



UMCCTS-UMMH Health Systems KL2 Program Scholar Laurel O'Connor, MD

"The KL2 award has been extremely transformative for my career. It has allowed me to pursue intensive formal training in clinical investigation and dedicate focused time to experiential learning through the execution of my own research projects, while also benefitting from focused mentoring from my extremely generous mentor team. As a physician-scientist, having dedicated time to foster research skills that are complementary to my clinical background has been instrumental in developing a career development plan and visualize a translational pathway to apply my investigational work in clinical practice. The KL2 will accelerate my trajectory to becoming an independent physician-investigator and I am extraordinarily grateful for the opportunities it has afforded me."

Dr. Laurel O'Connor, Assistant Professor, Division of Emergency Medical Services, Department of Emergency Medicine at UMass Chan, is supported by UMass Memorial Health as a KL2 Health Systems Scholar beginning in January 2023. Dr. O'Connor's research focuses on development and implementation of community-based mobile health interventions to improve the health of medically complex older adults. Over the course of her career development award, her research is focused

on developing, testing, and refining the acceptability and feasibility of a mobile integrated health intervention to manage patients with acute exacerbation of COPD, with the goal of reducing emergency services utilizations and hospitalizations. She has completed a qualitative needs assessment and has begun recruitment of her feasibility trial. The first manuscripts from her award have been accepted for publication in summer of 2023 and additional manuscripts are in preparation.

Notable accomplishments during her time as a scholar include:

- Won UMass Memorial Medical Group's 2023 Pace Prize (Prize for Academic Collaboration and Excellence) competition
- Had a first-author manuscript accepted for publication in Academic Emergency Medicine (doi:10.1111/acem.14791), with another manuscript under review and three in development
- Received a CCTS Small Conference Grant to host a regional symposium on mobile integrated health which is drawing clinicians and investigators from across the region, planned for October 2023.
- Completed training in qualitative research methods
- Conducted a qualitative assessment of barriers and facilitators towards the adoption of mobile integrated health for COPD management
- Began recruitment for a pilot feasibility trial of home-based management of patients with COPD using digital technology
- Submitted a research abstract to ACEP and a proposal for a podium presentation to the National Association of EMS Physicians (NAEMSP)
- Preparing NHLBI K23 Submission for October 2023 Cycle

Dr. O'Connor's primary mentor, Edwin D. Boudreaux, PhD, Professor, Departments of Emergency Medicine, Psychiatry, and Population and Quantitative Health Sciences, and Director, Center for Accelerating Practices to End Suicide (CAPES), had this to say: "Laurel is an incredibly talented member of the UMass Chan Medical School's faculty. She brings astute clinical and operational expertise to her academic endeavors and the KL2 is already accelerating her career trajectory as a health services researcher who seeks to improve the lives of her patients through novel care delivery models. She has taken full advantage of the award and has already made impressive headway on her research goals. She collaborates on relevant projects with investigators across the health system and enthusiastically pursues professional and academic growth through her ambitious career development plan. Her dedication and contributions to her patients, the department and the health system is impressive, and she demonstrates outstanding potential to become a successful independent physician-investigator."