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CMS NEWS

The Chicago Medical School Newsletter

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Cover Image: Soumi Santra, Jennifer Smith, Alecia Cherney, and Antra Das, CMS Class of 2023, celebrate their residency placements on Match Day.

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Dean's Message



Greetings from the Dean's Office!

It is a busy time on campus and beyond as we prepare for commencement week! The Class of 2023 will be graduating on June 2, and leading up to that day, we will be celebrating their academic and clinical accomplishments this week in a series of events, including the Alpha Omega Alpha Induction Ceremony, the Gold Humanism Honor Society Induction Ceremony, and the University Awards Reception. I give my sincere congratulations to the Class of 2023 for

not only completing their medical degrees, but doing so while also gaining distinction in research, serving the community in meaningful ways, and being outstanding examples of compassionate and humanistic care, among many other accomplishments.

In my message last quarter, I mentioned my anticipation for the approaching Match Day, a momentous day when our graduating seniors discover where they will be completing the next phase of their medical careers. I'm delighted to share the results of our March 17 celebration. The Class of 2023 achieved a 99.4% match rate, which includes the students who participated in the military and ophthalmology matches with a 100% early match rate. We celebrated these excellent results with a hybrid event, so parents, mentors, and loved ones in Rhoades Auditorium and around the world could share in the festivities.

As we get ready to say goodbye to our graduates, it is also a time for new beginnings as we prepare for the future Class of 2027. We welcomed 75 potential members of this class to our campus on April 21-22 for Admitted Student Weekend, a series of events where admitted students could engage with our alumni, current students, faculty, and staff; learn about research opportunities; tour one of our clinical affiliates; and hear firsthand experiences from student volunteers in the Interprofessional Community Clinic.

Another exciting beginning is the launch of a new academic affiliation to expand clinical opportunities for our students. Our recent partnership with Ascension Illinois will provide clinical rotations in Ascension Illinois' Health System, which encompasses 14 hospitals and more than 150 sites of care across the Chicago area. I look forward to witnessing the new research and educational opportunities this affiliation will bring for our students as we

continue to prepare future healthcare leaders to care for our communities.

Moving on to some alumni news, three CMS alumnae participated in the American Medical Women's Association's Woman to Woman Soirée, an event organized by our students with help from the alumni office. Mila Felder, MD '02, Mahreen Majid, MD '08, and Kaitlyn Egan, MD '18, shared their experiences and advice with students during this annual celebration of women supporting women in medicine. It was wonderful to connect with these alumnae and witness them providing support and encouragement to the next generation of women in medicine.

I'll conclude with faculty and administration news. I extend my congratulations to Dr. Jeanette Morrison, Executive Vice Dean for CMS and Vice Dean for Medical Education, who recently completed the Hedwig van Ameringen Executive Leadership in Academic Medicine® (ELAM) program. This very competitive nationwide program offers an intensive one-year fellowship of leadership training with extensive coaching, networking, and mentoring opportunities aimed at expanding the national pool of qualified women candidates for leadership in academic medicine, dentistry, public health, and pharmacy.

This is the second time a member of the CMS administration has had the opportunity to participate in this wonderful leadership program. Last year, Dr. Mildred M.G. Olivier, who was our Assistant Dean of Diversity and Inclusion at the time, completed the ELAM program. Although Dr. Olivier has since departed from CMS to become the founding campus dean of Ponce Health Sciences University's new Doctor of Medicine program at its regional campus in St. Louis, I'm proud that Chicago Medical School has been able to support two of our women faculty in their efforts to build the leadership and management skills needed for the future of health care.

In other faculty news, we recently bid farewell to Dr. Sandra LaBlance, CMS Senior Associate Dean for Student Affairs. I wish Dr. LaBlance success as she

pursues her interests and aspirations. Dr. Nutan Vaidya is currently leading a nationwide search of candidates for our next Student Affairs Dean, while Dr. Morrison temporarily oversees the Office of Student Affairs functions to provide a seamless transition for our students.

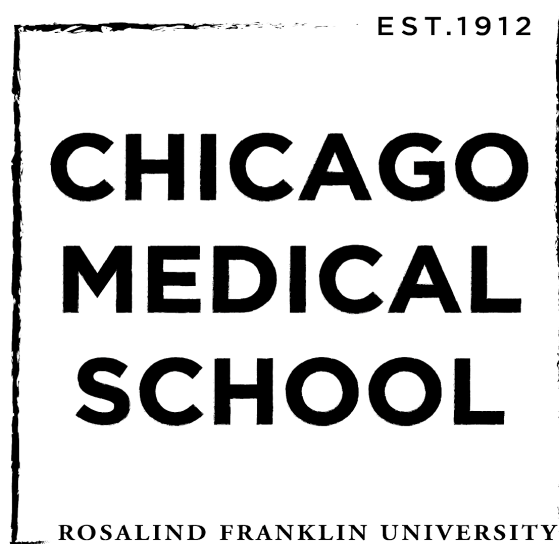
This is an exciting time of changes and transitions on campus. As we say goodbye to one class and prepare to welcome another, as our graduating students go off to begin their residencies in new cities and states, and as our rising M3 students begin their first clinical clerkships, I wish all of them success in the next phases of their education and careers.

I wish all our students, faculty, staff, alumni, and friends a happy summer, and I look forward to what the next academic year will bring.

Sincerely,



Archana Chatterjee, MD, PhD
Dean, Chicago Medical School
Vice President for Medical Affairs, RFUMS





Match Day

Fourth-year medical students celebrated Match Day on March 17, marking the culmination of years of hard work and intense study. CMS students joined graduating medical students across the country in simultaneously opening their envelopes (or NRMP emails, in the cases of those celebrating remotely) to reveal their residency placements, discovering where they will be completing the next phase of their education.

For the Class of 2023, the event was a celebration of achievement in the face of unexpected challenges

and unforeseen circumstances. The students were in their first academic year when COVID-19 was declared a global pandemic, and each of their four years of medical school was impacted in some way by the pandemic and its aftereffects.

“Our students stand on the brink of fulfilling their calling — a lifelong commitment to caring for others,” said CMS Dean **Archana Chatterjee, MD, PhD**. “Similar to medical students across the country, they were confronted with major adjustments demanded by COVID safety protocols, including



hybrid learning, online classes, disruptions to clinical rotations, and virtual residency interviews.”

Jeanette Morrison, MD, FACP, CMS Executive Vice Dean and Vice Dean for Medical Education, asked students to pause to consider the dedication, sacrifice, and hard work that had led them to that moment.

“You have all grown and changed, adapted and persevered, and developed empathy, compassion, and resilience beyond what is typical for a medical student,” she said. “You have taken those qualities and incorporated them into who you will be as physicians. We have seen these qualities in all of

you, and so have close to 200 residency program directors from all over the country.”

Tim Bauer, president of the Class of 2024, addressed his classmates to talk about the importance of embracing difficult experiences, such as the rigors of medical school and the additional challenges created by the pandemic, and viewing those difficulties as opportunities to develop and grow.

“We had a new environment we had to study in, and we had to learn in different ways,” he said. “So our first lesson of medical school was that we had to adapt. We had to be flexible, and we had to find ways to be successful in difficult situations.”



Tim congratulated his classmates on their successes and encouraged them to remain confident in their abilities. “Don’t forget to believe in yourself and don’t forget to value yourself,” he said, “because the envelope you’re about to get shows that a residency believes in you and values you enough to train you for years to come.”

Chicago Medical School achieved a 99.4% match rate, with internal medicine, emergency medicine, psychiatry, and anesthesiology among the top specialties chosen by the Class of 2023. Graduates will train at hospitals, university health systems, and medical centers across the country, including

Harbor-UCLA Medical Center, Yale-New Haven Hospital, University of Chicago Medical Center, McGaw Medical Center of Northwestern University, John H. Stroger, Jr. Hospital of Cook County, Loyola University Medical Center, Johns Hopkins Hospital, Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, Stanford Health Care, and Mayo Clinic School of Graduate Medical Education. Five graduates will be staying at RFU after matching into one of Chicago Medical School’s residency programs.

Congratulations to the Class of 2023! ■



American Medical Women's Association *Woman to Woman Soirée*



The AMWA executive board members at the event. From left to right: Angelica Bartler, CMS '26, M1 Representative; Angela LeDonne, CMS '25, Vice President; Nandita Gupta, CMS '25, President; Radhe Parikh, CMS '25, Community Outreach Chair; Nancy Shrestha, CMS '26, M1 Representative; Sydney Beasley, CMS '26, M1 Representative; and Maria Schmidt, CMS '25, Treasurer.

On March 5th, the CMS chapter of the American Medical Women's Association (AMWA) held its annual Woman to Woman Soirée for the first time since the pandemic, providing CMS students the opportunity to network with alumni and learn from their experiences. The soirée celebrates women supporting women in medicine with a focus on mentoring, inspiring, and empowering one another.

The event featured a dinner during which CMS students were able to rotate through different

tables to talk and network with the CMS alumni physicians present. Alumni shared their personal stories with students and imparted their expertise and advice. Afterward, the alumni participated in a panel discussion.

Three CMS alumni, **Mila Felder**, MD '02, emergency medicine; **Mahreen Majid**, MD '08, internal medicine hospitalist; and **Kaitlyn Egan**, MD '18, physical medicine and rehabilitation, participated in the event. Students in attendance also benefited from



the knowledge and expertise of a pharmacist who attended the soirée: **Branka Milicev**, PharmD, the Manager of Clinical Pharmacy at Advocate Aurora Health. CMS Dean **Archana Chatterjee**, MD, PhD, was in attendance as well.

The event was organized by the AMWA executive board, led by president **Nandita Gupta**, CMS '25, with assistance from the university's alumni office. During Nandita's presidency, AMWA has hosted several mentorship-related programs, including

an event on advocacy in the workplace and a new mentorship program with Saint Francis College to advise and support undergraduate women interested in pursuing a medical career. Through these events and others, AMWA continues its mission to advance women in medicine through leadership, advocacy, education, expertise, and mentoring. ■

All School Research Consortium

The university held its 18th annual All School Research Consortium (ASRC) on March 15, showcasing research from nearly 100 participants, including RFU students, postdoctoral trainees, resident clinicians, and undergraduate interns. The student-run event featured scientific symposium talks, poster presentations, and a keynote address by Kelly G. Lambert, PhD, MacEldin Trawick Chair and professor of behavioral neuroscience at the University of Richmond. The day concluded with the annual “Art from the Benchtop” exhibit (see opposite page).

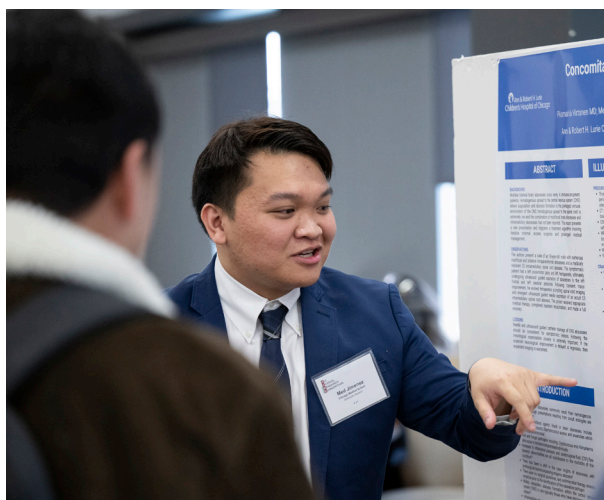
CMS students and residents presented a total of 58 research talks and posters. Congratulations to **Yasmine Choroomi**, CMS '24, who received the CMS award for Best Scientific Poster for her poster titled “Comparison of Metrics between Zoom and Doxy.me in a Student-led Free Clinic,” and **Kaitlyn Alleman**, CMS '25, who received the CMS award for Best Scientific Talk for her presentation “Multimodal Deep Learning-Based Prognostication in Glioma Patients: A Systematic Review.” ■



Yasmine Choroomi, CMS Best Scientific Poster winner



Kaitlyn Alleman, CMS Best Scientific Talk winner



Med Jimenez, CMS '25, presenting his poster

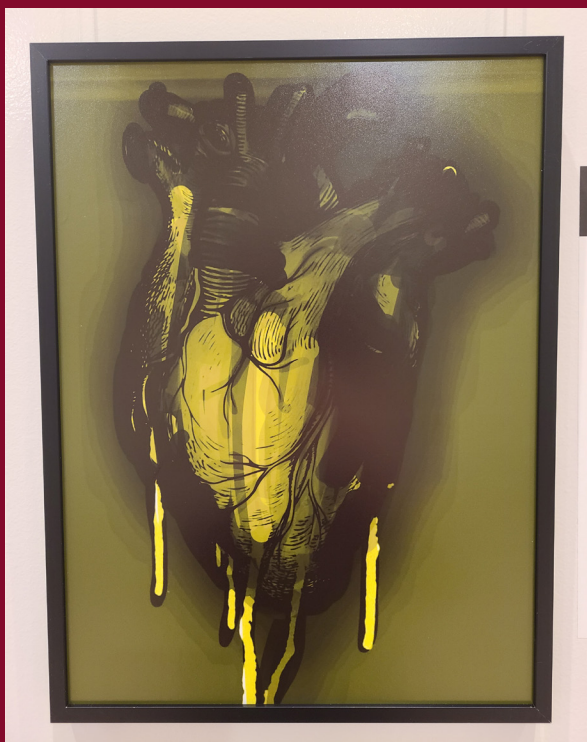


Rianna Flores, CMS '24, presenting her research during the poster session

Art from the Benchtop



Alexandria Ritger, CMS '25, MD/PhD candidate, with her artwork "Artificial Intelligence II."



An artwork by Hetal Patel, CMS '24, titled "Heartache After the Pandemic."

Several CMS students, faculty, and research staff showcased their work in the university's annual "Art from the Benchtop" exhibit, a selection of photography and other creative works produced during or inspired by research being conducted at RFU. CMS researchers who contributed to the exhibit include Eugene Dimitrov, MD, PhD, assistant professor of physiology and biophysics, Center for Neurobiology of Stress Resilience and Psychiatric Disorders; Hetal Patel, CMS '24; Alexandria Ritger, CMS '25; Neelam Sharma-Walia, PhD, associate professor of microbiology and immunology, Center for Cancer Cell Biology, Immunology, and Infection; Lainey Toennies, research technician, Center for Neurodegenerative Disease & Therapeutics; and Kelly Wilson, PhD, postdoctoral research associate in Dr. Johnny He's lab.



FACULTY SPOTLIGHT:

Joanna Dabrowska, PhD, PharmD

Dr. Joanna Dabrowska, associate professor of cellular and molecular pharmacology and neuroscience, was recently spotlighted by CMS Women in Medicine and Science (CMS-WIMS), answering questions about her life and career. CMS-WIMS is an organization that promotes the recruitment, support, and advancement of women faculty, residents, students, and staff in Chicago Medical School through education, mentorship, and other resources.

Tell us a little bit about yourself and how you got to where you are now.

I obtained my PharmD in Poland at the Wroclaw Medical University. I was very interested in Clinical Pharmacology, but there were not many options to pursue this specialty in Poland. Later, I pursued my PhD in Neuropharmacology at the Medical University of Silesia. I came to Emory University where I

completed my postdoc in Dr. Donald Rainnie's laboratory, which was very neuroscience-driven. There, I worked heavily on amygdala functional neuroanatomy. I wanted to gain more experience with electrophysiology and neuroendocrinology, so I sought out a K99 grant, which allowed me the funds and training component to gain experience in electrophysiology. This paved a path towards my independence and opened the door for faculty positions. I eventually accepted a position as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Cellular and Molecular Pharmacology at RFUMS.

Who has had the biggest impact on your career?

There is no single person who had the greatest impact on my choices; I think my career has been shaped by learning from different people. I figured out how I wanted to emulate certain people; in

other circumstances, I learned what I didn't want to bring into my own lab. I took the best and worst from everyone, rather than one specific person. I was strongly influenced scientifically by my two neuropeptide-passionate advisers, Tig Rainnie and my co-mentor, Larry Young. My main support actually came from outside of research; an Emory University Career Advisor motivated me the most and was crucial in helping me assemble my K99 application. My initial program officer from NIH was so helpful and passionate about her job that she helped me beyond grant support. She was someone I would talk to privately about where to take a faculty position. She gave unconventional support and advice that actually went against what my advisor at the time was suggesting.

What is your greatest scientific accomplishment?

It is hard to pick one specific accomplishment, as I believe my career is a bag of accomplishments and failures, small and big; if I had to pick one, then it would be my first grant — K99 award. This is mostly because it happened at a time when I wasn't really sure if I wanted to even be a PI [principal investigator]. At this time, I was also very driven by my side projects that I wanted to pursue, but didn't have time or resources for. So, I put together this grant by myself with very little input from my advisor. When I was funded on my first submission, it changed the whole trajectory of my career. I thought to myself, "Wow, maybe I can actually try doing this!" and I began to apply for jobs. At this point, I was already pursuing more independent research; obtaining this award solidified my drive to pursue a faculty position. I believe "accomplishment" is a continuum and a learning curve, not a single event.

What is one of your biggest failures in science and how did you overcome it?

When I first started applying for faculty positions during the first year of my K99 Fellowship, I had many job interviews, but no job offers. I was very stressed out that I had no offers and began to doubt if I was going to be able to get a job given this level

of competitiveness. I took a step back to identify what I could do to improve. At this point, I realized that I didn't really know how to present myself well and had no formal training in presentation skills; this was not part of my PhD training in Poland. I suddenly realized that I was missing this critical component of my training, so I took time to learn how to present my science in a confident and clear manner and in a way that was easier to digest. I received great advice from a colleague outside of science, a woman in business. She told me to be genuine, which, at the time, blew my mind. She told me to focus on connecting with people and being myself rather than to try to sell my science. I should be presenting as myself and not pretending to be something that I am not. With each subsequent interview, I felt more confident. By the second year of the interview process, I was in a much better place.

How do you balance home and work life? And how has COVID impacted this?

Work-life balance is very tricky. I had someone tell me that they try to address this as work-life integration, instead, because they aren't on opposing sides. I try to be present both at home and at work so that I can be more efficient with both. When COVID first hit, I had a 7-month-old at home and it felt impossible to do the basics. I had already taken on the primary caregiver role during my maternity leave and on weekends, but COVID was the breaking point in which I realized that this wasn't sustainable. So my partner and I split the day in half so each of us had our own time; this allowed us divide responsibilities in a more equitable way. I know that this isn't always the case with other women in academia and that many are having a hard time during these critical periods of their career. Some labs have the funding and manpower to work through the pandemic, but for people transitioning or early on in their career, this is an "at risk" time. The NIH gave a \$50,000 extension to my ROI grant, which was helpful, but we need something more than this one-time short-term solution. This was also "at risk" time for me as my first ROI grant was coming to an end in the

middle of the pandemic. I had a great team in my lab that took years to build and I was very concerned that I'd have to let people go. Juggling (juggling while jogging) a toddler with sleep regressions and grants submissions in the midst of the pandemic was challenging, to say the least. I remember sitting in my daughter's bedroom at night, trying to get her to sleep, and panicking that I still have to cut half a page of my grant for the next-day submission. I am happy to report that after two submissions and several sleep regressions, my ROI renewal is now funded. This was mainly due to the extraordinary work of people in my lab, who collected exceptional preliminary data in the midst of the pandemic. The notice of the award came on my daughter's third birthday — this tells me that the work-life integration might be possible after all, with the help of my supportive partner, who truly shares childcare responsibilities with me.

Have you ever faced prejudices being a woman?

I experienced a lot of sexism as a PhD student and didn't even realize it. There would be fleeting compliments that were clearly inappropriate and incongruous attention during conferences, but at the time, it was so heavily incorporated in the culture that I thought nothing of it. Nobody complained or even talked about it, despite it clearly being a problem. There was also a time when I was working at a biotech company (with a PharmD degree) and my boss came to me to make him a cup of coffee, while there were two other male colleagues in the room with me. It was just how you were treated as younger women in these companies and I realized then that I was not going to stay there. At my faculty job, I haven't experienced a lot of obvious sexism, at least not until I became a mom. I started to feel differently when I came back after maternity leave. I was pumping and I felt overloaded with some of the in-person meetings and service work, which would normally be okay to handle,

but because of my new situation, it felt insane. I would run to my office to pump milk, then run to next meeting for months on end when I asked my supervisors to help. I have to pay a high price to do what I wanted to do and it added to my stress level.

What tips or advice would you give to other women that want to pursue a faculty position?

Definitely follow your passion and drive for research science and medicine. It is normal to doubt yourself, but what helps me is to know that everyone doubts themselves and it is good to remember that. I know that I am not the only person who has imposter syndrome and just because I feel that way, doesn't mean that I am an impostor or I don't deserve to be where I am today. I would also say to follow your gut as well as your passion; I didn't realize how important having a good feeling about a place or choice really is. Follow your instincts, whether it's something good or bad.

What are some fun facts about yourself that are not on your resume?

I have a 3-year-old daughter and I am loving being a mother. I also love hard rock music. My favorite band is Faith No More (favorite album: King for a Day... Fool for a Lifetime). When I want to dance, I go with my beloved Prince (favorite album: Musicology). ■



Researchers in Dr. Dabrowska's lab.

RFU Faculty Awards Ceremony



Rosalind Franklin University held its annual Faculty Awards Ceremony on May 1, in recognition of faculty achievements in research, mentoring, clinical education, and more. Five CMS faculty members received awards during the ceremony. Congratulations to this year's award recipients!

EunJung Hwang, PhD, assistant professor of cell biology and anatomy, received the **Board of Trustees Research Award**, presented to a junior faculty member who has shown promise in research activities, published work, and grantmanship.



Fabio Re, PhD, professor of microbiology and immunology, Center for Cancer Cell Biology, Immunology, and Infection, received the **Morris L. Parker Research Award**, presented for long-term, meritorious research achievement in medicine or related health sciences.



Biana Kotlyar, MD, education director and assistant professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences, received the **Lawrence Medoff Award**, presented for outstanding performance in clinical sciences in the area of research, teaching, and/or clinical care.



Amiel Rosenkranz, PhD, professor of cellular and molecular pharmacology and director of the Brain Science Institute, received the **Rosalind Franklin Award for Excellence in Service**, presented to a faculty member who has made outstanding service contributions to the university.

Melissa Chen, MD, associate professor of medicine and clinical director of the Interprofessional Community Clinic, received the **Deans' Award for Diversity and Inclusion**, presented to a faculty member by the deans for outstanding contributions to the enhancement of the university's culture of diversity and inclusion.

We congratulate these faculty members and thank them for their contributions to RFU and CMS! ■

Photos from top to bottom: Dr. EunJung Hwang. Dr. Fabio Re with Neelam Sharma-Walia, PhD, and Joseph Reynolds, PhD. Dr. Biana Kotlyar with her daughter and Lise Eliot, PhD. Dr. Amiel Rosenkranz with Monica Oblinger, PhD.

The Modern White Coat: A Fluid Symbol



This reflection on the meaning of the white coat was submitted by Keaton Erickson, CMS '24, adapted from a speech he gave during his class's White Coat Ceremony last summer. The White Coat ceremony traditionally takes place at the start of students' first year of medical school, but the Class of 2024's ceremony was delayed two years by the pandemic.

On the eve of my brother's birthday four years ago, my little brother did something that he'd never done before. I was visiting home from college for Thanksgiving, and we were sitting at the bottom of the stairs playing with some toys. Going back and forth, I was playing as the T-Rex, and he was playing with his treasured elephant squad. For some time, we played like this. All of a sudden, he paused, looked at me, and extended one of his elephants.

Stunned, I accepted it gladly and played as one of his elephants for the rest of the time.

My younger brother has Autism Spectrum Disorder, and at this point, he had a mild (teetering on the edge of obsessive) fascination with elephants. They were his life! He had elephant posters, elephant-printed blankets, elephant-related books, and most importantly, his squad of elephant figurines. So...

in that moment, that offer meant more than words could describe. It was a symbol — a symbol of love, of brotherhood, of trust. To the unaware observer, this offer would appear to be no more than a kind gesture. Maybe one of expected social behavior, of sharing. But... to me, this symbol was incredibly meaningful.

I believe this story speaks very directly to the nuance of symbols: they are inherently personal. One symbol, whether it be an object, picture, or event, almost certainly means something different to each individual. This, undoubtedly, is the case when we consider the meaning of the white coat.

My personal perception of the white coat has changed incredibly across my short time in medicine. As a Certified Nursing Assistant working on a medical-surgical nursing unit in North Dakota, I always viewed those walking the halls having donned their white coats as the intelligent leaders of medical care within the hospital, and I desperately wanted to be them. The white coats served as an identifying symbol, where I could see that piece of clothing and immediately understand what role they played within the walls of the hospital.

Flash forward two years, and I am suddenly starting medical school! I've attained the first iteration of what I aspired to be professionally. I am, finally, heading down this medicine path, and in four short years, I will be treating patients!

Well, this self-fulfilling reflection was not this simple. In the midst of this global pandemic, I first put on my white coat in my apartment 15 minutes before a required Zoom session. It was incredibly easy to become disillusioned with this previously superbly important symbol of mine. And not only that, but feelings of personal inadequacy were strong and seemingly unavoidable. It was the first time in my life that when I looked into my future, I wasn't certain about my professional goals. I wasn't certain that I deserved it, that I was meant to be a physician. Imposter syndrome crept into my life and poisoned this strong symbol of mine — the one that I was finally permitted to wear.

But what I've realized since that first moment in my apartment is that symbols and their meanings are demonstrably fluid and personal. Just like my brother offering his elephant for me to take, the white coat must mean different things to different

people at different times. I know that I speak for most of my class when I say that the past three years have revealed things about medicine and the systems in which it exists that have made me pause and question, but my final reflection is one of clarity: How we view symbols like the white coat is open to our interpretation. Although we may have had or presently do have mixed feelings about the white coat and its meaning, we can choose to see it differently. This symbol should be one of transition, of dedication, of responsibility, of duty, and of trust. ■



Keaton at the White Coat Ceremony in May 2022.

M3 Clinical Poster Day

Chicago Medical School held its 8th annual M3 Clinical Poster Day on May 4. During the in-person event (after three years of virtual poster presentations), students from the CMS Class of 2024 presented nearly 80 posters detailing the clinical cases they had encountered during their clerkships.

“Each poster represents a unique journey, a story of discovery, a patient’s story, and an important contribution to the field of medicine,” said **Brenda Affinati**, MD, associate dean for clinical affairs. “As we examine each poster, we see evidence of the countless hours of hard work and dedication that have gone into each project. We see the impact that our scholarly activity has had on the patient outcome and the ways in which our findings may shape the future of health care.”

Congratulations to the following students who received prizes for their oral presentations, the visual appeal of their posters, and overall excellence:

Top 3 Posters for Student Presentation

- **Alexander Freidinger** — “Slowed Speech as Initial Presentation of Early-Onset Dementia”
- **Alyson Brinkman, Govind Verma**, and

Jonathan Lalezari — “Case Study: NF1-Associated Gastrointestinal Stromal Tumor”

- **Adina Dobre** — “The Role of Religious Delusions in Schizophrenia: A Case Report”

Top 3 Posters for Content and Visual Appeal

- **Rianna Flores** and **Sophia Yackel** — “Incidental Improvement of Tardive Dyskinesia Symptoms in Patient Receiving Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation for Treatment Resistant Depression”
- **Gina Martini** — “A Case of Urosepsis in a 63-Year-Old Female with Extensive Drug Allergies”
- **Patricia Bucci** and **Irenhe Harutyunyan** — “Tale of an Infarcted Spleen”

Top 5 Posters for Overall Excellence

- **Bryan Kim** and **Mojeeb Shir** — “A Rare Case of Probable Sporadic Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease”
- **Christopher Cutler** — “Cranial Vault Suspension in Hajdu-Cheney Syndrome”
- **Alexander Chen** and **Alexander Freidinger** — “Removal of Periappendiceal Tubo-Ovarian Abscess During Gender-Affirming Hysterectomy and Bilateral Salpingo-Oophorectomy”



Irenhe Harutyunyan and Patricia Bucci with Dr. Morrison



Anton Ketterer and Kayleen Knoll

- **Anton Ketterer** and **Kayleen Knoll** — “Twin Pregnancy Complicated by Delayed-Interval Delivery to Term”
- **Keaton Erickson** — “A Case of Aggressive NK Cell Leukemia: A Rare and Rapid Malignancy”

executive vice dean for CMS, congratulated all the participants on their presentations. “Your dedication to your patients and your enthusiasm for learning are really evident on the posters that were presented here today,” she said. ■

Before announcing the award winners, **Jeanette Morrison**, MD, vice dean for medical education and



Rianna Flores



Keaton Erickson



Christopher Cutler



Alexander Chen and Alexander Freidinger



Adina Dobre



Bryan Kim and Mojeeb Shir



Govind Verma, Jonathan Lalezari, and Alyson Brinkman

Student Leadership Awards

The university celebrated student leadership efforts on May 4, during the annual Student Leadership Awards. Outstanding individuals and organizations received recognition for their hard work and campus involvement, in areas such as community service, research, mentorship, and diversity and inclusion.

RFU students have been very active on campus, with 18 new student organizations created this academic year. Congratulations to the following CMS-affiliated groups for winning student organization awards:

- The **Orthopedic Surgery Interest Group** received the **Excellence in Educational Service Award**.
- The **RFU Athletics Club** and the **Asian Pacific American Medical Student Association (APAMSA)** won the **Organization of the Year Award**.
- The **American Academy of Developmental Medicine and Dentistry (AADMD)** received the **Rising Diversity, Equity and Inclusion-Focused Organization Award**.
- The **Interprofessional Clinic Initiative**, the student organization responsible for running the university's Interprofessional Community Clinic (ICC), received the **Team Unity Award**.
- The **Philippine Medical Association** won the **New Student Organization Award** after receiving 13 nominations!
- The **Student National Medical Association (SNMA)** received the **Outstanding Diversity Equity and Inclusion Project Award**.

Congratulations to the 16 CMS students who received individual awards during the ceremony!

Christian Arcelona, CMS '26, and **Joseph Rumenapp**, CMS '25, received the **Dr. Rosalind Franklin Rising Student Award**, which recognizes students who are intentionally devoted to the highest standard in programming and have a deep commitment to social justice.

Theodore Okoli, CMS '25, received the **Student Diversity Equity and Inclusion Board Member Award**. Throughout his time on the board, Theodore built relationships between SNMA and other DEI organizations, shared ideas that helped the board and the university, and demonstrated a strong commitment to creating an equitable, inclusive environment at RFU.

Maria Schmidt, CMS '25, and **Nahae Kim**, CMS '23, received the **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Stewardship Award**. Maria was selected for her work with the RFU chapter of the American Medical Women's Association, and Nahae was selected for her leadership role in JEDI (Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion) Students.

Emily Clamp, CMS '23, and **Sahil Sharma**, CMS '25, received the **Stewardship Award**. Emily was nominated for her creation of the CMS M4 mentorship program, which connects M4 student



mentors at CMS with M3 student mentees based on their shared interest in potential specialties. Sahil was nominated for his role as president and founding member of SAMOSA (South Asian Multicultural Organization for Student Activities).

Umar Rehman, CMS '25, received the **Excellence in Sportsmanship Award**. This award recognizes an intramural sports participant or coordinator who has provided excellent leadership, sportsmanship, and service within the intramural program at RFU. Umar was nominated for his leadership and participation in the RFU Running Club for the past two years, consistently demonstrating a positive attitude and sportsmanship both on and off campus.

Nick Quirini, CMS '25, received the **Ambassador for Student Fitness and Wellness Award**. Nick has served as president of the RFU Athletics Club over the past year and has made significant strides in improving the fitness center and improving access to fitness and athletics for all students at RFU.

Abhinav Agnani, CMS '26, received a **Community Member of the Year Award**. This award recognizes a Student Housing resident, nominated by their peers, who has made a significant impact on the residential community.

Emily Terlap, CMS/CHP '23, received an **Excellence in Tutoring Award**. In her time as a peer tutor at RFU, Emily has worked with numerous tutees for one-to-one tutoring, small-group tutoring, and large-group tutoring. In their nomination, the

Office of Academic Support reported that they are incredibly thankful for the tutoring services Emily has provided during her time as a student at RFU.

Taylor Lewis, CMS '23, received the **Outstanding Community Service Award**. Taylor was nominated for her work with the New Life Volunteering Society (NLVS), a free health clinic serving the uninsured of Chicago. Taylor has been involved with the NLVS since her first year as a medical student, and she has organized a great deal of clinic functions, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. Thanks in part to her hard work, the clinic continues to run and serve those who cannot afford health care.

CMS students received half of this year's six **Outstanding Ambassador Awards**. **Lekha Chirala**, **Valerie Shay**, and **Melissa Levin**, all CMS '25, received this award, which recognizes students who have gone beyond the call of duty to promote RFU to prospective students. Lekha, Valerie, and Melissa were selected for their organization, teamwork, willingness to listen, ability to problem-solve, eagerness to help out in times of need, and the hard work they put into the RFU Ambassador Program.

Timothy Bauer, CMS '23, class president, received the **CMS Student Leadership Award**. The Student Leadership Awards recognize awardees for their demonstration of exemplary leadership qualities, including commitment, dedication, and service to the university and the community. ■



CMS Faculty Awards



On February 27, CMS students showed their appreciation of the medical school's faculty and staff with an awards ceremony to recognize outstanding educators. During the student-led ceremony, each class gave out five awards to the faculty and staff who have made the greatest impact on their time at CMS so far.

"We have this ceremony to celebrate and recognize all the hard work that faculty put in this year, but also that happens every year," said **Tim Bauer**, CMS '23, class president. "The truth of the matter is that faculty put in a lot of effort every year, so we have this night tonight to show appreciation and say our thanks."

Each class came up with their own award categories, nominated faculty, and voted to select the winners. "Each class chooses their own way in which they want to present the awards, and no two classes did the same thing," Tim told the faculty members in attendance. "I think that speaks to the uniqueness of each class, but also, to you as faculty, to your ability to impact each class in different ways."

Sandra LaBlance, PhD, then Senior Associate Dean for Student Affairs, spoke to faculty about the

critical guidance, support, and mentorship they provide to students. "As medical educators, our faculty serve as teachers, guiding our students in accessing knowledge, creating understanding, and developing the skill of critical thinking that is needed to become physicians. Our faculty ensure that our students learn the physical skills of becoming a physician — how to examine a patient, how to read an X-ray, how to listen with compassion, and how to provide care to others with competence and kindness equally. As mentors and role models, our faculty provide the nurturing needed for our students to become professionals," she said. "As medical educators, your profession is noble. You are helping people so that they, in turn, will spend their lives helping people."

Congratulations to all the winners! We echo the students' appreciation and gratitude for your dedication to Chicago Medical School and its students.

Awards Given by M1s (Class of 2026)

- Accessibility Award: **David Everly**, PhD
- Enthusiasm and Engagement Award: **Kimiko Suzue**, MD, PhD
- Standout Slides Award: **Marc Glucksman**, PhD

- Lingual Master Award: **Judy Potashkin**, PhD
- Above and Beyond Award: **Dr. Kimiko Suzue**

Awards Given by M2s (Class of 2025)

- Schema Star Award: **Sean Williams**, MD
- Dress for Success Award: **Terrence Li**, MD
- The Human Megaphone Award: **Gary Kirshenbaum**, MD
- Pearls of Wisdom Award: **William Staehle**, MD '11
- Extra Mile Award: **Rosanne Oggoian**, DO

Awards Given by M3s (Class of 2024)

- Most Caring Clerkship Director: **Stuart Kiken**, MD
- Best Medical Student Advocate: **Lisa Cheng**, MD
- Outstanding Administrative Coordinator for Medical Education (ACME): **Gina Hartlaub**
- Energizer Bunny Award: **Phillip Zaret**, MD
- Dress to Kill Award: **Andrew Dahlem**, MD '13

Awards Given by M4s (Class of 2023)

- Teaching Moments Award: **Leo Kelly**, MD, MHA
- Physical Exam Wizard: **Dr. Rosanne Oggoian**
- Champion for Health Equity: **Melissa Chen**, MD
- Most Engaging Education Award: **Dr. Stuart Kiken**
- Extra Mile Award: **Dr. Rosanne Oggoian**

"I want to express the deepest gratitude and appreciation for everything you do," Tim told the faculty when concluding the ceremony. "The difference you make is very genuine, and it's going to be felt for years, for decades, for all of us." ■

Opposite page, from left to right:

Rachel To, CMS '23, presents the Most Engaging Education Award to Dr. Stuart Kiken.

Emily Clamp, CMS '23, presents the Physical Exam Wizard award to Dr. Rosanne Oggoian.

Bryce Alderson, CMS '26, presents the Above and Beyond Award to Dr. Kimiko Suzue.

Student Testimonials

"**Dr. Everly** is dedicated to making himself accessible to the students, and I felt that throughout the entire class, I could always reach out for clarity or support."

"I appreciate how [**Dr. Glucksman's**] slides are able to condense a lot of material down into bite-size pieces."

"**Dr. Suzue** is truly an outstanding professor and I think most of my fellow students would wholeheartedly agree with me... It has been an honor to be one of Dr. Suzue's students, and I hope one day I can have a similar impact on my own students as Dr. Suzue has had on me."

"Whenever we have a question, **Dr. Oggoian** is always ready to help. If we email her, she'll say, 'Next time just text me.' If we text her, she'll say, 'Next time just call me.' She will set up extra practice labs and find ways and solutions for every student to get the training they need in the physical exam."

"**Dr. Cheng** is a fun, kind, and hardworking individual who makes learning about pediatrics incredibly fun. She is very approachable, and goes out of her way to make rounding and lectures an enjoyable experience...She has made such a huge impact on so many students in a matter of six short weeks."

"[**Dr. Dahlem's**] outfits and style can only be described as dapper and spiffy. Congratulations on your personal flair!"

"[**Dr. Chen's**] dedication to not only educating others on health inequities but also acting and addressing these inequities is evident...She is someone who has inspired many in the pursuit of bettering the medical field."

Celebrating Art and Medicine

7th Annual Synapses salon for Chicago Medical School's creative journal

Chicago Medical School held a salon and art exhibit on May 15 to celebrate the release of the seventh volume of Synapses, the school's creative journal, which publishes fine art, photography, poetry, fiction, and non-fiction submitted by CMS students, faculty, staff, alumni, residents, and fellows. The salon featured presentations by **Monica Myers**, CMS '24; **Alex Yoon**, CMS '26; **Kwan Kew Lai**, MD '79, DMD; **Neha Basti**, CMS '25; and **Holly Hunsberger**, PhD, assistant professor, who read poems, reflected on their non-fiction essays, and talked about the background behind their artworks and photographs.

To begin the evening, Monica Myers discussed the inspiration behind her textile artwork titled "Neural Pla'stitch'city," a crocheted depiction of the inner workings of the human brain, which was chosen for the cover of this year's volume. Monica described learning to crochet from her grandmothers, a hobby that became a stress reliever and a creative outlet for her during college and medical school.

"Crocheting as a hobby also provided an excellent foundation upon which to learn very different types of stitching as a medical student," Monica said. "The very same dexterity and attention to detail that I was taught by my grandmothers at their kitchen tables provided skills that helped me learn how to do surgical

knots at the OR table during my surgery clerkship, simple interrupted sutures to repair lacerations during my emergency medicine rotation, and subcuticular closures after C-sections during my ob-gyn clerkship."

Alex Yoon performed his poem "M1 Treading," and alumna Dr. Kwan Kew Lai, an infectious disease specialist and disaster relief medical volunteer, discussed (via a pre-recorded video) her essay "Healthcare in War-Torn Yemen," based on her observations while volunteering at two hospitals in Yemen during the civil war that began in 2014.

To conclude the program, Neha Basti talked about her essay titled "Reflections from the RARE Disease Compassion Program," and Dr. Holly Hunsberger discussed her photograph "Memories," an image of a mouse brain, taken with a microscope, that illustrates the formation of memories.

The creative journal, which takes its name from the junctions between neurons that facilitate the passage of information from one nerve cell to another, celebrates connections — including the connections between doctors and their patients, and between art and science. The full journal can be found at www.bit.ly/synapses2023. The submission cycle for next year's volume will open in the fall. ■



Monica Myers with her artwork which was chosen for the journal's cover.



Alex Yoon performs his poem "M1 Treading."

Classroom to Clerkship Ceremony & Prosector Award



Left: Students from the Class of 2025 celebrate their transition from classrooms to clerkships. Right: Kushagra Gupta receives his Prosector Award certificate; the other two recipients, Erik Knecht and Jocelyn To, attended the ceremony virtually.

On May 16, the Chicago Medical School held a “Classroom to Clerkship” ceremony for the Class of 2025, celebrating and acknowledging the shift in learning environment as the students prepare to begin their clinical clerkships at the start of their M3 year.

Students celebrate their acceptance into medical school with a White Coat Ceremony, and they celebrate their graduation from medical school with a commencement ceremony. But in between, another milestone is celebrated: the transition from lecture-based education to clinical education — from learning mostly in a classroom to learning mostly at the bedside.

“May you all embrace the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead, with the guidance from your mentors and support from your colleagues,” said **Nutan Vaidya**, MD, vice dean for faculty affairs and equity. “You may encounter uncertainty, self-doubt, or failure during this new phase. But remember: these experience are integral to the learning process, and you should use them as an opportunity to grow as physicians. Congratulations and good luck.”

Paul Jones, MD, CMS learning community mentor, talked to the students about clinical learning and

practice, telling them that they would be part of a team working toward the goal of efficient, compassionate care for their patients. “You’ll do whatever it takes to get your patient the care they need, when they need it,” he said.

This joint ceremony also included the bestowing of the medical school’s inaugural Prosector Award for performance during the M2 Advanced Regional Dissection Elective. This new award was funded by CMS alumnus **Mervyn Sahud**, MD ’64, who wanted to support an award that would honor CMS students who had done well in anatomy.

“We created this award to acknowledge the team of students who performed the best dissection in their elective and who also worked well as a team together, were great leaders to their M1 student assistants, and demonstrated the qualities that we want to encourage in our future medical professionals,” said **Anne Lee**, MD ’08, PhD ’07, co-course director for the elective.

Congratulations to the winning team of students: **Kushagra Gupta**, **Erik Knecht**, and **Jocelyn To**, all CMS ’25, who were chosen for their exemplary skills in cadaver dissection, advanced understanding of clinical anatomy, and teamwork. ■

Interprofessional Corner

A place to highlight IP work, opportunities, research, and other news

In honor of National Interprofessional Healthcare Month, CMS held a contest for the best IP reflections! The two winners received Amazon gift cards. Congratulations to both winners!



First Place Winner:

Sophia Yang, CMS '23

Sophia reflected on her experience during her inpatient psychiatry rotation. She recognized the value of interprofessional team meetings and shared gratitude

for the diverse expertise of the healthcare team. Through this experience, Sophia gained a greater understanding of the importance of communication among healthcare professionals. She indicated how to apply this knowledge to improve patient outcomes in future practice.



Second Place Winner:

Tommi Tsao, CMS '26

Tommi reflected on participating in the Interprofessional Team Immersion Experience (IPTI). He acknowledged appreciation for interactions with [not only] other health professions

students but also the opportunity to collaborate with students and faculty from the University of New England. Through this experience, Tommi learned the importance of care coordination.

CMS students and faculty, with their interprofessional peers, presented at national conferences focused on IP learning and patient care:

Melissa Chen, MD, medical director of the Interprofessional Community Clinic (ICC) and

associate professor of medicine, and **Lauren Gard**, MPH, CMS '23, former ICC president, presented “Four Services Under One Roof: Communication Lessons Learned from an Interprofessional Practice at a Student-Led Free Clinic” at the National Academies of Practice annual conference and forum, held in April in Washington, DC. Co-authors included Danielle Candelario, PharmD; Khyati Patel, PharmD; **Claire Scott**, MD '20; and Kristin Schneider, PhD. At the forum, Dr. Chen was recognized as a National Academies of Practice (NAP) Distinguished Fellow of Medicine.

An interprofessional group of JEDI (Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion) students presented the workshop “Health Equity Discussion Facilitation Training: A Novel Student-Led Theater-Based Workshop” at the annual virtual National Collaborative for Education to Address the Social Determinants of Health (NCEAS) conference.

Alexander Ellyn, CMS '25, presented for the JEDI group that also included **Neha Basti**, CMS '25; **Abi Pont**, CMS '23; **Caroline Madigan**, CMS '25; **Nahae Kim**, CMS '23; **Lauren Gard**, CMS '23; **Emily Terlap**, CMS '23; Viral Mistry, SGPS '24; and faculty **Melissa Chen**, MD, and **Heather Kind-Keppel**, EdD, executive director of diversity and inclusion.

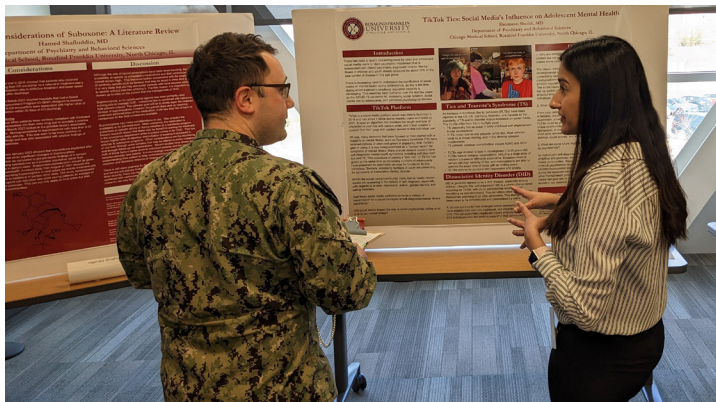
Caroline Madigan, CMS '25, presented the poster “Developing A Longitudinal Health Equity Course: A Faculty-Student Collaboration” at the NCEAS conference on behalf of the JEDI team that also included **Lauren Gard**, **Nahae Kim**, **Alexander Ellyn**, and **Dr. Melissa Chen**.

Dr. Melissa Chen presented the poster “That Was Then, This Is Now: A Succinct Reference to Inclusive, Patient-Centered Language” at the NCEAS conference. ■

Graduate Medical Education (GME) News

Psychiatry Poster Competition

CMS psychiatry residents presented their research at the 16th annual poster competition on April 13. Residents displayed 26 posters which were judged by faculty. First, second, and third place winners will be announced during the upcoming psychiatry graduation dinner in June. ■



PGY-1 Shermeen Sheikh, MD, presents her poster to LT Charles Mitschow, MD, CMS faculty who works at the FHCC.



The residents who presented posters, along with some of the judges and guests.



PGY-1 resident Ria Datta, MD, presents her poster to Dr. Archana Chatterjee and Dr. Nutan Vaidya.



PGY-4 residents Ali Khoshkish, MD, and Daniel Wasserman, MD, present their poster to Dr. Charles Burda, CMS faculty who works at the FHCC.

Graduate Medical Education (GME) News

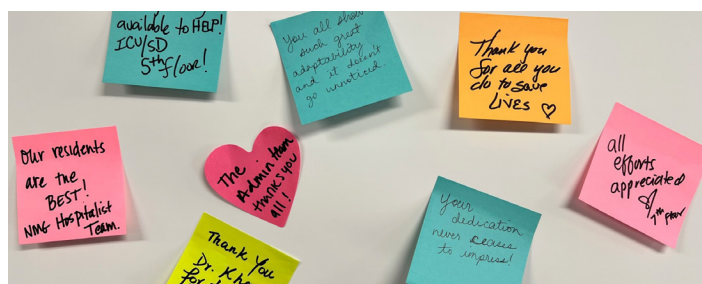
Resident Appreciation

Chicago Medical School's residency programs celebrated residents on National Thank a Resident Day — an annual day, led by the Gold Humanism Honor Society (GHHS), to recognize resident physicians and their contributions to medicine. This year some of our GHHS-nominated medical students volunteered to deliver special banners to our residency program sites to show the school's appreciation, gratitude, and support for our Internal Medicine and Psychiatry residents.

This day of appreciation happened to overlap with the psychiatry residency's quarterly wellness event, which was an afternoon of fun at Dave & Busters. The residents were able to celebrate National Thank a Resident Day while also enjoying some food and games! ■



Mount Sinai Hospital



Doctors at Northwestern Medicine McHenry decorated their banner with notes of appreciation and gratitude for residents.



Aaron Dyson, CMS '24 (left), with CMS residents and faculty at Weiss Memorial Hospital.

Graduate Medical Education (GME) News



Psychiatry residents at Dave & Busters



Tokens of appreciation for psychiatry residents

Other GME News



Dr. Ria Datta



Dr. Gary Wu

Two psychiatry residents participated in the American Psychiatric Association annual meeting, held May 20-24

in San Francisco. **Ria Datta**, MD, PGY-1, was part of a team presenting during one of the 90-minute symposia. Her topic was “Mental Health Stigma and its Implications Among the Ukrainian Immigrant Population.” Dr. Datta’s mentor is Dr. Aida Mihajlovic.

Gary Wu, MD, PGY-2, presented a poster at the conference on the topic “Safety of Antipsychotic Long Acting Injectable Use During Pregnancy: A Review with Considerations for Clinical Practice.” Other contributors to the poster included **Ghulam Mujtaba**, MD, PGY-2; **Jackie Rajani**, MD, R '21; and **Nishaan Nagarakanti**, DO, R '21.

The CMS/FHCC Internal Medicine Residency is proud to announce its chief residents for the next year! **Todd Johnson**, MD, PGY-4, will be joining us next year as our Designated Chief Medical Resident. We’re happy to watch Dr. Johnson continue to develop as a leader and we’re glad he will be growing right here with us. Two Associate Chiefs were selected from the Class of 2024: **Christopher Park**, MD, PGY-3, and **Aamani Bavanasi**, MD, PGY-3. ■



Dr. Todd Johnson



Dr. Christopher Park

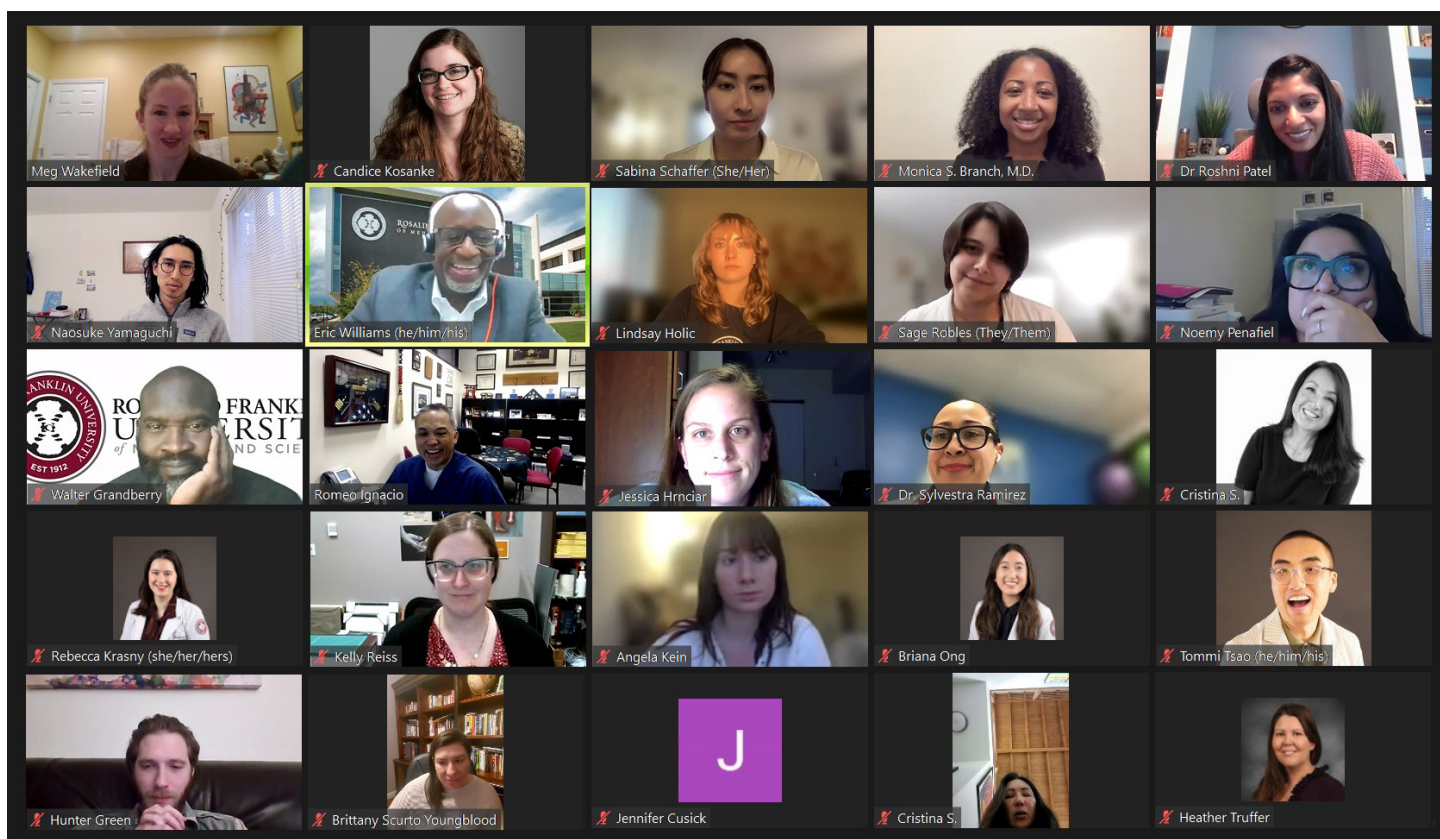


Dr. Aamani Bavanasi

Alumni News

Support for First-Generation Students in Health Care

RFU alumni shared their experiences and challenges they encountered as first-generation or non-traditional medical students.



Several CMS alumni shared their experiences in an interprofessional panel discussion for RFU students on the topic “Navigating Health Professions Education as a First-Generation, Non-Traditional Student.” The virtual event was presented by the university’s Division of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) and the Office of Alumni and Student Engagement.

Unlike students whose parents or other relatives attended college, first-generation college students may not be as familiar with the “landscape” of college, including the admissions process, work-

study programs, and navigating the resources available to them. They don’t have family members who can tell them what to expect or help them navigate based on their own college experiences. First-generation medical students — those who are first in their families to attend medical school — are also at a disadvantage compared to medical students with parents, grandparents, aunts, or uncles who are doctors.

First-year medical student **Sabina Schaffer**, CMS ’26, who is not a first-generation medical student, came up with the idea for the panel after talking to

Alumni News

her classmates about their path to medicine. She noticed differences in students' stories regarding the resources they had — or lacked.

"I had family members who were there to help me navigate my way into medicine and help me enter this process with a lot of confidence, and I had a lot of resources," Sabina said during the panel. "I wanted to create a space with this event for mentorship and advice and guidance to everyone who maybe didn't have that from family members, and start that with our RFU community." Sabina, a graduate assistant in the DEI office, worked with the university to organize the event, and she co-facilitated the panel with **Naosuke Yamaguchi**, CMS '26, who is a first-generation medical student.

Participants included CMS alumni **Monica Branch**, MD '17, MS '13; **Romeo Ignacio Jr.**, MD '97, MS '97, MS '93; and **Roshni Patel**, MD '09, along with Sylvestra Ramirez, DPT '10, MS '11, physical therapist, and Brittany Scurto, MS '06, PA-C, physician assistant. The alumni discussed the challenges they had gone through as first-generation students in health care, what they wish they had known about medical school, how to combat imposter syndrome, and the importance of mentors. The panelists also considered how medical schools can help the next generation of first-generation students to increase their chances of success.

"I had a long dream since childhood of being a physician, but it just always seemed unattainable to me," said Dr. Branch, who was a first-generation college student, a first-generation medical student, and a non-traditional student. "I just didn't have those mentors, and I didn't have people in my life that could help me believe that that was possible." Dr. Branch is now an assistant professor and

attending physician at Emory University School of Medicine, where she specializes in physical medicine and rehabilitation.

Dr. Ignacio was also a first-generation college and medical student. After graduating from medical school, he served in the U.S. Navy for 24 years, first as a general surgeon and then as a pediatric surgeon. He is now retired from the Navy and serves as a trauma medical director and the surgical director of the pediatric intensive care unit at Rady Children's Hospital in San Diego.

Dr. Patel, a first-generation medical student, is the daughter of immigrants who had gone to college in India. Although her parents were educated, they did not have any experience with the U.S. education system, and there was no one to help her figure out the system when she decided to go into the medical field. Instead, Dr. Patel said, she relied on friends and counselors. Dr. Patel is now a pediatrician in Orlando, Florida, where she serves as associate medical director at a clinic that provides care to underserved patients in central Florida.

"It's a privilege to find what gives you passion, what brings you happiness, but it's not always a clear-cut path," she said.

Dr. Branch concluded the panel by encouraging students to always seek a lesson from every situation, viewing each challenging experience they face as a learning opportunity and an opportunity to grow. "There's a reason why you have a seat at the table with all the other people who are not first-generation medical students and who have had lots of opportunities that maybe you did not have access to," she said. "But you're here, and you matter. And there's a reason why you're here." ■

Alumni News

L.A. Alumni Visits

CMS Dean Dr. Archana Chatterjee and representatives from the RFU Alumni Office recently connected with CMS alumni living in the Los Angeles Area.



Alumni News

Other Alumni News

Kwan Kew Lai, MD '79, participated in Chicago Medical School's seventh annual Synapses Salon to celebrate the release of this year's volume of Synapses, the CMS creative journal. Dr. Lai prepared a video discussing her humanitarian volunteer work and her essay "Health Care in War-Torn Yemen," which was published in the creative journal.

Dennis Vickers, MD '82, gave an on-campus presentation titled "Career Opportunities and Advancements in the Vaccine Industry" at the invitation of Rho Chi, the College of Pharmacy's academic honor society. Dr. Vickers talked about the diverse career opportunities available in the vaccine industry, including roles in research and development, clinical trials, manufacturing, and distribution.

David Feinberg, MD '89, MBA, chairman of Oracle Health, has joined Oracle's board of directors.

Physicians with ties to CMS returned to the Republic of Rwanda in Africa to collaborate with faculty and students at the Teaching Hospital of Kigali (CHUK). Through an 11-year relationship with the Rwandan Human Resources for Health program, **Cliff O'Callahan**, MD '90, PhD '88, professor of pediatrics at the University of Connecticut School of Medicine and chair of the Department of Pediatrics at Middlesex Health, works to strengthen medical student and residents training. **Lauren (Logan) Costigan**, MD '21, a second-year resident in pediatrics at the University of Connecticut and Connecticut Children's, participated in a global health elective at CHUK, working with Rwanda pediatricians and medical students under the supervision of Dr.

O'Callahan. **Adam Silverman**, MD '98, MS '98, also an associate professor of pediatrics at the University of Connecticut School of Medicine, is involved in multiple pediatric critical care capacity-building programs around the world through the foundation he co-founded (Medical Education Resources Unlimited) and returned to CHUK for the third time to support ongoing development of the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit at the hospital.

Kaleem Malik, MD '96, MS '92, an emergency medicine physician and director of medical disaster response for Humanity First USA, served as part of a medical team traveling to Turkey to provide patient care for people impacted by the devastating earthquakes that struck the Turkey and Syria regions. Dr. Malik later appeared on CBS News Chicago to discuss his experience volunteering in Turkey.

Raffi Hovsepian, MD '01, MS '01, MS '97, was highlighted in *LA Weekly* as one of LA's best plastic surgeons, internationally recognized for his creative artistry, precision, and mastery of his profession.

Kimberley Darey, MD '04, was promoted to president of Elmhurst Hospital, which is part of NorthShore — Edward-Elmhurst Health. Dr. Darey previously held the positions of vice president of medical affairs and chief medical officer at Elmhurst Hospital. ■

Dr. Morrison Completes ELAM Program

Congratulations to **Jeanette Morrison, MD**, Executive Vice Dean for CMS, Vice Dean for Medical Education, and Associate Professor of Medicine, who recently completed the Hedwig van Ameringen Executive Leadership in Academic Medicine® (ELAM) program. The ELAM program offers an intensive one-year fellowship of leadership training with extensive coaching, networking, and mentoring opportunities for women faculty in schools of medicine and other healthcare schools who have shown strong evidence of leadership potential. The program is dedicated to expanding the national pool of qualified women candidates in academic leadership positions in the health sciences.

As an ELAM Fellow, Dr. Morrison has spent the past year working on an Institutional Action Project at CMS that addresses a need or priority of the medical school. In April, she presented a poster on her project, "Expanding Opportunities for Medical Students to Earn Distinction," at the ELAM program's 2023 Leaders Forum in Philadelphia.

Upon graduating from the program, Dr. Morrison joined an alumnae community of more than 1,300 highly accomplished leaders that represent 300 medical, dental, public health, and pharmacy schools from around the world. ■



School and University Events



RFU's 36th annual Dance for Diabetes, held March 18 at the Lakehurst Events Center in Waukegan, Illinois, raised more than \$48,000 to support the university's Interprofessional Community Clinic (ICC), which provides uninsured patients with accessible, quality health care, educational programs, and other supportive resources. The event was organized by the Dr. William M. Scholl College of Podiatric Medicine Class of 2025 and RFU's Interprofessional Clinic Initiative, the student executive board that facilitates the ICC. Pictured above: Megan Mazander, CMS '25, past vice president of the ICC; Manasvi Paudel, CMS '26, current vice president; Caroline Madigan, CMS '26, current president; Radha Patel, CMS '25, past president; and Nick Adimi, CMS '24, CMS student dean.



CMS hosted a commencement ceremony on March 11 for the fourth and fifth graders from AJ Katzenmaier Academy in North Chicago who participated in the CMS Mini Medical School, a multi-week program designed to inspire kids to pursue careers in medicine. Shown above: The cohort of Mini Medical School participants, at AJ Katzenmaier Academy.



The CMS Office of Excellence in Diversity and Inclusion (OEDI) sponsored an OEDI Retreat which included a virtual presentation by keynote speaker David Acosta, MD, Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer for the AAMC. Dr. Acosta's presentation was titled "Breaking the Cycle of Underrepresentation in Medicine."

School & Department News

Awards & Accomplishments

Nandita Gupta, Elizabeth Hofman, and Kurtis Lavelle, all CMS '25, were elected to the executive board of the Illinois Psychiatric Society Medical Student Committee. Nandita and Elizabeth will serve as co-vice chairs and Kurtis will serve as research liaison. The committee was founded in 2021 by a group of medical students from various Illinois medical schools who wanted to develop a network of local medical students interested in pursuing psychiatry.



Nandita Gupta



Elizabeth Hofman



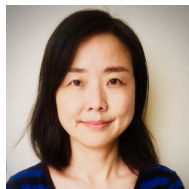
Kurtis Lavelle



Holly Hunsberger, PhD, assistant professor, Center for Neurodegenerative Diseases and Therapeutics, was awarded one of 18 academic grants from Taconic Biosciences to study cognitive reserve in a Tau mouse model. The grant is

in the form of donated animal models and will support Dr. Hunsberger's project titled "Cognitive Training to Enhance Cognitive Reserve in Aging and hTau Mice."

EunJung Hwang, PhD, assistant professor of cell biology and anatomy, Stanson Toshok Center for Brain Function and Repair, was awarded a one-year, \$60,000 Monica Ply



Research Innovation Award for her project "Motor Cortical Cell-Type Specific Intervention in Parkinson's Disease."



Juan Medina-Echeverria, CMS '25, was featured in the *American Heart Association News* article "Medical Student Learned Lesson at an Early Age: 'Health Goes Beyond Medicine,'" in which he discussed his life experiences and

his motivation for pursuing a career in medicine. Juan is currently serving as a scholar in the American Heart Association's National Hispanic Latino Cardiovascular Collaborative, a mentoring program that aims to promote the treatment and prevention of cardiovascular diseases and stroke within the Hispanic community.

Hector Rasgado-Flores, PhD, professor of physiology and biophysics, was selected to receive the Illinois Latino Council on Higher Education (ILACHE) Lifetime Achievement Award, which honors a leader whose lifetime body of work and commitment serves as a model for other educators and whose contributions to Latinos in higher education are inspiring. Dr. Rasgado-Flores received his award during the ILACHE annual conference on April 14 at Malcolm X. College in Chicago.



School & Department News



Fabio Re, PhD, professor of microbiology and immunology, Center for Cancer Cell Biology, Immunology, and Infection, received a five-year, \$2.5 million National Institutes of Health grant for his research study “Role of Non-myeloid Cells’ Pyroptosis in Melioidosis.”

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Jaime Vantrease, PhD, research assistant professor of physiology and biophysics, received the 2023 Dean Franklin Young Investigator Award to support her work on sex differences in BLA-BNST neural circuits contributing to sex-dependent cardiac responses during anticipatory anxiety. The award is presented through the American Physiological Society and established by Data Sciences International.



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Piyush Vyas, MD, associate professor of radiology, was voted president-elect of the Illinois State Medical Society. His term will run through April 2024.



Presentations & Publications

Daniel Benatar, MD, assistant professor of medicine, discussed “Updates in Chronic Heart Failure (CHF) Treatment” as part of the school’s medical grand rounds series. Dr. Benatar is the Director of Non-Invasive Cardiology at Mount Sinai Hospital.

Maureen Benjamins, PhD, adjunct faculty at CMS and senior research fellow at the Sinai Urban Health Institute (SUHI), co-authored two new publications. The first study, “Life Expectancy Gaps Among Black and White Persons and Contributing Causes of Death in Three Large US Cities, 2018-2019,” was done in collaboration with colleagues from SUHI and the AMA, and was published in *JAMA Network Open*. It assessed the causes of death that contributed to the racial gap in life expectancy in three large US cities.



The second article, titled “Cause-Specific Mortality and Racial Differentials in Life Expectancy, Chicago 2018-2019,” was published in the *Journal of Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities*. This study examined the specific causes of death that most contributed to the Black:White gap in life expectancy in Chicago.

Dr. Benjamins was also invited to give a plenary address at the Association for Prevention Teaching and Research conference in New Orleans on March 28. The talk covered research from SUHI’s latest book, *Unequal Cities: Structural Racism and the Death Gap in America’s Biggest Cities*.



Neil Bradbury, PhD, professor of physiology and biophysics, authored a book chapter titled “All Cells Have a Sex: Sex Chromosome Function at the Cellular Level” in the 4th edition of *Principles of Gender-Specific Medicine: Sex and Gender-Specific Biology in the Postgenomic Era* (Academic Press, 2023).

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Dr. Bradbury also gave a talk titled “The Physiology of Murder” at Lake Forest College.

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Yvette Castañeda, PhD, MPH, MBA, assistant professor of humanities and health care and community engagement core lead, Michael Reese Foundation Center for Health Equity Research, authored an article titled “Employment Precarity and Increased Risk of Hazardous Occupational Exposures Among Residents of High Socioeconomic Hardship Neighborhoods,” published in the *Annals of Work Exposures and Health*.

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Archana Chatterjee, MD, PhD, dean of Chicago Medical School, and **Nandita Gupta**, CMS '25, AMWA President, participated in a virtual presentation and panel discussion on March 13 titled “Leadership Pathways and Cultivating Leadership.” The event was organized by the CMS Office of Faculty Affairs and Equity in honor of International Women’s Month and the second anniversary of CMS-Women in Medicine and Science (CMS-WIMS).



Dr. Archana Chatterjee



Nandita Gupta

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Dr. Chatterjee also attended the National Hispanic Medical Association annual conference, held April 27-30 in Chicago, where she presented on the topic “Chicago Medical School’s Century of Educating Students of Diverse Backgrounds.”



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Rachel Chudoba, SGPS '24, a graduate student in the Dabrowska lab, co-authored a publication with **Joanna Dabrowska**, PhD, PharmD, associate professor of cellular and molecular pharmacology, Center for Neurobiology of Stress Resilience and Psychiatric Disorders. The article, titled “Distinct Populations of Corticotropin-Releasing Factor (CRF) Neurons Mediate Divergent Yet Complementary Defensive Behaviors in

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Response to a Threat,” was published in the *Journal of Neuropharmacology* as part of a special issue (of which Dr. Dabrowska was co-editor) on “Fear, Anxiety and PTSD: From Cellular Mechanisms to Translational Approaches.”



Rachel Chudoba



Dr. Joanna Dabrowska



Carl Correll, PhD, associate professor of biochemistry and molecular biology, Center for Proteomics and Molecular Therapeutics, co-authored an article titled “In Vitro Characterization of Dhr1 from *Saccharomyces Cerevisiae*,”

published in *Methods in Enzymology*.

Robin L. Dyer, MD, OTR, assistant professor of internal medicine, along with Marilyn Hanson, EdD, of the College of Health Professions, presented at the Collaborating Across Borders VIII Conference.

Their presentation was titled “What Type of Content and Delivery Fully Engages Healthcare Students in IPE? — A 17 Year Retrospective Study.”

Tamzin Ritchie, BSc, research specialist, also contributed to the research presented at the conference.



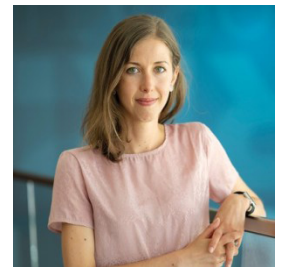
Dr. Robin Dyer



Lise Eliot, PhD, professor of neuroscience, Stanson Toshok Center for Brain Function and Repair, was quoted in the article “Sex vs. Gender: What’s the Difference?” published on *Yahoo Life*. Dr. Eliot was also interviewed on *60 Minutes Australia* during a piece on gender-free parenting.

Nicole Ferrara, PhD, assistant professor of physiology and biophysics, Center for Neurobiology of Stress Resilience and Psychiatric Disorders, co-authored three recent papers:

- “The Prolonged Impact of Psychosocial Stress on Fear Regulation,” published in *Neuropharmacology*.
- “Memory Retrieval, Reconsolidation, and Extinction: Exploring the Boundary Conditions of Post-Conditioning Cue Exposure,” published in *Frontiers in Synaptic Neuroscience*.
- “The Impact of Social Defeat on Basomedial Amygdala Neuronal Activity in Adult Male Rats,” published in *Behavioural Brain Research*.



Raúl Gazmuri, MD, PhD, FCCM, professor of physiology and biophysics, director of the Resuscitation Institute; **Salvatore Aiello**, CMS '24; and **Donghee Kim**, PhD, professor and chair of physiology and biophysics, authored a book chapter titled “Ventricular Arrhythmias” in the *Textbook of Critical Care 8th Edition* (Elsevier, 2023).

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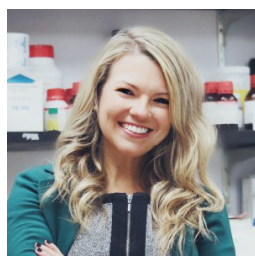


Anthony Holland

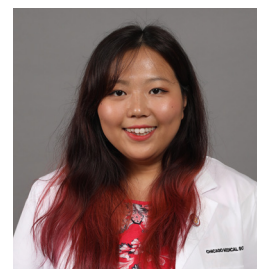
Anthony Holland, CMS '24, and **Neil Bradbury**, PhD, professor of physiology and biophysics, authored an article titled "Did You Forget Your Cell Sex? An Update on the Inclusion of Sex as a Variable," published in the *American Journal of Physiology - Cell Physiology*.

Mild Acidosis Increases Ca²⁺ Oscillations to Mediate pH Sensing in Rat Carotid Body Chemoreceptor Cells," published in the *American Journal of Physiology-Lung Cellular and Molecular Physiology*.

Holly Hunsberger, PhD, assistant professor, Center for Neurodegenerative Diseases and Therapeutics, published an editorial titled "Sex and Gender Differences in Neurodegenerative Diseases" in *Frontiers in Neuroscience*. She also published an article titled "Traumatic Brain Injury-Induced Fear Generalization in Mice Involves Hippocampal Memory Trace Dysfunction and Is Alleviated by (R,S)-Ketamine" in *bioRxiv*.



Nahae Kim, MPH, CMS '23, gave a presentation on "Reproductive Justice & Modern Contraception" as part of the university's observance of National Public Health Week. During the week of events, each day had a specific focus; Nahae's presentation was on the day dedicated to reproductive and sexual health.

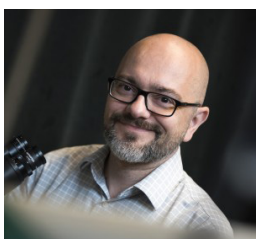


Dr. Donghee Kim

Donghee Kim, PhD, professor and chair of physiology and biophysics, published an article titled "Expression and Function of Mitochondrial Inhibitor Factor-1 and TASK Channels in Adrenal Cells" in the journal *Biochemical and Biophysical Research Communications*.



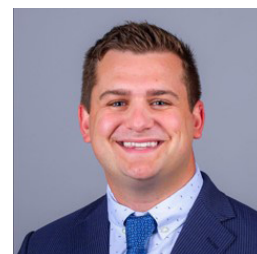
Lin Lu, MD, PhD, associate professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences, gave a virtual presentation on the topic "Mind and Body" on May 3 in honor of Mental Health Awareness Month. Dr. Lu, a child, adolescent, and adult psychiatrist at Rosalind Franklin University Health Clinics, talked about the science, treatment prevention, and resources for mental health.



Dr. Carl White

Dr. Kim and **Carl White**, PhD, associate professor of physiology and biophysics, co-authored an article titled "TASK Inhibition by

George Peek, CMS '26, M1 Organization of Student Representatives (OSR) Representative, presented a poster that he and his peers developed at the AAMC Group on Student Affairs (GSA) conference



George Peek

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in Kansas City. The poster was titled “The Impact of Learning Communities on Transitioning into Medical School.” The other students who co-authored the poster were **Riza Ali**, **Amogha Dahal**, **Vincent Loyal**, and **Brittany Wilson-Mifsud**, all CMS '26.

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Judith Potashkin, PhD, professor of cellular and molecular pharmacology, Center for Neurodegenerative Disease and Therapeutics, along with colleagues Jose Santiago of NeuroHub Analytics, LLC, and Jim

Quinn of Q Regulating Systems, LLC, co-authored the article “Co-Expression Network Analysis Identifies Molecular Determinants of Loneliness Associated with Neuropsychiatric and Neurodegenerative Diseases,” published in the *International Journal of Molecular Sciences*.

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Justin Shun, CMS '23, presented a poster titled “Studies on the Mechanism of Lactate-Induced Increase in Ca²⁺ Oscillations in Carotid Body Type 1 Cells” at the annual American Physiological Society Meeting, held in Long Beach, CA. **Donghee Kim**, PhD, professor and chair of physiology and biophysics, was a co-author on the poster.

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Justin Shun



Amanda M. Simanek, PhD, MPH, director of the Michael Reese Foundation Center for Health Equity Research and associate professor of humanities and health care, was an invited speaker on “Social Patterning of Infection,

Links Between Persistent Pathogens and Alzheimer’s Disease (AD)-Related Conditions, and Implications for Social Inequities in AD Across the Lifecourse” at a National Institute on Aging-sponsored meeting, “Leveraging Existing Data and Analytic Methods for Health Disparities Research Related to Aging, Alzheimer’s Disease and Related Dementias” on March 15 at Duke University.

Dr. Simanek also authored two publications:

- She was first author on a publication reporting findings from her National Institutes of Minority Health and Health Disparities-funded study titled “Prenatal Socioeconomic Disadvantage, Adverse Birth Outcomes, and Inflammatory Response at Birth,” which identified for the first time an association between prenatal socioeconomic disadvantage at both the individual- and combined individual- and neighborhood-level and elevated inflammatory response among population-based sample of neonates at birth. The article was published in *Psychoneuroendocrinology*.
- She co-authored a publication in *PLoS One* titled “Dear Pandemic: A Topic Modeling Analysis of COVID-19 Information Needs Among Readers of an Online Science Communication Campaign” which describes the information needs of readers of the social media-based science communication campaign “Dear Pandemic” (of which Dr. Simanek is a founding member and contributing writer) during the first part of the pandemic. The publication

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identified themes and longitudinal trends among questions submitted to the web-based “Dear Pandemic” question box. Dr. Simanek found that Dear Pandemic’s readers sought information that not only clarified novel scientific concepts but was also timely and practical to their personal lives. The question box format and topic modeling approach offer science communicators a robust methodology for tracking, understanding, and responding to the information needs of online audiences.

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Beth Stutzmann, PhD, professor

and chair of neuroscience
and director of the Center

for Neurodegenerative

Disease and Therapeutics,

presented a talk titled “Protein

Mishandling and Mitochondrial

Pathophysiology Driven by

Calcium Dyshomeostasis in Animal and Human Models of

AD” and chaired a session (“Synaptic Homeostasis and

Dysfunction”) at the Alzheimer’s Disease / Parkinson’s

Disease conference in Gothenburg, Sweden in March.

Dr. Stutzmann also participated in the LysoNet

Workshop and presented a talk titled “Early Contribution

of Calcium-Mediated Organelle Dysfunction to

Neurodegenerative Disease” at the University College

London in the U.K.



Events and Other News

RFU celebrated **National Minority Health Month** in April

with a series of presentations organized by the RFU

Division of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. Students,

faculty, and staff were invited to give presentations

addressing a topic that is relevant to underserved communities and health care.

- On April 14, **Sabina Schaffer**, CMS '26, delivered a virtual presentation titled “An Intro to Masking.” Sabina discussed masking in the autism community and the effects it has on mental and physical



Sabina Schaffer

- health, including the intersectionality between neurodivergence and other minorities in our society. Her presentation focused on personal experiences of those in the autism community and provided some personally researched ways in which health care providers can be sensitive and aware when interacting with neurodivergent patients.
- Ramiro Gumucio**, MD, assistant professor of anesthesiology, gave a presentation on April 19 titled “The Abled Patient” in which he talked about the history of disability advocacy and the inequality in health care experienced by his own family. Dr. Gumucio focused on how physicians can show compassion, recognizing a patient as a human being first without labeling or disregarding a disability when a treatment plan is proposed.
- Maureen Benjamins**, PhD, adjunct faculty at CMS and senior research fellow at the Sinai Urban Health Institute (SUHI), gave a presentation titled “Addressing Racial Health Inequities in America’s 30 Largest Cities” on April 20. Dr. Benjamins explored potential reasons for race-based differences in health outcomes and assessed the extent to which health departments within big cities address racial equity in their formal plans, policies, and activities.

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On April 20, the Office of Medical Education hosted a **Springtime Curriculum Retreat**, a three-hour workshop

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focused on curricular enhancements and strategic initiatives related to LCME Element 8.7 (Comparability of Education/Assessment). This workshop-style retreat provided guests an opportunity to actively and collaboratively evaluate the effectiveness of current curricular enhancements, strategic initiatives, and activities in the Phase II/M3 year of the curriculum.

Guests included M3 faculty, chairs of the CMS Curriculum Committee, and administrative leadership and staff from the Department of Clinical Sciences and the Offices of Medical Education, Faculty Affairs and Equity, and Excellence in Diversity and Inclusion. Education directors, assistant education directors, and guests engaged in small-group reflections and large-group sessions discussing evidence-based change, opportunities for continuous quality improvement, and innovations related to our ongoing compliance with LCME 8.7. Additionally, this retreat served as the inaugural launch of a series of 8.7-focused quarterly workshops.



Phi Delta Epsilon Beta Tau chapter, the medical fraternity at CMS, organized two events in May. On May 4, they hosted a Zoom lecture by Cary Archer from Planned Parenthood Illinois to talk about current disparities in reproductive healthcare and

the work Planned Parenthood does to address these disparities and meet community needs. And on May 8, the fraternity hosted a Red Cross blood drive on campus, in cooperation with the Interprofessional Community Clinic.



CMS students and faculty presented a **suture clinic** to 30 high school students at Cristo Rey St. Martin College Prep in Waukegan. The clinic, designed to inspire and educate the high school students about careers in medicine, was led by Noreen Kelly, MD, clinical assistant professor, and eight medical students from the **CMS Association of Women Surgeons (AWS)** interest group. ■





CMS administration on Match Day: Jeanette Morrison, MD, Vice Dean for Medical Education and Executive Vice Dean, CMS; Michael Allswede, DO, Assistant Dean of Clinical Education; Lucy Hammerberg, MD '82, Assistant Dean for Career and Specialty Advising; Brenda Affinati, MD, Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs; and Frank Maldonado, MD, Executive Chair of Clinical Sciences.

We want to hear from you!

**To submit information or news for upcoming issues, contact
Candice Kosanke at candice.kosanke@rosalindfranklin.edu.**



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