11/18 Parkinson's Foundation Healthy Living Expo
Breakout Session & Expert Panel Speakers

Muhammad Nashatizadeh, MD
Director, Inpatient Movement Disorders
Associate Director, Movement Disorders Fellowship
Clinical Associate Professor
Parkinson's Disease and Movement Disorders Center at University of Kansas Medical Center,
Parkinson's Foundation Krupp Smith Family Foundation Center of Excellence

Muhammad Nashatizadeh, MD, known as Dr. Muhammad by patients, earned his medical degree from the University of Kansas School of Medicine and completed his neurology residency at the University of Kansas Medical Center. After serving as chief resident, he was a movement disorder fellow at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, Texas, and then returned to Kansas City in 2008. Dr. Muhammad works full-time as a senior neurology hospitalist at KU Medical Center. He trains fellows in movement disorders and geriatrics; mentors residents from neurology, internal medicine, psychiatry, and family medicine; and educates medical students with an emphasis on understanding how systemic medical disease affects patients neurologically. He is a Distinguished Alumnus of Emporia State University (2022) and has received numerous teaching and professionalism awards from learners at different levels of training.

Brooke Heffernan, MD
Movement Disorder Neurologist
Saint Luke's Neurology

Brooke Heffernan, MD, is a board-certified and fellowship-trained movement disorder neurologist with Saint Luke's Neurology. Dr. Heffernan is committed to working with her patients to improve understanding of their movement disorder and assist with their daily functioning and quality of life. She enjoys building lasting relationships and empowering her patients with as much information about their condition as possible so they can discuss treatment options together as a team. With extensive training in movement disorders, Dr. Heffernan has clinical interests in Parkinson's disease, Parkinsonism, multiple systems atrophy, progressive supranuclear palsy, ataxia, Huntington's disease, dystonia, and tremors. In addition, she has experience treating corticobasal syndrome, Lewy body dementia, and chorea. She also treats patients using deep brain stimulation and botulinum toxin for spasticity and dystonia.

Manuel Solano, MD (Retired)
Interim Director of Behavioral Health
Samuel U. Rodgers Health Center

Manuel Solano, MD, earned his medical degree and completed his residency in psychiatry in Colombia, South America, where he practiced medicine and psychiatry for more than 20 years.

After coming to the United States, he pursued additional academic and professional development, earning a bachelor's degree in computer science and engineering from the University of Missouri-Kansas City, a master's degree in teaching from the University of Central Missouri, and a specialist degree in school administration from UMKC.

Dr. Solano has extensive experience in leadership, education, healthcare, and community development. Throughout his career, he has successfully taught, directed, managed, and implemented programs across healthcare, educational, and community-based organizations. He is recognized for his commitment to advancing health equity and helping individuals overcome barriers related to social and economic disparities. His work has focused particularly on serving marginalized and underserved populations with limited access to healthcare services.

Following his retirement, Dr. Solano returned to Samuel U. Rodgers Health Center as Interim Director of Behavioral Health. He also serves as co-chair of the Missouri Community Health Workers (CHW) Coalition, led by the Mid-America Regional Council (MARC), where he continues to champion initiatives that improve health outcomes and strengthen community-based care across Missouri.

Saira Saad, MD
Movement Disorder Neurologist
UPMC Neurological Institute in Pennsylvania

Saira Saad, MD, is a neurologist and movement disorder specialist. She earned her medical degree at Dow Medical College in Karachi, Pakistan, and completed a residency program at Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences and a fellowship program at Case Western Reserve University Hospitals. Dr. Saad practices at the UPMC Neurological Institute in Pennsylvania.

Rachel K. Spooner, PhD
Director, Translational Motor Imaging Laboratory
Institute for Human Neuroscience, Boys Town National Research Hospital
Assistant Clinical Professor, Department of Pharmacology and Neuroscience, Creighton University

Rachel Spooner, PhD, is the Director of the Translational Motor Imaging Laboratory at the Institute for Human Neuroscience. Dr. Spooner is a clinical translational neuroscientist interested in characterizing the neurobiological underpinnings of cognitive-motor dysfunction across the lifespan. Her work utilizes a systems biology approach combined with advanced neuroimaging and behavioral analysis techniques to answer questions, including multimodal neuroimaging with MEG and MRI, invasive and non-invasive brain stimulation, quantitative biological assays, and comprehensive behavioral and clinical testing. She has authored numerous peer-reviewed publications featured in premier outlets such as PNAS, Brain Behavior and Immunology, npj Parkinsons's Disease, and Cerebral Cortex. During her PhD at UNMC, her work was among the first to demonstrate how systemic levels of mitochondrial redox environments and inflammation are related to the neural oscillatory dynamics serving sensorimotor control and cognitive ability in humans. During her postdoc, she utilized combined MEG and deep-brain stimulation (DBS)

recordings in individuals with movement disorders to identify the neural markers related to optimal DBS stimulation parameters, such as the intensity and directionality of current administered in the brain, and how those relate to changes in motor symptoms in clinical populations. Her research lab is focused on leveraging these systems biology, neurophysiology and neuromodulation techniques, with the ultimate goal of improving diagnostic accuracy and treatment efficacy for age- and disease-related functional decline in the future.

Megan Roberts, MS, RD, LD
Registered Dietitian
John Knox Village, a Parkinson's Foundation Community Partner in Parkinson's Care

Megan Roberts, MS, RD, LD, is a registered dietitian at John Knox Village in Lee's Summit, Missouri, a Parkinson's Foundation Community Partner in Parkinson's Care. She provides clinical nutrition services across the continuum of care, supporting older adults in independent living, assisted living, skilled nursing, and rehabilitation settings. Megan earned her master of science in nutrition and bachelor of science in microbiology from Auburn University. She specializes in nutrition for aging and chronic disease management, with a focus on practical strategies that help residents maintain strength, function, and quality of life. She works closely with interdisciplinary care teams to address nutrition-related challenges commonly experienced in Parkinson's disease, including weight changes, swallowing concerns, and gastrointestinal health.

Jill VonFange, LCSW
Turning Point Program Manager and Social Worker
The University of Kansas Health System

Jill VonFange is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker who joined Turning Point in May 2019. She brings 31 years of experience as a social worker, with the majority of her career spent as a medical social worker in both adult health care and pediatric hematology/oncology at Children's Mercy Hospital. At Turning Point, Jill works closely with program directors to develop and promote programming while providing support and guidance to both new and returning participants. She is passionate about helping individuals feel welcomed, supported, and connected throughout their Turning Point experience.

Tamara Rounds, BS, PTA, CPT
Community Research Liaison/Clinical Research Assistant
University of Kansas Alzheimer's Disease Research Center

Tamara Rounds is a clinical research professional, licensed physical therapist assistant, and certified personal trainer who brings more than a decade of experience spanning physical rehabilitation in memory care settings, fitness and physical activity, and clinical research. Her current work with the University of Kansas Alzheimer's Disease Research Center helps support Alzheimer's and dementia research while connecting community members, caregivers, and potential research participants with education, resources, and opportunities to participate in research--building upon her previous clinical leadership in long-term care and memory care. This

combination of clinical and research experience provides a valuable perspective for understanding dementia within the broader context of supporting not only the individual, but also the families and care partners navigating changes in cognition, function, and independence. Tamara is passionate about translating research and clinical knowledge into information that people can understand, use, and carry with them into everyday life.

Valerie Blanco Johnson, MS
Program Manager
Alzheimer's Association

Valerie Blanco Johnson, MS, is the program manager for the Alzheimer's Association – Heart of America Chapter. Valerie previously worked as a researcher and educator at the university level in dental public health where she developed continuing education programs for allied health professionals and advocated for access to care for individuals living with cognitive impairment. She has also served as a senior advisor, supporting family caregivers while assisting with resources and services. Valerie was a long-time volunteer with the Alzheimer's Association before becoming a staff member and is deeply committed to advancing a public health approach toward risk reduction and early detection for Alzheimer's disease and dementia through awareness and educational resources.

Jacob Peabody, MS
General Manager
Discover Strength Leawood

Jacob Peabody serves as general manager of Discover Strength in Leawood, Kansas, where he helps individuals improve their strength, physical function, and quality of life through evidence-based resistance training. He holds a master of science in sports management from the University of Central Missouri and a bachelor of arts in sports management with a minor in exercise science from John Carroll University. His professional experience spans personal training, collegiate strength and conditioning, fitness management, and rehabilitation services. Throughout his career, he's worked with hundreds of individuals across a wide range of ages, abilities, and fitness levels, including those with specialized exercise needs and neurological conditions such as Parkinson's disease, multiple sclerosis, stroke, and peripheral neuropathy. His passion for the role evidence-based strength training plays in helping individuals stems from the positive experiences he's had with exercise. He's seen it make tremendous differences in his personal life, as well as provide others with maintained mobility, preserved independence, and improvements in their long-term health and quality of life.

Sun Joo Lee, PhD, MT-BC
Assistant Professor, Music Therapy
University of Missouri–Kansas City Conservatory

Sun Joo Lee, Ph.D., MT-BC, NMT is an assistant professor of music therapy at the Conservatory of UMKC. Born in South Korea, she moved to the United States to pursue a career in vocal

performance and earned her master's in voice performance at Arizona State University, where she also completed a double major in music therapy, becoming a board-certified music therapist. She received her Ph.D. in music therapy from the University of Iowa.

Lee has extensive clinical experience working with individuals with neurological diseases, including Parkinson's disease and Alzheimer's. Since 2008, she has served as music director of Tremble Clefs Arizona, a therapeutic singing group for individuals with Parkinson's disease, their care partners and family members. During her doctoral studies at the University of Iowa, she established Tremble Clefs Iowa. Her work with these populations has been recognized with several national awards, including the Presidents' Student Leadership Award from Seed Coalition and the P.E.O. Sisterhood Award. Lee collaborated with Banner Alzheimer's Institute in Arizona to create Shine Your Light, a therapeutic community choir for individuals with memory loss and their care partners. She is also the founder and director of Sunshine Music Therapy, LLC, a company specializing in serving older adults. She established Tremble Clefs and Shine Your Light in Kansas City in 2026 after joining the UMKC Conservatory as a faculty member.

Lee has received the AMTA Midwestern Region Research Award and multiple research grants. She regularly presents at international, national and regional conferences. Her research focuses on the use of therapeutic group singing as an intervention for individuals with neurological diseases and developmental delays. She believes that singing fosters connection, allows individuals to engage at their own level of functioning, and supports meaningful relationships.