

Putting the Patient in the Center

An Interview with Judy Yee, M.D., FACR,
University Chair of Radiology, Montefiore Health System and Professor of Radiology, Albert Einstein College of Medicine

EDITORS' NOTE Dr. Judy Yee attended the Bronx High School of Science and then Barnard College. She received her medical degree from Albert Einstein College of Medicine and interned at Mount Sinai Medical Center. Dr. Yee then returned to Einstein and completed her residency in Radiology. She completed an abdominal imaging fellowship at the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF) Medical Center and was recruited to stay on as faculty. During her



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tenure at UCSF, Dr. Yee became Professor of Radiology and Biomedical Imaging and Vice Chair of Radiology. She also served as the Chief of Radiology at the San Francisco VA Medical Center. Dr. Yee is the editor and primary author of *Virtual Colonoscopy*, which is a leading textbook on the topic. She holds a patent on Enhanced Virtual Colonoscopy. She served on the Board of the Society of Abdominal Radiology (SAR) and was the President of SAR from 2015-2016. She currently serves as Chair of the American College of Radiology Colon Cancer Committee and Chair of the RSNA Gastrointestinal Refresher Course Program and is Co-Chair of the Diversity and Inclusion Committee for the New York State Radiological Society. Dr. Yee is a well-respected educator, having taught and mentored numerous trainees in abdominal imaging. Dr. Yee was awarded Honorary Fellow of the European Society of Gastrointestinal and Abdominal Radiology in 2019, the sole recipient from the United States to receive this honor.

INSTITUTION BRIEF Montefiore Medicine (montefiore.org) is the umbrella organization overseeing both Montefiore Health System and Albert Einstein College of Medicine. Montefiore Health System includes 10 hospitals including White Plains Hospital and Burke Rehabilitation Hospital, employs 45,000 people, and cares for 3.5 million people throughout four New York counties: The Bronx, Westchester, Rockland and Orange. In addition, Montefiore recently ranked among the top 1 percent of hospitals nationally and regionally by U.S. News & World Report. For more than 100 years, Montefiore has been nationally recognized for innovating new treatments, procedures and approaches to patient care, producing stellar outcomes and raising the bar for health systems around the country and around the world.

Will you highlight your role and your key areas of focus at Montefiore?

I have been chair of radiology at Montefiore for two years, and I arrived with a vision of innovation in multiple areas. This correlates with the key values of Montefiore Health System. In the area of patient clinical experience and clinical care, we have developed a patient-centered radiology department where we have examined all aspects of the patient experience from making an appointment for an imaging test, to making sure we are using the best test

for a particular clinical issue, to making sure the images are being read correctly and in a timely manner. Finally, we are making sure there is appropriate follow-up care.



Overview of segments of the colon using CT Colonography (Virtual Colonoscopy)

We strive to put the patient at the center of what we do so they have the best possible experience. We work with a director of patient experience who coaches our front-line staff – the clerk, the technologists, the nurses – on the best way to interact with patients. We conduct empathy training because we are aware that our patients are often vulnerable and scared. They are here

because there is typically a clinical issue and they may not be feeling well, so we need to make sure our staff are as supportive as possible. On the research side, I am an abdominal radiologist and my area of expertise is imaging and screening for colorectal cancer using a novel test that I helped to develop called CT colonography or virtual colonoscopy. We just opened a brand-new 3D imaging lab which will house not only the ability to perform 3D imaging and 3D printing, but virtual reality imaging and simulation training. The lab combines state of the art technology for clinical care and research, and will also be a great teaching tool for our medical students, residents and fellows.

We are also looking at how we can expand some of our cancer screening programs and how we can use the data we accumulate from our unique patient population in the Bronx to see how it may be similar or different from other patient cohorts.

Quality and safety are areas we are heavily focused on. For example, we are working hard on ways to reduce the amount of time it takes for a patient who walks into our Emergency Department to get neuro-interventional radiology treatment. We're also looking at ways we can reduce pediatric MRI sedation time and wait times as well.

Finally, faculty development and growth is one of my priorities. I am focused on making sure our faculty members go through the academic system with appropriate professional guidance and development. They need the tools to be able to go out on the national and international stage to promote the great work they're doing at Montefiore and Einstein.

Montefiore is an institution that serves a diverse population. How important is it that this diversity is mirrored in Montefiore's workforce?

It is extremely important. I went to the Bronx High School of Science. I was a medical student at Einstein and a resident at Einstein, so I have deep roots in the Bronx and the Montefiore and Einstein system. I came back because I wanted to work with a staff that mirrors our patient population. As a result, our patients can relate to our staff. I am inspired by the amazing staff we have and I learn from them every single day as they learn from each other and they learn from me and they learn from our patients. I think it's a perfect mixture of talent that in the long run improves everyone's health and well-being. ●