



Value & Systems Science Lab

Year in Review (2018-2019)

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

As we transition into a new academic year, we wanted to take a moment to reflect on a busy but productive first year (2018-2019) for the Value & Systems Science Lab — known by shorthand as VSSL (and said “vessel”).

Because VSSL is relatively new, and some of you may not be familiar with its key focus areas, this year-in-review begins with a brief introduction to Lab goals and current team members. In brief, the design of the Lab seeks to reflect the fact that value, health systems and care delivery are large, multifaceted topics, and the belief that a range of expertise — operational, research, educational — is needed to help “move the needle” on improving how we finance and deliver care to patients. In that spirit, this year-in-review also highlights some of the training and educational work that VSSL team members have led or supported, as well as their local, regional, and national activities and research scholarship.

In reviewing the year, we want to recognize the strong support from mentors and several groups, in particular the Division of General Internal Medicine, the UW Medicine Center for Scholarship in Patient Care Quality and Safety, and the Office of the Chief Medical Officer at UW Medicine. Much of the work described here was possible through their guidance, sponsorship, and support.

Finally, as you we hope you’ll agree, we believe there’s much more work to be done in the areas of value and systems science! Therefore, we encourage anyone interested in learning more about the Lab and/or joining in its work to visit the VSSL site [here](#) (where one can find out more about [how to work with us](#)) and reach out.

The VSSL team

VSSL Goals

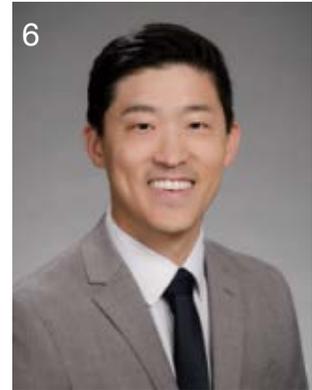
As a growing group of faculty at UW and its affiliated sites, VSSL seeks to draw upon expertise from scholars and care delivery leaders at UW to aggregate expertise that spans scholarly disciplines (e.g., decision sciences, health policy, care delivery redesign) and health systems operations (e.g., population health, value-based purchasing) to drive change and evaluate programs that impact patients and populations.



Lab goals

1. Identify and synthesize value-based payment and care delivery policies into strategic organizational insights
2. Educate stakeholders about value-based and systems-focused policies and their care delivery implications
3. Apply rigorous scholarship – via program evaluation and implementation of pragmatic interventions – to understand policy impact on health systems and patients

Current Team Members



1. **Leah Marcotte, MD, FACP**
Population Health
[@marcottl](#)
2. **Linnaea Schuttner, MD, MSHS**
Primary Care Quality Improvement
[@LSchuttner](#)
3. **Anders Chen, MD, MHS**
Policy Concepts
[@ChenAnders](#)
4. **Christopher Chen, MD, MBA**
Value Management
[@chrispchen](#)
5. **Ashok Reddy, MD, MSc**
Primary Care Transformation
[@reddya](#)
6. **Joshua Liao, MD, MSc, FACP**
Payment and Delivery Policy
[@JoshuaLiaoMD](#)

Learn more about our team members [here](#)

Trainees & Learning

Designed by **Leah Marcotte** and **Joshua Liao** in collaboration with **Anders Chen**, the Lab is excited to welcome its first cohort of **VSSL Policy & Care Delivery Immersive** trainees this coming academic year (2019-2020)! This initial cohort is comprised of several outstanding physicians in the internal medicine residency program:



Sophie Miller, MD, MPH



Carly Hudelson, MD, MSc



Ryan Clodfelter, MD

Each immersive trainee will spend dedicated time with VSSL team members to get hands-on experience in their areas of interest with the overarching areas of health care payment and delivery policy and administration. Participants will do so by engaging in a combination of project work and scholarship (e.g., research projects, policy briefs and/or other dissemination products). Learn more about the immersive [here](#).

2019 also marked the inaugural year of a 4-week seminar series designed by **Anders Chen** for the UW Internal Medicine Residency Program. Because practicing physicians need to be trained in core health systems concepts — to understand the broader context in which they practice and their impact on daily clinical decisions — this **Health Policy, Economics and Delivery Systems (HPEDS) Seminar Series** exposes all residents to a set of health policy, economics and delivery systems topics in their final year of training.

The seminar series utilizes a mixed didactic and small group format to teach concepts including the following:

- Historical and international perspectives on health care systems
- Payment models and incentive structures
- Regulation and oversight
- Policy making process

Local Activities

Through their roles in UW Medicine and the Puget Sound VA, VSSL members have engaged in health system initiatives in their respective areas over the last year. For example:

Through her role as Associate Medical Director for Population Health for UW Medicine, **Leah Marcotte** has worked on initiatives to improve processes for “risk capture” (ensuring that UW Medicine is accurately compensated for its patient case-mix by ensuring that patients’ clinical conditions are captured appropriately in clinical documentation) and transitions of care after hospital discharge (e.g., through capitalizing on “Transitional Care Management” codes that reimburse organizations and its clinicians for coordinating care after hospital discharge).

Through his role as the Director of Population Health for the General Medicine (primary care) Service Line at the VA Puget Sound Health Care System, **Anders Chen** has worked on processes to identify and improve care for patients at risk for hospitalization from ambulatory care sensitive conditions, with initial efforts focused on patients with COPD.

Anders Chen also delivered a presentation at the VA Puget Sound Health Care System Primary Care Journal Club entitled, “The Future of Primary Care Payments”. While primary care providers within the VA system may be insulated from the direct effects of MACRA as a Medicare policy and other new Medicare payment models, the overall move from volume to value in the American health care landscape remains highly relevant for all clinicians. This presentation highlighted recent trends in primary care payment models, including comparison of Medicare and VA models for payment.

Through his role as Medical Director of Value Management at Valley Medical Center, **Christopher Chen** has helped lead initiatives such as clinical pathway development and programs that support a Medicare value-based bundled payment model (BPCI-Advanced).

Through his roles — previously as Associate Medical Director for Contracting & Value-based Care, and now as Medical Director for Payment Strategy at UW Medicine — **Joshua Liao** has helped lead system-wide work identifying strategies, external best practices, and internal readiness for participation in value-based payment models.

Regional Activities



In April 2019, VSSL members **Christopher Chen**, **Leah Marcotte**, and **Joshua Liao** participated in a Population Health panel organized by the Washington Chapter of the American College of Healthcare Executives (WSHEF). Topics discussed included the following:

How should health systems interested in shifting towards a population-based care approach begin this work?

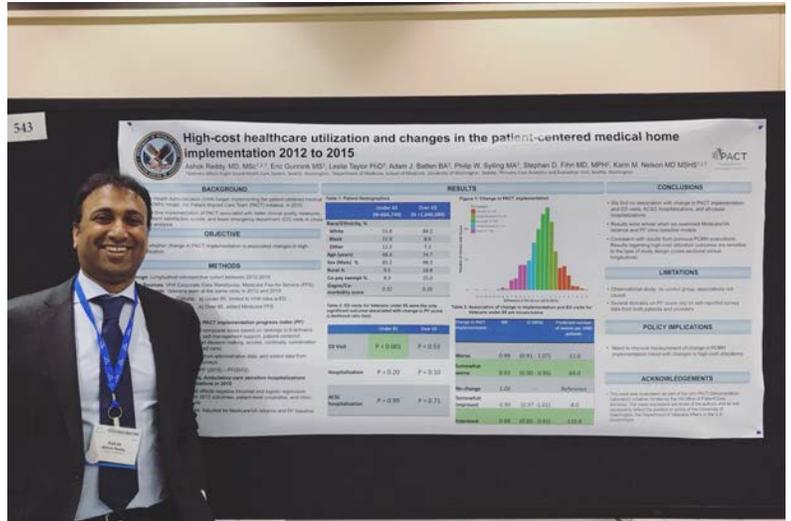
How can health systems ensure on the practice level that efforts to enact population health management don't unintentionally create disparities?

The event was attended by different UW and non-UW stakeholders in the health care community, making for a thoughtful, lively discussion.

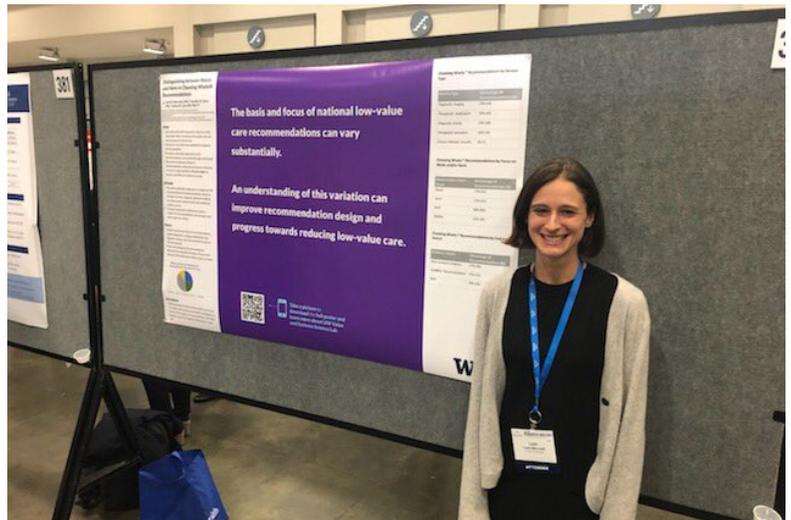
National Activities

VSSL has been fortunate to have strong representation at several national conferences, including the annual meetings for groups such as the American College of Physicians, Society of General Internal Medicine, and AcademyHealth.

For instance, in 2018, **Ashok Reddy** presented a poster at the AcademyHealth Annual Research Meeting based on work conducted with colleagues at the Puget Sound VA evaluating high-cost healthcare utilization and changes in the patient-centered medical home implementation between 2012 and 2015.



At the 2019 Annual Research Meeting, **Leah Marcotte** presented a poster — using the new “better poster” format (for those unfamiliar, read more about this [here](#)) — about ways to improve recommendations about avoiding low-value care services by understanding the rationales underlying these recommendations.



National Activities

National activities by VSSL members have also included podium presentations about scholarly work on a wide range of topics. For example:

Christopher Chen participated in a national webinar, moderated by Dr. Nirav Shah (Clinical Excellence Research Center, Stanford University) and reviewed principles on how to set key performance indicators and implement integrated information systems to support care coordination and intervention for Bundled Payment Programs.

Linnaea Schuttner presented a podium presentation at the SGIM national meeting on the implementation of the patient-centered medical home with quality of life in patients with multimorbidity. SGIM recognized the rigor of this work by awarding Dr. Schuttner one of several **Milton W. Hamolsky Jr. Awards** (given to junior faculty for outstanding scientific presentations).

At the same meeting, **Ashok Reddy** gave a podium presentation about a positive deviance approach to identifying outlier primary care practices in order to reduce high-cost utilization.

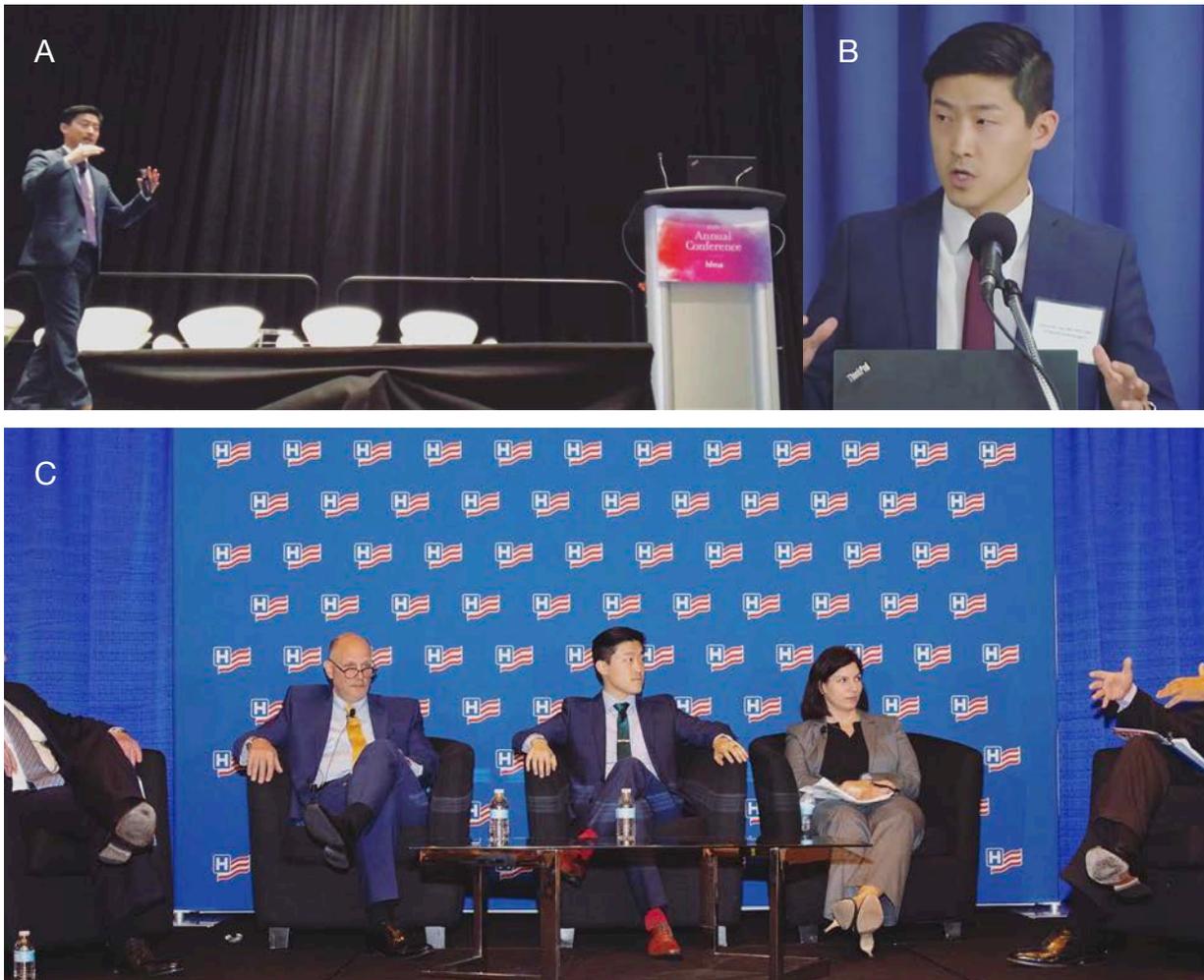


Joshua Liao presented a podium presentation at the Academyhealth Annual Research Meeting about the spillover effects from a Medicare bundled payment program onto the care of commercially insured patients.

National Activities

VSSL members have also been able to use scholarship to engage other health care stakeholders on a national level.

For instance, **Joshua Liao** (a) gave a podium presentation to Chief Financial Officers and financial professionals at the Healthcare Financial Management Association national meeting; (b) spoke at a bundled payment policy briefing at the National Press Club in Washington DC; and (c) participated in a panel at the American Hospital Association annual meeting directed towards health system executives and care delivery and post-acute care strategy.



Research



Ashok Reddy is the recipient of a 5-year grant career development award (“K award”) from the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. Through this award, Dr. Reddy will study the implementation of Health information exchange-enabled care plans to coordinate care for high-risk patients. This grant will support an evaluation of Washington State’s efforts to implement policies and programs to improve care for high-risk patients.



Joshua Liao co-leads a portfolio of work focused on understanding how Medicare’s bundled payments programs—value-based payment models in which providers are held accountable for the quality and costs of care across an episode of care—impact patient care. Read more about this work [here](#). In the last year, Dr. Liao and collaborators have secured several grants to support this work, including grants from the Commonwealth Fund, the American Hospital Association, and the National Institutes of Health (R01).



Together with Drs. Reddy, Liao, and other UW collaborators in the Division of General Internal Medicine, **Linnaea Schuttner** has led an analysis evaluating the statistical reliability of UW Medicine’s ambulatory quality metrics. The results of this analysis — which has the potential to both inform local work using these measures at UW Medicine, as well as efforts by other academic health systems — are currently being written up for peer-reviewed dissemination.

VSSL Scholarship 2018-2019 by the numbers

45+ peer-reviewed publications
>including in NEJM, JAMA, Health Affairs

2 new curricula launched
>including one implemented across the entire Internal Medicine residency

30+ presentations
>80% national

4 grants
>1 NIH K award
>1 NIH R01