

An impressionistic painting of a face, focusing on the eyes and upper part of the face. The style uses thick, visible brushstrokes in a palette of blues, greens, yellows, and browns. The background is a mix of these colors, creating a textured, almost abstract effect.

**Rhode Island Hospital  
Department of Ophthalmology**

*8th Annual*  
**Sunil Rao, MD  
Memorial Lecture**

A close-up, impressionistic painting of a face, focusing on the eyes and upper part of the face. The style uses thick, visible brushstrokes in a palette of blues, greens, yellows, and browns. The background is a mix of these colors, creating a textured, almost abstract effect.

**October 8, 2020  
7:00–8:30 pm  
Video Conference**

## Annual Sunil Rao, MD Memorial Lecture



**Sunil Rao, MD**

### Welcome to the 8th Annual Sunil Rao, MD Memorial Lecture

Sunil Rao, MD, was a disciplined, dedicated, and successful young physician. Elected to Alpha Omega Alpha as a junior, he was incredibly passionate about providing the very best care to his patients, and equally passionate about educating the next generation

of great physicians. Rhode Island Hospital is proud to include Sunil as a distinguished alumnus of our residency program and was honored to have him return to join the teaching faculty. His untimely passing leaves a void difficult to fill.

The Rao family and the Department of Ophthalmology at Rhode Island Hospital established this memorial endowment in Dr. Rao's name to create a meaningful tribute to honor Sunil's legacy of extraordinary care, dedication to teaching, and friendship.

The Sunil Rao, MD Memorial Fund is an ideal mechanism to honor alumni and distinguished faculty and friends of the Department of Ophthalmology at Rhode Island Hospital. Your gifts help us to fulfill its purpose to afford the necessary resources for these important programs in perpetuity.

We are honored to have Jason Comander, MD, PhD, as the 2020 Sunil Rao, MD Memorial Lecturer.

## 2020 Lecture

### Michael E. Migliori, MD, FACS

*Ophthalmologist in Chief*

### Program Coordinators

Kimberly V. Miller, MD, *Residency Program Director*

Wendy Chen, MD, PhD, *Associate Program Director*

Paul Greenberg, MD, *Associate Research Coordinator*

### Sunil Rao, MD Memorial Lecture, via Zoom

7:00–7:05 Michael Migliori, MD

*Introduction of Dr. Jason Comander*

7:05–8:20 Jason Comander, MD, PhD

*Gene Therapy for Inherited Retinal Disease*

8:20–8:30 Program concludes



### Jason Comander, MD, PhD

Jason Comander, MD, PhD, received his undergraduate degree from Harvard College and his MD from Harvard Medical School. He served his ophthalmology residency and Vitreoretinal Surgery fellowship at the Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary. His clinical interests include inherited retinal disorders such as retinitis pigmentosa and Stargardt disease.

He is a clinician-scientist whose research primarily focuses on the genetics and treatment of inherited retinal diseases. He has studied the genetic basis of distinct forms of retinitis pigmentosa, investigated methods to assay the functional significance of human mutations, and tested techniques for retinal gene therapy in primates. He also is an investigator and surgeon for several ongoing clinical trials for patients with inherited retinal disorders.

Dr. Jason Comander is a member of the Mass. Eye and Ear Inherited Retinal Disorders Service and Retina Service, where he specializes in diagnosing and treating inherited retinal diseases. He is also a member of the Ocular Genomics Institute, the Berman-Gund Laboratory for Retinal Degenerations, and the Howe Laboratory.

In 2012, Dr. Comander received the highly competitive K12 Mentored Clinical Scientist Development Program Award from the National Institutes of Health. He also holds a Career Development Award from Research to Prevent Blindness and an Enhanced Career Development Award from the Foundation Fighting Blindness.



PHOTOGRAPH BY  
MICHAEL E. MIGLIORI, MD, FACS  
SEPTEMBER 2019  
*Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam,  
Self-Portrait in Felt Hat, 1888,  
by Vincent Van Gogh*



## Rhode Island Hospital

*A Lifespan Partner*

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