



Tri Cities Pain Conference April 24 & 25, 2026

Speaker Biographies

Michael Kolczynski, MD

Board Certification: Anesthesiology & Pain Medicine

Precision Interventional Pain Center

Kennewick, WA

Title: Necessary Behavioral and Biomechanical Adaptations in Pain Management

1. Understanding Pathology
2. Application and Maintenance

Keval Shah, MD

Board Certification: Interventional Cardiology, Cardiovascular Disease

Virginia Mason Franciscan Health

Seattle, WA

Title: Chest Pain

1. Components of a chest pain history and differential diagnosis
2. Urgent care vs ED vs Clinic work up per the 2021 ACC chest pain guidelines
3. Risk reduction prevention/when to start medication

Keval Shah, MD, is a board-certified cardiologist with additional fellowship training in interventional cardiology.

Dr. Shah believes in patient-centered care and views his role as that of an advocate, helping patients to achieve their health care goals. He strives to ensure patients understand their medical conditions and the treatment and preventive measures available to them, so they may make well-informed decisions.

Dr. Shah is a member of the American College of Cardiology and Society for Cardiac Angiography and Interventions.

Amber Charoen, MD

Board Certification: Internal Medicine & Gastroenterology

Prosser Memorial Health

Prosser, WA

Title: Navigating the Anatomical Crossroads: A GI-Led Approach to Chronic Pelvic Pain

1. The Diagnostic Challenge: Overlapping Etiologies
2. Clinical Assessment: Beyond the Pelvic Exam
3. Coordinate Multimodal Management

Dr. Amber Charoen is a board-certified gastroenterologist and internist specializing in women's digestive health through both conventional and integrative care. A Valedictorian graduate from Rangsit University, she completed research at Harvard, residency at Tufts/MetroWest, and fellowship at Brown University — one of the few gastroenterology fellowship programs in the United States with a dedicated Women's Gastroenterology Center. There, she received advanced training in complex motility disorders, pelvic floor dysfunction, and gender-specific digestive issues, working alongside pioneers in the field.

Her foundation is deeply rooted in rigorous academic training and a lifelong commitment to excellence. This expertise becomes the seed for every patient relationship — grounded in knowledge, trust, and compassionate care.

Jason Wright, DO

Board Certification: Cosmetic Surgery

Wright Surgical Arts

Pasco, WA

Title: Adipose-Based Cellular Therapy and HBOT

1. Biological rationale for Adipose-Derived Cellular Therapy
2. Why hyperbaric oxygen therapy fits chronic pain and tissue dysfunction
3. How stem cells and HBOT are effective in chronic pain patients

Dr. Jason Wright is a highly skilled Board Certified Cosmetic Surgeon with extensive experience in the field. Since 2014, he has been dedicated to providing exceptional cosmetic expertise to his patients that, along with his team, includes a comprehensive range of med spa services, including injectables, lasers, and advanced skin care treatments.

Dr. Wright completed his undergraduate degree at Washington State University before pursuing his medical degree at Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine in Bradenton, FL. Following the completion of medical school, he embarked on a rigorous General Surgery and Trauma residency in Detroit, MI.

To further refine his skills and broaden his knowledge, Dr. Wright sought additional training in Salt Lake City, UT where he successfully completed a comprehensive fellowship in total body and face cosmetic surgery at Vincent Surgical Arts, accredited by the esteemed American Academy of Cosmetic Surgery.

After the completion of his fellowship, Dr. Wright joined Vincent Surgical Arts, where he honed his expertise for an entire year before establishing his own medical practice. In 2015, he proudly opened Wright Surgical Arts in Tri-Cities, WA.

With a state-of-the-art surgical center at his disposal, Dr. Wright specializes in full-body cosmetic surgery, providing transformative procedures for both the face and body.

Driven by a genuine desire to help individuals achieve their best selves, Dr. Wright is committed to delivering exceptional surgical and nonsurgical treatments that enhance both appearance and confidence.

Ken Call, PT

Therapeutic Associates Physical Therapy

Kennewick, WA

Title: Evaluating and Treating the Whole Person: Movement is Medicine

1. Be able to identify PNE appropriate patients
2. Understand the importance of sleep/sleep hygiene principles
3. Exercises can make significant improvements in activity tolerance and pain reduction

Ken enjoys getting to know his patients by assessing their rehab needs as well as learning about their history and life stories. His treatment approach has always been one-on-one care. Education is a critical part of the rehab process both for the therapist and patient. He is a clinical instructor and has doctorate students from around the country in clinic to provide education for future physical therapists. All patients are educated about their condition and general health/wellness needs.

Ken graduated from the University of Osteopathic Medicine and Health Sciences Physical Therapy program in 1994, and then completed his doctorate work in physical therapy in 2004. Ken has taken several manual therapy courses, is an APTA clinical instructor, and has certifications in ASTYM, BikeFit, and ErgoScience work testing.

Ken moved to the Tri-cities in 1994 and began working for Therapeutic Associates. He opened the Therapeutic Associates West Kennewick location in 1997 and then opened the Southridge clinic in 2012 to help better serve the rehabilitation needs of the community.

Ken spends as much time as he can with his wife and their five sons. Ken has always been an outdoors enthusiast. He especially enjoys hiking, fishing, hunting, and participating in various sporting activities from 70.3 distance triathlons to century rides. Ken is a big supporter of community activities and events, particularly those that lend to a healthier community.

Ross Bindler, PharmD

Washington State University

Spokane, WA

Title: Problematic Substance Use in Adults with Chronic Pain

1. Recognize current trends in substance use among adults with chronic pain
2. Understand how to access and utilize substance use risk assessment tools and harm reduction resources
3. Apply risk assessment and harm reduction principles during the pain management care process

Ross is a Research Investigator in the Office of Research and Scholarship at Washington State University Spokane's College of Nursing. After graduating from Washington State University's College of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences he completed a two-year postdoctoral residency in Drug Information and Academics at Washington State University Spokane's Drug Information Center. He has been involved in health outcomes research for over ten years with research focusing on the management of chronic pain and substance use disorders as well as healthcare practitioner wellbeing.

Russell Tagg, DC

Brain Body Connect

Richland, WA

Title: Myofascial Pain and Autonomic Nervous System Modulation

1. Review current evidence on the anatomical and physiological relationships between the vagus nerve, connective tissue and myofascial structures
2. Examine mechanisms linking myofascial dysfunction with the Vagus nerve
3. Demonstrate practical myofascial techniques and their short-term effects on autonomic markers associated with stress and anxiety

Dr. Tagg is a 1992 graduate from Palmer college of chiropractic. He has extensive training with Upledger institute cranial sacral therapy, lymphatic drainage, zero balancing, Emotional release and AK. Masters level certification with Neurologic Integration System (NIS).

Dr. Tagg is an intuitive healer and uses his understanding of neurology, anatomy, physiology and body energy to assist in your healing journey. Dr. Tagg continues to update his knowledge and skills to bring you the latest from scientific research.

Juno Choe, MD

Board Certification: Radiation Oncology

Northwest Cancer Clinic

Kennewick, WA

Title: Cancer and Beyond: Radiation Therapy for Pain Relief

1. Understand indications for palliative radiation therapy in cancer patients
2. Understand the benefits of low dose radiation therapy in treating benign disorders including arthritis, bursitis, tendonitis, plantar fasciitis, Dupuytren's contracture, and plantar fibromatosis

Dr. Choe is the full-time board-certified radiation oncologist at Northwest Cancer Clinic. After earning a degree in Electrical Engineering and Computer Science from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Dr. Choe attended the University of Washington and earned his medical degree as well as a Ph.D. in Molecular Biotechnology. He completed his radiation oncology residency training at University Hospitals Case Medical Center in Cleveland, Ohio. Prior to joining Northwest Cancer Clinic, he served as the medical director at Eastern Oregon Cancer Center at Pendleton.

He treats a broad range of conditions including cancers of the lung, prostate, breast, brain, gastrointestinal, head and neck, lymphoma, gynecologic malignancies and sarcomas. He also treats numerous benign conditions such as Dupuytren's contracture, plantar fibromas (Ledderhose disease), plantar fasciitis, arthritis and bursitis, epicondylitis, keloids, and heterotopic bone formation.

In addition, Dr. Choe developed the radioactive prostate seed implant programs at Kadlec Medical Center and Lourdes Medical Center, and he is passionate about radioactive seed implants as a management option for the curative treatment of prostate cancer.

Dr. Choe has been published in prestigious journals including the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences and has presented research numerous times at national meetings of the American Society for Therapeutic Radiation and Oncology. He has also been active in the development of medical software to help improve patient care. Dr. Choe has devoted his career to delivering expert and compassionate treatment utilizing the latest radiation oncology technologies for the treatment of cancer and benign disorders.

In his spare time, Dr. Choe enjoys playing golf, tennis, and racquetball. He is a classical musician and plays the piano and cello. He is fluent in English and Korean.

Andrew Friedman, MD

Board Certification: Pain Medicine & Electrodiagnostic
Medicine

Virginia Mason Franciscan Health

Seattle, WA

Title: Updates in PM&R and Pain

1. Understand the most recent legislative efforts around opioid prescribing in WA State
2. Review the pharmacology and indications for new pain management drug suzetrigine
3. Recognize the presentation and learn about the management of Neuralgic Amyotrophy

Andrew Friedman, MD, specializes in electrodiagnosis of the muscles and nerves, spine related diagnosis and treatment, brain injury, prosthetics, neuromuscular disorders and electrodiagnostic studies.

Dr. Friedman is a Clinical Assistant Professor in the Department of Rehabilitation Medicine at University of Washington School of Medicine, Seattle.

Dr. Friedman was voted one of Seattle's Top Doctors by both Seattle Metropolitan and Seattle Magazine in 2005-2022; and voted America's Best Doctors according to Castle Connelly for 2012-2022.

Neil Ponder, DO

Board Certification: Obstetrics & Gynecology

Desert Sky Women's Healthcare

Kennewick, WA

Title: Endometriosis: Acute and Chronic Pain in Women

1. Identify the presentation and evaluation of endometriosis
2. Management of pain in the patient with endometriosis, both pharmacologic and non-pharmacologic strategies

Dr. Ponder has been practicing obstetrics and gynecology since 2010. He provides Women's Health Care for every stage of life, including family planning options, preventative management, obstetrical care and all aspects of gynecological care. He believes that everyone deserves personalized, comprehensive and compassionate care. In addition, he combines diagnostic and therapeutic skills while practicing with empathy and sincerity.

Silverio Arenas, PhD

Doctorate in Clinical Psychology

Injury Clinic Northwest/De Alta Clinic

Mount Vernon, WA

Title: Clinical Insights from a Pain Psychologist in the Workers Compensation System

1. Chronic pain from a physio/socio/psychological perspective
2. Somatic Symptom Disorder with predominant pain (DSM-5)
3. Physical, sociological/cultural, psychological, and bureaucratic/medicolegal factors in treating injured workers

Dr. Silverio Arenas, Jr., PhD, is a licensed psychologist who completed Masters and Doctorate degrees in clinical psychology at Washington State University; predoctoral internship in a Hispanic migrant community mental health program in Colorado; postdoctoral training and experience in rehabilitation psychology at UC Davis Medical Center; and a Senior Fellowship in pain psychology at the University of Washington Interdisciplinary Pain Treatment Program, under distinguished mentors Drs. John Loeser, MD, and William Fordyce, PhD, and other pain physicians, psychologists, and allied staff.

Born in Texas to Mexican parents and raised in a dual-culture environment, Dr. Arenas entered the mental health field in 1972 as a community mental health center counselor in the Lower Rio Grande Valley and has practiced as a psychologist since 1985 in California, Oregon, and Washington. His life experiences include being a farmworker in Texas, a migrant worker in Michigan and Ohio, a Chicano civil rights activist and organizer, and research assistant and apprentice in Mexican folk medicine (curanderismo).

Dr. Arenas presently treats injured workers at Injury Recovery NW, in Mount Vernon, WA, in multidisciplinary coordinated collaboration with other providers and staff.

Ralph Laraiso, MD

Board Certification: Pain Medicine

Prosser Memorial Health

Prosser, WA

Title: Adjuvant Analgesics

1. Identify key adjuvant analgesics and their roles in pain
2. Explain pain pathways and improve outcomes
3. Apply strategies to safely prescribe in clinical practice

Dr. Laraiso brings a wealth of experience in physical medicine and rehabilitation, specializing in the management and treatment of acute and chronic pain conditions.

Dr. Laraiso completed his education at Nova Southeastern University College of Osteopathic Medicine in Fort Lauderdale, Florida and his medical residency in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at St. Francis Hospital in Pittsburgh. His extensive career includes leadership roles and clinical positions across several esteemed medical centers, including Kadlec Neuroscience Center, Alaska Regional Medical Center, TriHealth Rehabilitation Hospital, and more.

His specialties and areas of expertise include acute and chronic low back pain, spinal stenosis, radiculopathy, degenerative disc disease, lumbago, degenerative joint Disease, SI joint dysfunction, neuropathy, osteoarthritis, migraine, carpal tunnel syndrome, paraplegia, traumatic brain injury (TBI), and more.

Dr. Laraiso is committed to providing compassionate and comprehensive care to his patients, utilizing the latest advancements in medical technology and treatment methodologies. His approach focuses on improving the quality of life for those suffering from debilitating conditions through tailored treatment plans and patient-centered care.

Eric Kurtz, DC

Certified Chiropractic Sports Practitioner

Columbia Basin Chiropractic Center

Richland, WA

Title: Non-Surgical Interventions for Pain

1. Identify current evidence-based non-surgical pain interventions
2. Compare the effectiveness and appropriate clinical application
3. Recognize emerging technologies and therapies
4. Apply patient-centered strategies

Dr. Eric Kurtz is a highly experienced chiropractor and Physical Medicine Director at Columbia Basin Medical Center. He has been practicing chiropractic care in Kennewick since 1993 after earning his degree from Life Chiropractic College West in California. He is also a Certified Chiropractic Sports Practitioner (CCSP) and has advanced training in spinal rehabilitation and physical fitness.

Dr. Kurtz specializes in treating sports injuries, back pain, and other musculoskeletal conditions using a combination of chiropractic adjustments, spinal rehabilitation, and innovative therapy equipment. He is committed to helping his patients achieve optimal physical health and mobility. In his personal life, Dr. Kurtz enjoys spending time with his family and participating in various outdoor activities.