

# **UW-Madison School of Medicine and Public Health: Tamara Scerpella to become chair of orthopedics and rehabilitation**

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MADISON, Wis. – Dr. Tamara Scerpella, a nationally renowned orthopedic surgeon, academic leader, mentor and researcher, will become the next chair of the Department of Orthopedics and Rehabilitation at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health.

Scerpella has provided leadership for the clinical and academic programs in the department in prior roles, having served as chief of its division of sports medicine, vice chair, senior vice chair and interim chair. She has emphasized exceptional patient care while advancing the department's residency and fellowship programs, research enterprise and faculty development initiatives.

The school's Department of Orthopedics and Rehabilitation houses more than 50 faculty whose clinical interests include arthroplasty, foot and ankle, hand, musculoskeletal oncology, pediatrics, spine, sports, trauma and physical medicine and rehabilitation. Its orthopedic program has been consistently ranked first in Wisconsin by U.S. News & World Report and frequently ranks in the top 20 programs nationally.

Faculty provide clinical care for every type of musculoskeletal disorder and offer highly specialized care, such as hip preservation, pediatric orthopedics, orthopedic oncology, sports medicine, spine surgery, pain management and rehabilitation.

"I hope to accelerate the expansion of the department's clinical, research and

education missions while promoting the vision of the school and our academic health system,” Scerpella said. “I am proud of our department and look forward to supporting our faculty, staff and learners in our continuous evolution as a leading department of orthopedics and rehabilitation.”

Scerpella is a national expert in arthroscopic shoulder and knee surgery. An accomplished researcher, she leads a longitudinal study evaluating the impact of youth physical activity on bone health across the lifespan. This study, which Scerpella began early in her career, is now the longest and one of the most robust of its kind. Her research group has shown that physical activity during childhood and adolescence improves bone health in adulthood. As senior vice chair, she spearheaded efforts for researchers to acquire high-quality data on patient outcomes, inspiring faculty to improve patient care through research and clinical trials.

Scerpella strives to be a role model for women in medicine and advocates for gender diversity in the department and nationally, particularly in orthopedic surgery, which is the least diverse of all medical specialties. Only 6% of practicing orthopedic surgeons in the United States are women, according to data reported by the Association of American Medical Colleges, but through Scerpella’s mentorship and leadership, women now comprise 30% of orthopedic surgeon faculty and 37% of total faculty in the department.

Scerpella earned her bachelor’s degree at the University of Iowa, where she competed as a Division I gymnast, and her medical degree from the University of Iowa Carver College of Medicine. In 1985 she first came to Wisconsin for her residency in orthopedic surgery at UW Hospitals and Clinics. After three years in private practice in Monroe, Wisconsin, she completed a fellowship in sports medicine and arthroscopic surgery at Union Memorial Hospital in Baltimore. She was a member of the faculty at the State University of New York Upstate Medical University in Syracuse for 16 years before returning to UW-Madison in 2010.

Scerpella holds the Ballantine Endowed Professorship for Orthopedic Research. Among other accolades, she has earned the UW-Madison Slesinger Award for Excellence in Mentoring and the Woman in Science Award from the American Medical Women’s Association.

Scerpella is exceptionally well positioned to chart the exciting future of the department, which positively impacts the mobility and well-being of thousands of

patients each year, according to Dr. Robert N. Golden, dean of the UW School of Medicine and Public Health.

“I am confident that Dr. Scerpella will be an exceptionally impactful chair of this vitally important department,” he said. “Her experience in improving clinical outcomes and advancing academic missions, while increasing the diversity of the department, will provide an outstanding foundation for her new leadership role.”