



Bridge the



GHAPP

Gastroenterology & Hepatology
Advanced Practice Providers

NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 15





Dear Reader,

The year is moving along at what feels to be top speed. As the snow melts and the tulips bloom, we are getting closer to our National GHAPP Meeting in October, which will be held in Chula Vista, California. The entire GHAPP Communications and Member Engagement Committees are buzzing with anticipation for our upcoming 9th Annual Meeting. In the meantime, we have some Regional Meetings to tide us over. Be sure to check the GHAPP website for an event near you.

In this issue, you will find a recap of the recent Liver Connect meeting, which took place in San Diego, California, in February; a great meeting if I do say so myself. We also have a featured article from one of our GHAPP Members, Rosirma Corney, PA-C, about bowel endometriosis, as well as some trivia questions and a spotlight on the fabulous Rocky Mountain GHAPP Chapter.

Don't miss your chance to send us your abstracts for the National Conference! This is great opportunity to try your hand at creating an abstract and poster if you have always wanted to but never had the chance. How to submit is in this issue, as well as how to nominate a colleague for our Excellence Awards and our Conference Scholarships, so be sure to read all about it!

I can't wait to see what our GHAPP community creates in the next few months in anticipation of our conference, and we hope to see you in the meantime at our Regional Meetings across the country.

In Health,

Allysa Saggese, NP
 Director of Newsletter

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Trivia Questions

Here are a couple of trivia questions for you:

?

Which of the following is the most accurate early marker for pancreatic necrosis?

A) Amylase > 3x normal

B) Lipase > 5x normal

C) Persistent SIRS beyond 48 hours

D) CT scan within the first 24 hours

?

Which of the following is the most likely cause of a patient with cirrhosis developing acute hematemesis and melena?

A) Mallory-Weiss tear

B) Gastric varices

C) Peptic Ulcer Disease

D) Esophageal varices

?

Which genetic variant is strongly associated with MASLD progression to NASH/cirrhosis?

A) HFE C28Y

B) SERPINA1

C) PNPLA3 I148M

D) ATP7B

Answers are located on page 11!

Is it Bowel Endometriosis? When IBS is not the only consideration Rosirma Corney, PA-C

What is endometriosis?

It is a chronic inflammatory disorder that mainly affects the reproductive system and other organ systems of the body. It affects women of reproductive age. It is controlled by estrogen.

What is bowel endometriosis?

One of the most common sites outside the reproductive system to be infiltrated with endometriomas, which are collections of endometrial tissue, is the rectosigmoid colon, followed by the ileum, appendix, and cecum. In rarer cases the stomach and transverse colon may be affected as well.

How does it present?

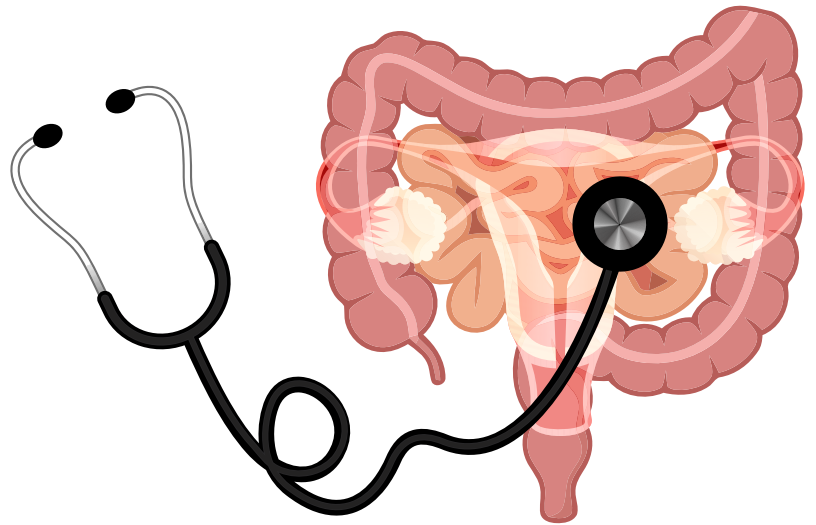
Symptoms of bowel endometriosis can resemble other chronic bowel diseases including the following:

- Chronic pelvic or lower abdominal pain (most common)
- Painful bloating
- Painful bowel movements
- Constipation
- Diarrhea
- Altered bowel habits
- Nausea and/or vomiting
- Rectal bleeding (rare)

Besides GI symptoms, what else to ask?

- How long have you been diagnosed with IBS?
- Do you notice the GI symptoms before or during your menses?
- Have you ever been diagnosed with endometriosis?

- Have you had a transvaginal ultrasound?
- Any painful menstruation, painful during sexual intercourse, or painful urination?
- Any history of multiple miscarriages?
- Any family history of endometriosis?



Rule out Differentials

It is important to rule out and assess for other potential differential diagnoses.

These include the following:

- IBS
- IBD
- Appendicitis
- Diverticulitis—including symptomatic diverticular disease and diverticular bleed
- Colitis
- Small bowel obstruction (SBO)
- Colon or rectal cancer

Some studies show, however, that patients with an established diagnosis of endometriosis have a higher likelihood of also being diagnosed with IBS, which brings into question if there could be an endometrial origin of the IBS symptoms instead of two separate conditions.

What is the work-up?

The workup should be done in conjunction with OB/GYN providers who can assess the patient with physical exam and blood work. Otherwise, patients may need transvaginal ultrasound or MRI if ultrasound is inconclusive. MRI has a higher specificity but a lower sensitivity than a transvaginal ultrasound. MRI may also be used as pre-op imaging for endometrial or bowel surgery.

Management

Medical: Hormonal control through contraceptive pills or other hormonal medications such as Gonadotropin Releasing Hormone Agonist. Pain control through medication regimens should also be discussed.

Surgical: Usually chosen for symptomatic patient, and the choice and type of surgery depends on the severity of the case. The type of surgery can range from shaving excision for mild cases, disc excision, or segmental excision for severe cases.

Potential Complications

Complications both from surgically treating bowel endometriosis can include adhesions, small bowel obstruction, or chronic pain. These are also the possible long-term complications of untreated bowel endometriosis as well.

Conclusion

Bowel endometriosis presents with GI symptoms that may be similar to other common GI disorders or conditions. Many women have been misdiagnosed with IBS when in fact they have bowel endometriosis. It is a situation where your patient may have been suffering for years without a diagnosis because they are in need of a complete and thorough evaluation, having been misdiagnosed along the way causing a delay in proper care. It is also important to inform patients that the treatments are not curative but will provide symptom relief.

Reference

Angie Tsuei. Farr Nezhat. Nikki Amirlatifi. Zahra Najmi. Azadeh Nezhat. Camran Nezhat. Comprehensive Management of Bowel Endometriosis: Surgical Techniques, Outcomes, and Best Practices. Retrieved from Journal of Clinical Medicine. Feb 2025. 14(3), 977 J. Clin. Med.2025, 14(3), 977; <https://doi.org/10.3390/jcm140309>

Rocky Mountain GHAPP Chapter Spotlight

Kayla Stoick, PA

The foundation for the Rocky Mountain GHAPP Chapter started in 2017 with the Colorado GI practice, South Denver Gastroenterology. At the time, Natalie Mul, PA-C, asked her hepatologist, Dr. Marcelo Kugelmas, to teach her and her fellow advanced practice providers about complex liver disease. To which Dr. Kugelmas acquiesced, but only if he was fed. After obtaining SDGI board approval, the quarterly liver disease dinners were born.

Dubbed “Liver Ladies” at its inception, thanks to the APPs all being female at the time, hepatology education was the sole focus. The topics were chosen by APPs, for APPs, and taught by colleagues. Researching and creating presentations allowed a deeper insight into the pathophysiology behind the disease and a chance to practice public speaking in a comfortable atmosphere with open discussion and constructive feedback.

Over the past several years, Liver Ladies has morphed into a larger group of APPs, now of all genders, from a variety of practices across the Denver metropolitan area. Now the Rocky Mountain GHAPP Chapter, our presentations range from pharmaceutical sponsored talks to topics on not only Hepatology but general GI and inflammatory bowel disease as well. Our most recent meeting covered small bowel pathology with presentations on small intestinal bacterial overgrowth, Celiac disease, giardia infection, and Whipple’s disease.

Our Rocky Mountain GHAPP chapter meetings offer meaningful professional, educational, and community building benefits. They provide the opportunity to share real-world clinical experience beyond the guidelines and offer a chance to collaborate, develop public speaking skills and network in a supportive environment. Through this group, we are able to strengthen professional community while directly improving patient care in our South Denver area.



LIVER CONNECT

Wrap Up

The 6th Annual Liver Connect 2026 in San Diego this year was a rousing success this year with many of our own in attendance. Here are some snippets from our colleagues about their experiences:

“

Lisa Richards, MSN, FNP-BC

I just attended the plenary session on Met-ALD. This was exceptional and so clinically focused. I loved the panel discussion format. Content focused on clinical practice and application.

“

Andrea Gossard, APRN

The conference began with a heartfelt tribute to the late Dr. Bruce Bacon (1945-2025), a pioneer in the study of liver disease. Dr. Kim Brown did a superb job of recognizing his profound contributions to the science of understanding and treating liver disease. The first afternoon included sessions focused on viral hepatitis, followed by Bootcamps on pediatric cholestatic and autoimmune liver disease. The day wrapped up with a lovely Welcome Reception for all to enjoy.

Day two kicked off with a well-attended APP breakfast! During this time, Patrick Horne shared an update on GHAPP, including the many accomplishments and projects underway! Next were lectures on MASH/MASLD, highlighting the disease burden and risk stratification using non-invasive testing, along with the management of co-morbid conditions. A presentation on the identification and management of Med-ALD wrapped up the morning. The afternoon focused on MASLD and MASH in the pediatric population. Finally, the last session focused on alcoholic liver disease.

We also heard about a Complex Case Journey highlighting the challenges associated with a patient diagnosed with liver disease as a young woman, and pregnancy in the setting of advanced fibrosis. The course wrapped up with a comprehensive summary of the exceptional content from expert speakers, highlighted by Dr. Brown.

“

Summer Collier, DNP, FNP-BC, UCSD Health

Attending CLDF's Liver Connect 2026 was a strong reminder of how valuable conferences are for APP education. The Friday sessions, particularly the panel on MASLD/MASH, moved beyond clinical trial outcomes and into the practical realities we face in clinic - how to thoughtfully use NITs for risk stratification, when to initiate therapy, how to monitor patients once started, and when dual therapy may be appropriate. Equally impactful was the dedicated MetALD plenary session, which underscored the importance of holistic alcohol use screening across all patients with liver disease, reinforcing that effective care requires breaking down stigma, integrating both subjective and objective assessments, and staying deeply patient-focused.

”

Oyin Penny, NP

The meeting was very informative and offered many clinical pearls that I will quickly be able to apply to practice. Here are some takeaways: In MASLD vs MetALD, Phosphatidylethanol (PeTH) testing should be utilized more consistently when objective measure of alcohol is needed. While provider practices vary regarding alcohol level assessment, there is a broad consensus that PeTH remains underused in clinical settings and represents an opportunity to improve accuracy in evaluating alcohol intake. It was also emphasized that we should adopt measures for better management of Alcohol Use Disorder (AUD). Patient outcome improves better when measures are instituted earlier on. We can use medications such as Acomprosate and Naltrexone are the FDA approved medications for treatment of AUD. Integrated care can also be used for AUD and Alcohol associated Liver Disease (ALD). Binge drinking in the setting of T2DM has increase risk for mortality.

We look forward to seeing more APPs at the 7th Annual Liver Connect to be held February 25-27, 2027 in Red Rock Casino, Las Vegas NV!

www.liverconnect.org

9TH ANNUAL

National Conference

We're thrilled to announce the 9th annual GHAPP conference, scheduled for October 1–3, 2026, at the Gaylord Pacific Resort & Convention Center in Chula Vista, CA. This live event will convene advanced practice providers (APPs) from across the United States for a comprehensive clinical update on treating and managing patients with chronic liver disease and gastrointestinal (GI) disorders.

The conference will cover a range of topics, including viral hepatitis, NASH, cirrhosis, and GI disorders such as IBD, IBS, and CIC. What sets this conference apart from others is its peer-led approach. Expert APPs will lead all the talks, including the plenary sessions, boot camps, and smaller workshop sessions. All the GHAPP faculty hope not only to educate but also to empower and elevate other GI and hepatology APPs!

We will be offering some exciting boot camps this year, including NIT hands-on, IBD (General & Advanced), IBS-C, EoE, Cholestatic, and Motility. In addition to having our boot camps again this year, we wanted to ensure our APP colleagues who work inpatient have sufficient learning, so there will be an Inpatient Summit on GI & Hepatology.

Some additional social events this year will include our Posters and Prosecco Session on Thursday, October 1st, from 6 PM–7 PM, and a networking event on Friday evening! We hope to see you there!

Registration Open Now!



Visit
[www.ghapp.org/
annual-conference](http://www.ghapp.org/annual-conference)

Regional Conference Series

Hot Topics in Chronic Liver Disease and GI Disorders

**Earn up to a maximum of 2.0 AAPA Category 1 CME credits,
or 2.0 ANCC nursing contact hours!**

We are pleased to announce the GHAPP Regional Conference series, which will take place in major cities such as Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, Denver, Los Angeles, Miami, New Orleans, New York, San Antonio, San Francisco & Scottsdale. These 3-hour CME-accredited dinner meetings will highlight “HOT” topics in chronic liver diseases and GI disorders, including IBD, MASH & PBC. Registration is open for these live events.

We hope to see you at the annual conference or one of our regional events for an enriching and educational experience!

Upcoming dates & locations

Los Angeles, CA – May 14, 2026

Boston, MA – May 14, 2026

San Antonio, TX – June 4, 2026

Denver, CO – June 11, 2026

Cleveland, OH – July 9, 2026

Chicago, IL – July 16, 2026

San Francisco, CA – August 20, 2026

Scottsdale, AZ – October 22, 2026

New York, NY – November 12, 2026

Miami, FL – November 19, 2026

New Orleans, LA – December 3, 2026

**REGISTER
NOW!**



**[www.ghapp.org/
regionals](http://www.ghapp.org/regionals)**

National Conference Call for Abstracts

Imagine this: you have a great insight to exchange – maybe it's a success story, a case study with unexpected outcomes, or a pilot study, to name a few – and now you are ready to share this with others. ***That's where an abstract comes into play.*** It is a brief but precise statement of the issue or problem, followed by a description of what you did or designed, your major findings, and the conclusions you reached.

Submitting an abstract is a meaningful way to contribute to your field while strengthening your professional profile. It builds credibility, supports career growth, and creates opportunities for collaboration. Most importantly, it helps share insights that can enhance patient care and advance clinical practice.



You are invited to submit your abstract for the GHAPP 2026 Annual Meeting!

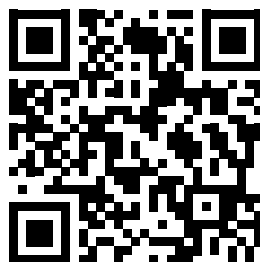
Deadline: Friday, August 28, 2026

Event: 9th Annual GHAPP Conference

Posters and Prosecco Session: Thursday, October 1 | 6:00–7:00 PM

Submit your abstract:

www.ghapp.org/call-for-abstracts



Click the link or scan the QR code to get started!

APP Excellence Award Nomination Form

We are excited to invite you to nominate a deserving colleague or friend for the GHAPP Advanced Practice Provider Excellence Award! This award recognizes advanced practice providers (APPs) who have demonstrated exceptional leadership, clinical expertise, and dedication to improving patient care. Whether through innovation, mentorship, or outstanding contributions to the healthcare field, we want to celebrate those who go above and beyond. If you know an APP that consistently exemplifies these qualities, we encourage you to submit a nomination and help us honor the remarkable impact they have on the profession.

One APP Excellence Award in Gastroenterology and one in Hepatology will be presented at the National Conference on Saturday, October 3rd, before the plenary session.

NOMINATION FORMS DUE BY JUNE 30, 2026.



**SCAN HERE TO
NOMINATE**



Step Up to GI Scholarship Program

We are excited to announce the **Step Up to GI Scholarship Program!** This year, we are offering a scholarship opportunity for APPs to attend the **National Conference**, held from October 1–3 at the Gaylord Resort in Chula Vista, CA.

GHAPP recognizes the vital importance of educating and guiding the next generation of APPs entering the fields of Chronic Liver Disease (CLD) and GI disorders. This scholarship provides a unique platform for APPs to network with over 1,300 peers and industry leaders.



What the Scholarship Covers:

- **Travel:** Up to \$500 in airfare.
- **Lodging:** Complimentary hotel accommodation (booked on your behalf).
- **Registration:** Free conference registration.
- **All-Inclusive:** All conference meals, beverages, and access to exclusive networking events.

How to Apply:

To be eligible, candidates must complete the GHAPP Scholarship course on the new Step Up to GI platform by **June 30th**.

1. Create an Account OR log in:

- <https://astepuptogi.focusmeded.com?KeyName=AStepUptoGI>
- If you are unable to register with your email, you likely have an existing account. Please contact dartigliere@focusmeded.com for assistance.

2. Onboarding: Follow the quick sign-up process and accept the terms of use.

3. Complete the Course: The GHAPP Scholarship course will automatically load onto your main dashboard.

4. Submit Application: Once you have viewed all the course videos, please fill out the application form included at the end of the module.

We look forward to seeing your applications and supporting the continued growth of APPs in the GI community!

Trivia Answers

Question 1: C)

Persistent SIRS beyond 48 hours

Question 2: D)

Esophageal varices

Question 3: C)

PNPLA3 I148M

PNPLA3 I148M is a well-known genetic risk factor for progression of MASLD to MASH and cirrhosis.

For more information, please visit:

www.ghapp.org



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