UMass Chan Medical School | UMass Memorial Health | Department of Neurology

Neuroimmunology and MS Annual Symposium

Annual Neuroimmunology and Multiple Sclerosis Clinical and Research Hybrid Program:

Navigating the Frontier of Autoimmune CNS Disorders: Diagnostic, Treatment and Research Updates



Friday, December 18, 2026
12:00 PM – 8:00 PM

In-Person: Beechwood Hotel
363 Plantation St., Worcester, MA

Via Zoom 1:00 PM – 5:50 PM

(link will be provided 1 day prior to meeting)

Register Now

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Neuroimmunology and MS Annual Symposium

Course Directors:

- Carolina Ionete, MD, PhD, Professor, Director, Neuroimmunology/MS Division and Multiple Sclerosis Center
- Christopher Hemond, MD, Associate Professor, Associate Research Director, Neuroimmunology/MS Division

Program Description: The landscape of autoimmune central nervous system (CNS) disorders is expanding at a rapid pace. The discovery of novel neural antibodies refined diagnostic criteria, and the introduction of targeted biologic therapies have revolutionized how clinicians approach these complex conditions. This intensive 4-hour CME program provides an essential update on the diagnosis, differentiation, and management of key autoimmune CNS diseases, including Multiple Sclerosis (MS), Neuromyelitis Optica Spectrum Disorder (NMOSD), MOG Antibody-Associated Disease (MOGAD), and Autoimmune Encephalitis. Through expert-led lectures, on current and evolving understanding, as well as presentations and discussion of new research from UMASS Chan Medical School, participants will gain practical insights into implementing the latest diagnostic algorithms, utilizing advanced biomarkers, and tailoring personalized, evidence-based treatment strategies to optimize patient outcomes.

Learning Objectives: At the end of this activity, participants should be able to:

1. Differentiate between MS, NMOSD, MOGAD, and various autoimmune CNS entities using the latest clinical, radiographic, and serological criteria.
2. Interpret complex antibody testing panels (serum vs. CSF) to avoid common diagnostic pitfalls and misclassification.
3. Formulate individualized acute and long-term treatment plans incorporating newly approved biologic and targeted therapies.
4. Manage treatment-related risks, monitoring protocols, and long-term safety profiles in patients undergoing immunosuppressive or immunomodulatory therapy.
5. Gain knowledge about new research on the autoimmune/inflammatory CNS diseases

Highlights: Traditional research | Collaborative approaches to managing MS – Networking opportunities | Exhibits with the latest in services and products | Social event

Target Audience: Healthcare professionals-physicians (neuroimmunologists, rheumatologists, internal medicine physicians, primary care, internists), Physician assistants, Nurse practitioners, MS nurses, Physical and occupational therapists, researchers; post docs; residents, fellows, medical students, and PhD students.

Continuing Education Credit: The UMass Chan Medical School is accredited by the ACGME to provide continuing medical education for physicians.

The UMass Chan Medical School designates this live activity for a maximum of 4 *AMA PRA Category 1 Credits™*. Physicians should claim only credit commensurate with the extent of their participation in the activity.

Nurses: This program meets the requirements for 4.8 contact hours for nurses as specified by the Massachusetts Board of Registration in Nursing (244-CMR 5.04).

Others: Other healthcare professionals will receive a certificate that states this activity was designated for 4 *AMA PRA Category 1 Credits*™.

Cancellation policy: If you cancel your registration before November 25th, 2026, the fee is refundable, less a processing charge of $75. After that date, no refund will be given for any reason, including weather and other emergencies; substitutions are always welcome. UMass Chan Office of Continuing Medical Education and the Department of Neurology reserves the right to cancel a program at any time caused by circumstances not under its control. People registered in a canceled program will be notified by email, using the email address provided when registering for the program. There may also be changes in the program's content caused by circumstances beyond the control of the Office of Continuing Medical Education.

Policy on Faculty and Provider Disclosure: It is the policy of UMass Chan Medical School Office of Continuing Medical Education (OCME) to ensure fair balance, independence, objectivity, and scientific rigor in all activities. All people participating in CME activities provided by UMass Chan OCME are required to present evidence-based data, identify any off-label product use, and disclose all relevant financial relationships with those supporting the activity or others whose products or services are discussed. Faculty disclosures will be provided in the activity materials.

Individual	Role(s)
Carolina Ionete, MD, PhD, Professor	Course Director Presenter
Christopher Hemond, MD, Associate Professor	Course Director Presenter
Roberto Bomprezzi, MD, PhD, Professor	Presenter
Agnes Bacopulos, MD, Assistant Professor	Presenter
Molly Wilner, DO, Assistant Professor	Presenter
Fabiola Devarona-Colon, MD, Neuroimmunology Fellow	Presenter
Anna Gil, PhD, Instructor	Presenter
Jinwei Zhang, PhD, Assistant Professor	Presenter
Irina Radu, MD, MHA, Post Doctoral Research Fellow	Presenter
Jean Pierre Schatzmann Peron, PhD, Associate Professor	Presenter
Isabel Okinedo, MS4	Presenter
Jillian Richmond, PhD, Assistant Professor	Presenter
Morna Larson, Senior Medical Administrative Assistant – UMass Chan, Neurology Administration	Organizer
Lynn Hancock, Project Manager – UMass Chan, Office of Continuing Medical Education	Organizer

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Annual Neuroimmunology and Multiple Sclerosis Clinical & Research Updates Presentations Agenda

12:00 – 1:00 pm	**Registration Open & Lunch provided**
Session 1: The Modern Diagnostic Toolkit & De-mystifying Biomarkers	
1:00 – 1:10 pm	Welcome and Introduction – **Carolina Ionete, MD, PhD, Christopher Hemond, MD**
1:10 – 1:35 pm	Beyond the Oligoclonal Bands: Navigating Serum and CSF Antibody Panels - **Carolina Ionete, MD, PhD** *Q&A*- 5 min
1:35 – 1:55pm	Radiographic Red Flags: MRI Clues to Differentiate Atypical Neuroinflammatory Conditions **- Christopher Hemond, MD** *Q&A*- 5 min
Session 2: The Evolving Landscape of Other Demyelinating Diseases and Autoimmune Encephalitis	
1:55 – 2:20 pm	NMOSD and MOGAD: Moving Past the Shadow of Multiple Sclerosis - **Roberto Bomprezzi, MD, PhD** *Q&A*- 5 min
2:20 – 2:45 pm	**BREAK – Coffee/Refreshments & Exhibitors**
2:45 – 3:05 pm	Paradigm Shifts in NMOSD Therapeutics: The Era of Targeted Biologics - **Agnes Bacopulos, MD** *Q&A- 5 min*
3:05- 3:25 pm	Autoimmune Encephalitis: Updates on diagnosis, prognosis and immunotherapies- **Fabiola Devarona-Colon, MD** *Q&A- 5 min*
Session 3: New frontiers in Neuroinflammation Research	
3:25 – 3:40 pm	Characterization of immunoglobulin isotypes and antibody specificities reveal shared and distinct humoral signature across lupus target tissues**-- Isabel Okinedo MS4, Jillian Richmond, PhD** *Q&A*- 5 min
3:40 – 4:00 pm	Susac's syndrome: parsing a diagnostic challenge - **Molly Wilner, DO** *Q&A*- 5 min
4:00 – 4:20 pm	**BREAK – Coffee/Refreshments & Exhibitors**
Session 3 (cont): New Frontiers in Neuroinflammation Research	
4:20 – 4:40 pm	CD8 T cell Dysfunction and antigen discovery in post viral syndromes- **Anna Gil, PhD** *Q&A*- 5 min
4:40 – 5:00 pm	Deep Learning for Heterogeneous Clinical MRI Data **- Jinwei Zhang, PhD** *Q&A*- 5 min

5:00 – 5:20 pm	Cerebrospinal fluid from Multiple Sclerosis Patients Reshape Astrocyte Gene Expression and Metabolism - **Jean Pierre Schatzmann Peron, PhD** *Q&A*- 5 min
5:20 – 5:40 pm	Bacterial microbiome and accumulation of disability in MS- **Irina Radu, MD** *Q&A*- 5 min
5:40– 5:45 pm	Closing Remarks – **Carolina Ionete, MD, PhD and Christopher Hemond, MD**
6:00 – 8:00 pm	**Dinner Buffet and Social Gathering**

2026 Registration fees: In-Person and Hybrid

(In-person – includes lunch, refreshments & dinner buffet)

Active UMass Department of Neurology Employee, Neurology Residents, Fellows & Students	**Free**
All Other Health Professionals	**$300**
Physicians or nurses not affiliated with UMass	**$200**
UMass Alumnus	**$50**

Register Now