



# CMS NEWS

## The Chicago Medical School Newsletter

### SUMMER 2021 ISSUE 21

#### A SELF DISCOVERY JOURNEY

*Fourth-year student Yanhan Ren reflects on his research and global health experiences and how he decided on a career in ophthalmology.*

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#### CMS SERVICE AWARD RECIPIENTS

*This award recognizes students who have demonstrated excellent achievement in working with persons and communities underrepresented in medicine.*

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#### GOLD HUMANISM "CHAMPIONS OF HUMANISTIC CARE"

*One CMS faculty member and two graduating students were honored for their compassion, care, and courage during the COVID-19 pandemic.*

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## Class of 2021 Celebrates Commencement

*More than 630 students received their degrees during the virtual ceremony, including 174 CMS students.*

Chicago Medical School celebrated its Class of 2021 during a virtual ceremony, marking the university's 107th commencement and second virtual ceremony. Together with their interprofessional peers from RFU's other schools and colleges, the CMS Class of 2021 received their degrees and celebrated all the hard work that had brought them to that point, despite the many challenges of the past year and a half.

CMS hosted a small, socially-distanced event on campus on May 15 so graduating students could meet with their peers in person to celebrate

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## Dean's Message

Greetings from the Dean's Office!

As summer comes to a close and students return to campus, it is an exciting time filled with anticipation and reunions after working and learning remotely for well over a year. The hallways are busy with students, the library is once again a mecca for quiet study, and the DNA Café is buzzing with activity. Faculty and staff are back on campus also enjoying the hustle and bustle of being among our students.

When I wrote to you at the end of last summer, we had all hoped for a more 'normal' return to campus an entire year later. While most classes and many events are being conducted in person, there are still many safety measures in place with the goal of keeping everyone healthy. Safety is top of mind and I want to express my sincere appreciation for complying with the guidelines that our RFU leadership has established to keep our campus safe and the Delta variant of SARS-CoV-2 at bay.

The Class of 2025 arrived earlier this month for orientation and are now fully immersed in their first year of medical school. The class of 189 students is composed of almost half men and half women with the number of women being slightly higher. Among the top ten colleges and universities that students have come from, the highest number have graduated from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign with DePaul University following in second place. Other universities in this top ten category include the University of California Los Angeles and the University of Illinois Chicago along with Northwestern University - Evanston and the University of California - Berkeley.

A diverse group geographically, students hail from twenty-four states across the nation. A continued focus on increasing the proportion of students who are underrepresented in medicine has resulted in nearly 60% of the Class of 2025 being comprised of students from diverse backgrounds, including Asian - Indian, Asian - Chinese, and Asian - Korean to Cuban, Black or African American, and Latinx, to name a few. Nineteen students already hold graduate level and/or professional degrees and students' ages range from 20 - 38 years.

Second-year students returned to campus in mid-August and are able to experience a true sense of being on their medical school campus after completing most of their first year remotely. The camaraderie of being together is a great feeling and I am sure that new relationships will flourish. Third- and fourth-year students are well into their clinical rotations and electives and we are all grateful that their education is progressing with our dedicated affiliate partners.

As the new academic year begins we have also completed a major reorganization in the medical school and welcomed many new faculty. In our next edition, I will share a detailed update of all the changes and the many new members of faculty, but for now, please join me in welcoming Dr. Frank Maldonado, Executive Chair of Clinical Sciences; Dr. Sandra LaBlance, Senior Associate Dean of Student Affairs; and Dr. Michael Ellison, Associate Dean of Admissions to our CMS community. Also included in our reorganization were several new positions. While there are too many to list in this brief message, a few highlights include Dr. Jeanette Morrison, Vice Dean for Medical Education and Executive Vice Dean for Chicago Medical School; Dr. Brenda Affinati, Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs; and Dr. Nutan Atre-Vaidya, Vice Dean for Faculty Affairs & Equity.

As I close this message, my sincerest wish is that your family, friends, and you remain safe and healthy as our country and the world doubles down in dealing with the Delta variant of SARS-CoV-2. More than ever, I hope that those who are unvaccinated will find a way to join those who are so we can defeat this pandemic once and for all.

Sincerely,



Archana Chatterjee, MD, PhD  
Dean, Chicago Medical School

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## Commencement

*continued from cover*



*Kenneth Furlough, MD '21, posed with his diploma during CMS's in-person commencement celebration on May 15. Dr. Furlough delivered the graduate address during the university's virtual commencement ceremony on June 12.*



*Archana Chatterjee, MD, PhD, Dean of CMS, addressed graduates on campus during the in-person celebration.*

their accomplishments. Students were given the opportunity to don their commencement regalia, cross the stage to receive their diplomas, and recite the Oath of Geneva with their classmates. They were also given the chance to record a brief message of thanks and gratitude to their families, friends, mentors, and anyone else who had helped them during their journey through medical school. These messages, along with the recordings of the moments when students crossed the stage and recited the oath, were played during the virtual commencement ceremony recording. The virtual ceremony was shared with students and their families on June 12.

“We gather today around a virtual stage to celebrate our graduates as they prepare to enter fields in need of their energy and expertise,” RFU President and CEO **Dr. Wendy Rheault** said during her opening remarks. “For the second consecutive year, commencement arrives amid a pandemic that our nation and world are still struggling to bring under control. You, graduates, will have a hand in



making that happen.” Dr. Rheault noted that RFU had prepared the graduates for the challenges they would face during the pandemic and beyond, telling them, “RFU has provided you with the training you need to help lead our post-pandemic future.”

RFU Provost **Dr. Nancy Parsley** also congratulated the graduates on overcoming the recent challenges. “As I look back over events of the past year, I admire your strength and tenacity, and the empathy you have shown each other and those in your care,” she said. “Your resilience has been an inspiration.”

**Kenneth Furlough**, MD '21, a 2016-17 Franklin Fellow who is headed to a residency in orthopedic surgery at the University of Missouri-Kansas City, gave the graduate address. He talked about the importance of adapting to change and addressing the socioeconomic determinants of health that impact patients' well-being. “The pandemic highlighted the inequities that exist in our communities, and the need for healthcare teams that understand the importance of how the clinical evaluation and treatment plan must extend beyond the four walls of any clinical setting and into the communities where our patients reside,” he said. He encouraged his fellow graduates to “become innovators and the builders of equity in order to promote a healthcare system built upon justice.”

Dr. Furlough also quoted the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. — “Faith is taking the first step, even when you don't see the whole staircase” — in urging fellow graduates to move forward in the face of uncertainties posed by the pandemic.

“Whatever is to happen in our futures after this day, be comforted in knowing that with humility and commitment to excellence, our steps are the building blocks to make this world a better place,” said Dr. Furlough.

The keynote commencement address was delivered by **Ngozi Ezike**, MD, director of the Illinois Department of Public Health, who has guided the state's coronavirus

response. She discussed the importance of compassion and empathy, encouraging the graduates to always bring their humanity to their work. She also urged them to confront unconscious and implicit bias and be part of an anti-racist community, referring to racism as the second pandemic threatening society.

“Be dedicated to improving wellness,” Dr. Ezike told students. “May every place you venture into find itself better off for your having been there.” ■



*Small groups of students recited the Oath of Geneva while practicing social distancing.*



*From left to right: Hector Rasgado-Flores, PhD, Director of UIM Student Support and Success; Maureen Ikpeama, MD '21; Raven Wright, MD '21; Stephanie Puga-Bernaldo, MD '21; and Mildred MG Olivier, MD '88, Assistant Dean for Diversity and Inclusion.*



*CMS students walked across the stage and posed with their diplomas in a socially distanced on-campus ceremony.*



# Awards & Honors

CMS students received the following distinctions during the virtual commencement ceremony.

## **Ronald M. Reifler Primary Care Award**

*The Ronald M. Reifler Primary Care Award is awarded to a graduate who will be continuing their career in primary care. This award commemorates Mr. Reifler's love of learning and enthusiasm for helping others to reach their potential.*

**Cassandra Marie Gee, MD '21**

## **John J. Sheinin, MD, PhD, DSc Research Award**

*The John J. Sheinin, MD, PhD, DSc Research Award is presented for originality and creativity in a research project conducted while a medical student.*

**Yanhan Ren, Class of 2022**

## **MD with Distinction in Research**

*The MD with Distinction in Research Award is awarded to medical students who complete a substantial committee-refereed research program during the course of their medical studies.*

**Samuel Robert Bunting, MD '21**

**Stephanie Kaszuba, MD '21**

**Natasha Scaria, MD '21**

**Rachyl Morgan Shanker, MD '21**

## **Melvyn Leichtling, MD '48 Oncology Research Award**

*The Melvyn Leichtling, MD '48 Oncology Research Award was established in 1977 to give assistance to students who submit an outstanding research proposal related to the field of oncology.*

**Simone Raiter, Class of 2022**

## **Martin Gecht, MD '44 Memorial Award**

*The Martin Gecht, MD '44 Memorial Award honors Dr. Gecht's love of the Chicago Medical School and commemorates his commitment to the community. The award recognizes student efforts in community service projects including development, leadership, assessment and inspiration of community projects.*

**Kenneth Austin Furlough, MD '21**

## **CMS Dean's Award for Service to the School**

*The CMS Dean's Award for Service to the School was established in 1974 to give recognition to graduating students who have been active in school functions and have demonstrated a continuing interest in the future of the school.*

**Laura Billstein, MD '21**

**Leah Bolden, MD '21**

**Samuel Robert Bunting, MD '21, MS '21**

**Matthew John Christensen, MD '21**

**Chantal Joylene Creighton, MD '21**

## **Ronald Bangasser, MD '75 Memorial Award**

*The Ronald Bangasser, MD '75 Memorial Award commemorates the commitment that Dr. Bangasser, CMS Class of 1975, had for organized medicine and service to his colleagues. The recipient of this award has demonstrated leadership in medical school, a training which will follow into his/her life in organized medicine.*

**Samuel Robert Bunting, MD '21, MS '21**

## **Eugene J. Rogers, MD '46 Memorial Award for Excellence in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation**

*The Eugene J. Rogers, MD '46 Memorial Award for Excellence in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation is awarded to a graduate who will be continuing their career in the specialty of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation.*

**Haaris Pervaiz, MD '21**

## **USPHS Excellence in Public Health Award**

*The USPHS Excellence in Public Health Award is awarded by the U.S. Public Health Service to medical students who are involved in public health issues in their community, as well as to increase awareness of the Public Health Service and its mission to protect, promote and advance the health and safety of our nation.*

**Lauren Gard, Class of 2023**

## **Senior Independent Project Award**

*CMS students have the option of participating in a Senior Independent Project. Each student works with a faculty advisor throughout the process who evaluates their progress. These students are being recognized for their outstanding efforts on their senior independent project.*

**Shiva Barforoshi, MD '21**

**Natasha Thern, MD '21**

## **CMS Student Service Award**

*The CMS Student Service Award recognizes a student who has demonstrated excellent achievement in working with persons and communities that are underrepresented in medicine.*

**Sallyan Rusnak, MD '21 ■**

# Gold Humanism Honor Society Induction Ceremony



Twenty-nine graduating CMS students were inducted into the Gold Humanism Honor Society (GHHS) at the annual recognition luncheon, where they were recognized for their commitment, competence, and compassion.

The GHHS is an organization, sponsored by the Arnold P. Gold Foundation, that recognizes medical students, physician-teachers, and other exemplars for their integrity, clinical excellence, leadership, compassion, and dedication to service. The mission of the GHHS is to elevate the values of humanism and professionalism within the field of medicine and to integrate those values into the educational environment of the future.

Students are nominated by their peers and approved by faculty and staff.

Congratulations to the 2021 inductees:

**Zahra Abbas**  
**Erika Yen Belmont**  
**Laura Billstein**  
**Leah Bolden**

**Alex Clos**  
**Ashley P. Cohen**  
**Chantal Joylene Creighton**  
**Brandon Flock**  
**Kenneth Austin Furlough**  
**Cassandra Marie Gee**  
**Leah Getsov**  
**Ari Hadar**  
**Jennifer Lee Jung**  
**Diana Kantarovich**  
**Stephanie Kaszuba**  
**Alyssa Patricia Kessel**  
**Sara Ali Khan**  
**Theresa Kunnel**  
**Lauren Logan**  
**Douglas Moss**  
**Karan Pandher**  
**Akshay Dipak Patel**  
**John T. Pierce**  
**Natasha Elena Scaria**  
**Alvin Peter Singh**  
**Janki Thakkar**  
**Shayna Rose Waldbaum**  
**Drew E. Weinstein**  
**Jonathan Winegarden** ■



# Alpha Omega Alpha Induction Ceremony

CMS held its annual Alpha Omega Alpha (AQA) induction ceremony on June 1. During a celebration held via Zoom, students and residents were inducted

into the national honor medical society in recognition of their scholarly achievement, professional conduct, excellence in teaching, and service. ■

## Class of 2021 Initiates:



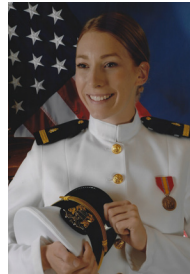
Jackson Adams



Natalia Adamska



Adnan Ahmed



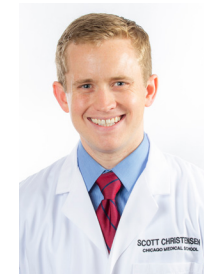
Kristin Bala



Kyle Behrens



Erika Belmont



Benjamin Christensen



Alex Clos



Sabrina Isabel Coronel



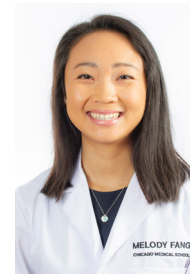
Chantal Creighton



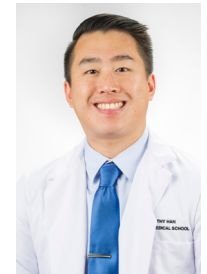
Nickolaus Crump



Corbin Edmondson



Melody Fang



Timothy Han



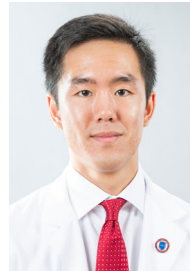
Jennifer Jung



Stephanie Kaszuba



Sara Khan



Dennis Lee\*



Mary Lewis



Sara Majewski



Patrick Melville



Joshua Moran



Jordan Newman\*



Emilia Norlin\*



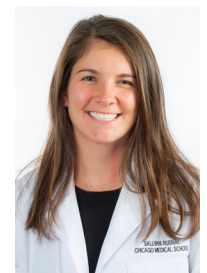
Paul Pantapalangkoor\*



Nikhil Patel



Sumit Patel



Sallyan Rusnak

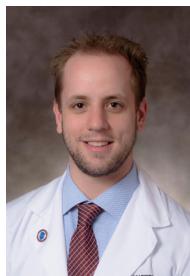
*\*elected as juniors*



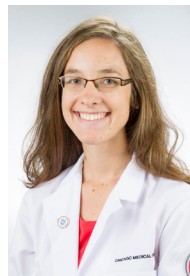
John Shapton



Natalie Shovlin-Bankole



Darren Stapleton



Johanna Stecher



Reid Stubbee



Prahasit Thirkateh



Mateusz Tkacz



Charlotte van Schooten\*



Drew Weinstein\*



Zhaoyang (Vill) Wen

### Ashley Evans Professionalism Award Recipient:



Sara Khan

### Class of 2021 Initiates:



Reagan Chapman



Adriana Fresquez



Courtney Harris



Peter Lorenz



Yanhan Ren



Alexander Woods

### Faculty Initiate and Resident Award Recipients:



Terrence Li, MD  
*Associate Professor of Neurology and Clinical Education Director, Neurology*



Allison Lawler, MD, PGY-3  
*CMS Psychiatry Resident*



Hiteshwar Mangat, MD, PGY-2  
*CMS Internal Medicine Resident at Lovell FHCC*



Nehal Patel, MD, PGY-3  
*CMS Internal Medicine Resident at Lovell FHCC*



Robin Sherchan, MD, PGY-3  
*CMS Internal Medicine Resident at NW Medicine, McHenry*

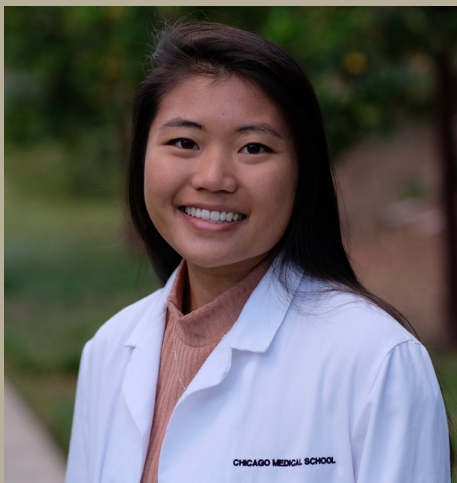


Jasleen Singh, MD, PGY-3  
*CMS Psychiatry Resident*



Nayha Tahir, MD, PGY-3  
*CMS Internal Medicine Resident at NW Medicine, McHenry*





# *Student Dean Corner*

**Each quarter, student dean Rachel To will give updates on the projects she will be working on throughout the year.**

Greetings, fellow classmates and colleagues!

CMS is looking forward to welcoming students back to campus this fall with precautions still in place. I am sure we all eagerly anticipate returning to in-person learning and activities. I would first like to thank former Student Dean, Courtney Harris, for her dedication and contribution to CMS. As I step into my role as CMS Student Dean for the 2021-2022 academic year, I hope to further the work that she and former student deans have begun.

For those of you who may be unfamiliar with the position, the official role of the CMS Student Dean is to represent the interests of the CMS student body on a handful of administrative committees that meet monthly. I will also work with the Executive Student Council and other student leaders such as the CMS Class Councils and other RFU Student Deans on university and CMS specific issues. Prior Student Deans have pursued projects that sought to improve student success in areas like career development and mentorship. My focus this year will be on building bridges, improving communication, and creating transparency between students and administration. I look forward to working alongside faculty to help students not only succeed academically, but also thrive as forward-thinking, socially responsible, and

compassionate physician leaders. At the end of the day, my main priority is to be a resource and an advocate that all CMS students feel comfortable approaching.

In congruence with my goals of improving communication, I wanted to bring special attention to how CMS has positively responded to the issues of structural racism and injustice in medicine as I am aware that many of my peers have wondered about this. This past year and a half has been a time of tremendous growth and development as CMS recently implemented immense changes to address health disparities and diversity in its curriculum.

I would like to highlight the CMS Health Disparities and Equity in Medical Education Task Force (HDEMETF) that was created in June 2020 and chaired by Dr. Carl Lawson. The HDEMETF identified and corrected content in curriculum that reinforced structural racism, incorporated education on health inequities into existing curriculum, and proposed training of CMS faculty, administrators, and staff on topics of diversity and inclusion. In addition to revamping schema cases, ECR workshops, and establishing a journal club focused on health disparities, the HDEMETF endorsed an overhaul of the pre-existing “Clinical Reflections” course. The new



curriculum, now termed “Principles of Professionalism, Health Care and Health Equity,” will begin this fall and is a four-year longitudinal course led by Drs. William Agbor-Baiyee, Melissa Chen, and Dima Arbach. This course will prepare students to practice clinically relevant and socially responsible medicine by emphasizing topics such as healthcare inequities, structural racism, sexual and gender minority bias/discrimination, and social determinants of health. Many of these changes were a result of student feedback and CMS recognizing the need for anti-racist action. I encourage you all to continue providing constructive feedback during the implementation of these projects as it is invaluable to shaping changes like these.

Finally, I am excited to serve in this new capacity and I look forward to working with other student leaders

to promote positive change. If there is anything I can assist with, I would be more than happy to meet online or in-person with students, faculty, and staff. I am always available at [student.deancms@rfums.org](mailto:student.deancms@rfums.org).

Cheers to a wonderful start to the 2021-2022 academic year!

Sincerely,



Rachel To  
Chicago Medical School Student Dean, 2021-22  
Chicago Medical School Class of 2023

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## Scholarship Updates

RFUMS and CMS are dedicated to addressing social inequities in areas where we can have the greatest impact. One of those areas is growing financial support for our students who are Underrepresented in Medicine (UiM). Two endowed scholarship funds established in 2020, listed below, provide the perfect opportunity to do so:

- The **The Fannie H. Emanuel, MD 1915 Endowed Scholarship Fund** provides financial support to African American CMS students who “exemplify Dr. Emanuel’s civic leadership, demonstrated by their commitment to health equity, community-based care and/or interprofessional care.”
- The **Agnes D. Lattimer, MD '54 Memorial Endowed Scholarship** supports the ongoing financial needs of CMS students from UiM groups.

As we end this unprecedented academic and fiscal year, the University and CMS have chosen to examine our year-end financial abilities and priorities, and have

decided to contribute \$100,000 to each of those endowed scholarship funds.

To address the financial needs of our students, we must create a sustainable plan that continues to perpetuate scholarship funding long into the future, and this \$200,000 addition to those funds provides significant progress toward meeting that goal. ■



Fannie Emanuel, MD 1915



Agnes Lattimer, MD '54

# Student Leadership Awards

During the week of April 26, student leaders from across RFU were honored for their commitment, dedication, and service to the university and the community. Congratulations to the following individuals and student organizations from CMS who were recognized for their leadership impact! ■



**Interprofessional Community Initiative** received the Outstanding Community Service Award

*For revamping the ICC's healthcare delivery system in response to the pandemic and creating a telehealth platform to respond to the needs of underserved patients.*



**Amir Hakimi, MD '21**, received the Commitment to Research Award

*For his extensive peer-reviewed publications in prestigious clinical medicine journals and presentations at national conferences.*



**Statistical Techniques and Training Society (STATS)** received the Outstanding Student Organization Award

*For helping students as well as faculty in conducting excellent research around the university.*



**Latino Medical Student Association, Salud Ofrecida a Latinos, & Interprofessional Clinic Initiative** received the Outstanding Collaboration Award

*For expanding the "Cafecito" program with "En Salud" to give the RFU community an opportunity to enhance their medical Spanish.*



**Asian Pacific American Medical Student Association (APAMSA)** received the Outstanding Established Program Award

*For the Red Lantern Show.*



**Student National Medical Association (SNMA), Student National Pharmaceutical Association (SNPhA), & Student National Podiatric Medical Association (SNPMA)** received the Team Unity Award

*For working together to put on innovative university programming and serve others.*



**Asian Pacific American Medical Student Association (APAMSA)** received the Outstanding Multicultural Project Award

*For using the Red Lantern Show to call attention to issues like racism, discrimination, and domestic violence.*



**Leah Bolden, MD '21**, received the Helix Award

*For being a vocal and active advocate in leading the student voice for institutional change with the CMS Health Disparities in Education Task Force.*



**Lauren Gard, CMS '23**, received the Rising Rosalind Award

*For her work as patient advocate, social justice activist, community leader, student collaborator, and educator in her role as the president of the Interprofessional Community Initiative.*



**Emily Terlap, CHP '22, CMS '23**, received the D&I Peer Mentor Award

*For supporting and helping her peers within the program in an extraordinary fashion.*



**Nahae Kim, CMS '23**, received the Outstanding Representation of a Student Voice Award

*For working tirelessly to challenge institutional racism and to speak up and advocate for students who are harmed most by systemic violence.*



**Patricia Bucci, CHP '23, CMS '24**, received the Outstanding Service in Tutoring Award

*For going above and beyond to support the students in the BMS program.*



**Ashna Yalamanchi, CMS '23**, received the Stewardship Award

*For being a continuous advocate (and former president) for the Surgery Interest Group, and making numerous contributions to revamp and change this organization for the better.*





**Anna Sandler, COP '23, and Amy Marr, CHP '23, CMS '24,** received the CONNECT Award for Student Housing

*For opening their Woodlands apartment, virtually, to incoming students to provide tours and answer questions.*



**Taylor Knopf, CMS '23,** received the Outstanding Ambassador Award

*For working hard to create a new application and Engage presence for the ambassador program, and working with others to create several new virtual programs during the pandemic.*



**Taylor Recek, CMS '23,** received the Outstanding Ambassador Award

*For working to keep the Assigned Ambassador program going by connecting applicants to a current CMS student during this time of remote connections.*



**Dayken Dawson, CMS '23,** received the Outstanding Ambassador Award

*For helping to create the Virtual Tour program and always being willing to train and help other CMS Ambassadors give this tour.*



**Chantel Creighton, MD '21,** received the CMS Student Leadership Award

*For providing essential leadership during COVID-19 when students were removed from the clinical environment, by continually meeting with administration, advocating for her class, and providing regular updates for her peers.*



**Victor Barragan, CMS '24,** received the Student at Large Student Leadership Award

*For being a forefront leader at our university and a proficient peer-mentor to under-represented in medicine (UiM) students. He was elected president of his M2 class and the LMSA, and he is the INSPIRE and Science Saturdays program director.*

***Congratulations to these leaders, and thank you for the contributions you have made to the CMS/RFU community!***





## Celebrating Dr. Ann Snyder



**Ann Snyder**, PhD, associate professor of cellular and molecular pharmacology, was honored on June 30 for her years of service on the CMS Student Admissions Committee as Co-Chair. She has served as co-chair from 2017-2021. We appreciate her exemplary service and leadership!

Dr. Snyder joined the faculty of the Chicago Medical School as a research assistant professor of medicine in 1989 and was appointed research associate professor of cellular and molecular pharmacology in 1996. She was promoted to associate professor in 2007. She has been an adjunct associate professor in the Department of Basic Biomedical Sciences of the Scholl College of Podiatric Medicine since 2007.

Her research interests include glial and neuronal glucose transport and metabolism, neurotoxic effects of alcohol, fetal alcohol syndrome, and fuel-mediated teratogenesis. ■





# FACULTY

## SPOTLIGHT:

### Carl Correll, PhD

*Dr. Correll was recently selected as the university's monthly Champion for Diversity. He serves as Associate Professor and Vice Discipline Chair of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology in the Department of Foundational Sciences and Humanities, and he works in the Center for Proteomics and Molecular Therapeutics. We reprint his Q & A below to share what diversity and inclusion means to Dr. Correll!*

**Q: How long have you been at RFU?**

A: Since October 2004, almost 17 years.

**Q: When did you realize diversity and inclusion were important to you?**

A: In sixth grade, my awakening physical attraction was to boys, not girls. I was different. Growing up in the 1970s I saw how much hatred there was against sexual and gender minorities (SGMs). Unlike most minorities I could fake fitting in, pretending to be straight. This cowardly double life left me empty inside like a ghost, stripped me of self-worth, and challenged my ability to support my SGM peers who could not or would not “fake” it. It was not until my sophomore year at university that I came out to myself, my close friends, and some of my family. Aside from meeting my husband and our subsequent wedding, coming out was the most important event in my life. The stories of all those who are different and struggle to fit in highlight the necessity to embrace diversity and inclusion.

**Q: What does it mean to be an inclusive person, and what does an inclusive environment feel like to you?**

A: An inclusive person is curious, inviting, and welcoming of others. Instead of making assumptions about someone they merely ask, eager to learn what makes this other person special. An inclusive environment shows at all levels (e.g., policy, programming, attitude, culture, etc.) that the spectrum of human diversity is welcome, and that these differences enrich us all.

**When's the last time you felt truly included? Why?**

A: I have always felt included at RFUMS and truly feel accepted whenever anyone mentions or asks about my husband because this acknowledges an important part of myself.

**Q: How do you infuse diversity and inclusion in the work that you do?**

A: In the Foundations for Interprofessional Practice I introduce students to the health disparities faced by sexual and gender minorities (SGMs) and strategies to reach equity in health outcomes. These topics are explored in more in-depth in a sophomore elective that I direct entitled “LGBTQI Healthcare.” In the class, I bring together health care providers from Howard Brown, Rush, and Advocate who specialize



in treating SGM patients. Also, I do my best to bring an SGM voice to the table whenever I serve on a CMS or RFUMS committee.

**Q: What does diversity and inclusion mean to you outside of RFU?**

A: Coming home to my husband and savoring life with my SGM friends and allies, living an open life, accepted by family and friends who love us for who we are.

**Q: How do you think RFU benefits from being a more diverse and inclusive community?**

A: A core mission of RFUMS is to train and educate outstanding health care providers. To connect with each unique patient, providers must listen and respect everyone that walks in the door. Making a connection is an important step toward effective compliance with a treatment plan. Not only does this improve health outcomes; it also makes the professional life of the provider more rewarding.

**Q: As a champion for diversity and inclusion, what words would you like to share with our colleagues to encourage them to also be champions for D&I?**

A: Don't assume, ask! Find out what is special about your colleagues and use that as a point to build or strengthen connections with this person. Your life and that of those around you will be richer for it.

**Q: If applicable, please share your favorite quote that exemplifies the ideals of diversity and inclusion.**

A: I have two favorite quotes. The first is from the late playwright, author, film producer, public health advocate, and LGBT rights activist Larry Kramer who said, "There will always be enemies. Time to stop being your own." The second is from the actor and playwright Harvey Fierstein who said, "Never be bullied into silence. Never allow yourself to be made a victim. Accept no one's definition of your life; define yourself." ■



*Dr. Correll teaches in the Foundations for Interprofessional Practice course.*



# *A Self Discovery Journey*

*Article submitted by  
Yanhan Ren, CMS '22*

*Yanhan Ren is a fourth-year medical student at Chicago Medical School. He is an international student from China. Starting off as an undecided first-year medical student, Yanhan arrived at his final career choice: ophthalmology, and the type of physician he wished to be in the future.*

It has been over two years since I last saw my family before COVID. I can still recall the day back in March 2019, when I received an email from student housing informing us to leave student apartments immediately as the pandemic unfolded in the United States. Fortunately it was a miscommunication and all my great friends offered me places to stay in cases of emergencies. I am truly grateful for all your help!

I am hoping to take this opportunity to share with you all about the path I took in medicine. If I were to share these stories with myself four years ago, I probably wouldn't believe how I was able to arrive at this step. Although my research and medical interests took a different turn, the core values that I treasure still remain, and in fact have expanded with these changes.

I grew up in a general surgeon's household, where most of our schedules revolved around the clock of surgeries. Our apartment was literally across the street from the hospital, which allowed my

father to reach the operation room in under five minutes. Anecdotally I was the first student in my elementary school to draw out the digestive tract. My perceptions of medicine were heavily influenced by general surgery for the first 26 years of my life.

I kept an open mind entering medical school, hoping to seek out something new that is intellectually stimulating. I used to play this computer game called Command and Conquer Red Alert 2. The Allied forces' Prism Tank was my favorite weaponry. It's known for its technological superiority and precision targeting network which was quite similar to its medical counterpart: ophthalmology. My first encounter with ophthalmology was coincidental. During our school's last global health elective in 2019 to Taizhou Hospital, China, I rotated through their ophthalmology department in week one and was immediately attracted to its detail-orientated procedures as well as the "fancy" examination equipment. Along with basic clinical and surgical work, we organized community services at local elementary schools, teaching students about medical science and expanding their views of what life is like in the U.S. It was during this trip that my interest for the field started to germinate.

During our third year's surgical rotation, I found out that it was the delicate, detailed procedures



that interested me the most, such as spines, necks, and eyes. These were the few moments that I truly felt happy during surgical rotation. I was fortunate enough to observe several retina surgeries with Dr. Michael Blair and Dr. Michael Shapiro. We worked through bread and butter vitrectomy cases as well as rare retinoblastoma chemotherapy injections. Outside the OR, I shared my concerns for future career choices with Dr. Shapiro, as I have spent years learning the gut, but only months with the eyes. Surprisingly Dr. Shapiro and I shared very similar experiences in searching for the ideal speciality in medical school. After receiving his reassurance, I packed up my backpack and readied to move on from my past.

I was on the fence of doing a research year or not, but the real question is, where to even begin? Our school has no home program or ophthalmology related research, and COVID definitely made things much harder. After being turned down by everyone on the research contact list, I started to think of a way out by emailing ophthalmologists in each Chicago program. Dr. Charles Bouchard, chair of ophthalmology at Loyola University, stepped in at the last moment and mentored me through several projects. He was a great mentor who led me through peripheral ulcerative keratitis and refractive surgery research. When I first started, I thought that my past research projects in wound repair and burns would not be relevant in my understanding of the eyes. However, working side by side with him helped me to see more connections between the eyes and the rest of the body.

Prior to meeting Dr. Bouchard, studying metalloproteinases-9 (MMP-9) in diabetic ulcers was the center of my research before medical school. I was surprised to hear about Dr. Bouchard's parallel interests in using MMP-9 as a diagnostic

parameter among patients with dry eyes and blepharitis, which helped us to find intellectual common ground. This June, I completed a third-year clerkship with Dr. Bouchard, and I realized it wasn't just research in which we could find overlap. Professionally, I discovered that we both share a passion for global health and being able to travel to deeply underserved areas to work. Outside of work, the chair of ophthalmology also takes time to smell the flowers. I learned that we both enjoy being in nature as much as possible, and revel in the serenity of gardening.

Working together as a multidisciplinary team with our colleagues will help us to sail further. While I was expanding my connections within the realm of ophthalmology, Dr. Lilly Wagner from Mayo Clinic gratuitously took me on several multidisciplinary research studies. We focused on bringing quality evidenced patient care to patients with thyroid eye



*Yanhan (left) on the last day of his surgery rotation.*



disease, with the support of otolaryngologists and endocrinologists.

These research works with Dr. Bouchard and Dr. Wagner combined were definitely not a walk in the park, especially with a full rotation schedule. I remember during my internal medicine rotation at Stroger Cook County Hospital, I was sleeping only six hours per day, while trying to meet project deadlines and wrapping up 1,000+ UWorld questions. Nevertheless, all this hard work finally paid off! This August, I will be completing my away rotation at Mayo Clinic and presenting my thyroid eye disease research project with Dr. Wagner at the August 9th Mayo Clinic grand rounds. This September, I will be presenting my refractive surgery projects with Dr. Bouchard at Loyola University's grand rounds. Our peripheral ulcerative keratitis surgery video poster will be presented at the American Academy of Ophthalmology in November. In addition, our pilot research project on myopic shifts after cataract surgeries is also currently underway. These are all unknown adventures that await in the distant horizon!

The pandemic has incurred a lasting change to the type of physician I would like to become as well as my future career objectives. Both Dr. Bouchard and Dr. Wagner have helped me envision the kind of

physician I want to be, someone who appreciates the rigor of research and investigation but draws pride from strong mentorship of medical students and helping others globally. It is my hope to continue participating in global health and teaching beyond residency. I would like my future career to be a balanced mixture of academic medicine, teaching residents and students, and surgical outreach to places most in need of ophthalmological interventions.

An important aspect of global health is the longitudinal relationship with the outreach site. Teaching and mentoring students of all ages would be the best way to stay connected with the local communities. We have an old saying in Chinese: it is better to teach someone the way to fish than directly offer the fish. My ultimate career goal, which is still many years away, is to build a nonprofit international medical school while practicing medicine in the U.S. I was once inspired by these efforts as Dr. Robert O. Wilson, Dr. Norman Bethune, and many other physicians from the U.S. came to my country during the darkest hours of World War II. They have inspired me to study and practice medicine in the U.S. and I wish to return my gratitude by inspiring more students to pursue a career in medicine around the world. ■



# 2021 UNIVERSITY FACULTY AWARDS

## Board of Trustees Award for Research

*Recognition to a junior faculty member who has shown promise in research activities in published work and grantmanship.*

### Neelam Sharma-Walia, PhD

Associate Professor  
Microbiology & Immunology  
Foundational Sciences and  
Humanities



## Lawrence Medoff Award for Clinical Sciences

*Recognition for outstanding work in the clinical sciences in research, teaching, and/or clinical care.*

### Kenneth Beaman, PhD

Professor  
Microbiology & Immunology  
Foundational Sciences and  
Humanities



## Excellence in Teaching Award

*Recognition for meritorious teaching in the health sciences.*

### James O'Donnell, PhD

Assistant Professor  
Cellular and Molecular  
Pharmacology  
Foundational Sciences and  
Humanities



## Morris L. Parker Research Award

*Recognition to a senior faculty member for meritorious research in medicine or related health sciences by an investigator.*

### Michelle Hastings, PhD

Professor  
Cell Biology and Anatomy  
Foundational Sciences and  
Humanities



## Deans' Award for Diversity and Inclusion

*Recognition for outstanding contributions to developing a culture of diversity and inclusion at the University.*

### Carl Lawson, PhD

Assistant Professor  
Humanities and Health Care  
Foundational Sciences and  
Humanities



# Congratulations to the winners of the CMS Student Service Award for Under-represented Communities!

*This award recognizes students who have demonstrated excellent achievement in working with persons and communities that are underrepresented in medicine. The following winners were announced in May.*



## **M3 Winner: Laurine Tiema-Benson, CMS '22**

### **Project 1: Diverse Medical Scholar, United Health Foundation/ National Medical Fellowships**

"This is an ongoing project that I created to assess and address barriers of the utilization of health services at the Interprofessional Community Clinic (ICC) for uninsured African Americans in Lake County. To assess these barriers, 25 Lake County community leaders were interviewed, including the mayors of North Chicago and Waukegan. Their insight and

suggestions provided the basis for the second phase which is to address the barriers in effort to increase the number of African Americans utilizing health services at the ICC. Currently we have been able to create a new flyer, which has begun distribution; created a team of six students from my school who have helped me create a business directory, including local Black businesses; partnered and met with the North Chicago Think Tank (NCTT); and done one Facebook Live event on a new community partner's page where my project mentor shared information about the ICC. In February, contacted all of the businesses and churches in our directory and began flyer distribution. In March, we conducted a wide distribution of flyers and advertising of the clinic as well as our main Facebook Live event."

### **Project 2: Medical Student Volunteer, Outreach for Health**

"Outreach for Health is a student-run organization at RFUMS that provides a mobile prevention clinic in areas in Lake County that are deemed as underserved. There, I have been able to screen and educate low-income community residents at several health fairs and community events regarding hypertension, diabetes, and cholesterol. Many people who attend these events do not have a primary care provider nor health insurance; thus I am able to provide them with community resources, including our school's free student-led clinic, the Interprofessional Community Clinic (ICC)."

### **Project 3: Clinical Volunteer and Mentor, Family Medicine Clinic**

"I volunteered at a Family Medicine clinic for over three years where I accompanied the physician on home visits to the homebound, elderly, and bedridden. I conducted home visits in some of Chicago's highest crime



communities. I also worked with patients from vulnerable populations including people in assisted living residences and transitional homes, in which some were mentally ill and had been recently been released from prison. Lastly, I oversaw and provided guidance on clinical assessments of patients to pre-medical and first- and second-year medical students.”

#### **Project 4: Prep for MD Co-Instructor, University of Illinois at Chicago**

“I taught Anatomy, Physiology, Biochemistry, Neuroanatomy, and Nutrition to 24 Chicago inner-city minority high school students. I designed and coordinated the course curriculum and assessments for students’ learning. I also led clinical skills workshops and accompanied students to medically related field trips.”

#### **Project 5: VISTA Volunteer: Health Program Coordinator, Americorps VISTA**

“I coordinated events, including a televised awareness campaign, and programs regarding health access for the underserved in various international Atlanta communities. I also volunteered at health fairs, conducted outreach efforts, and provided health education to communities that lacked consistent and regular medical care.”



### **M3 Honorable Mention: Alfonso Gomez, CMS '22**

#### **Project 1: Main Coordinator and Developer, COVID DIY PPE**

“My project began with my family first making PPE to distribute to Vista Medical Center, where my sister is employed. We began to make cloth surgical masks and DIY shields. I needed to develop and implement a distribution and collection network, as well as sewing teams and a call center team (to call hospitals/nursing homes). Therefore, I partnered with RFUMS LMSA and SNMA chapters as well as reached out to the

local community in Lake County (including Waukegan public schools, the College of Lake County theater department, and the RFUMS community at large). We began to collect and distribute cleaning supplies such as medical gloves, hand sanitizers, and disinfecting wipes, and we continued to make DIY cloth masks and face shields. We were able to distribute 2,000+ PPE to Lake County hospital systems as well as Southside Cook County, Lake Forest Hospital, Condell, Naperville ER, Good Shepherd, Mercy Health Care Rockford branch, Jesse Brown VA Medical Center, and others. We quickly realized that in order to minimize the spread of COVID-19 we needed to distribute PPE to frontline workers. We focused our efforts in the most hard-hit areas which primarily affected Latinx as well as black populations. We distributed to local nursing homes in Lake County as well as nursing homes in the south and west sides of Chicago, grocery store workers, food industry workers, community centers and special needs centers, police departments, prisons and correctional facilities in Lake and Cook counties, and religious institutions and organizations.”

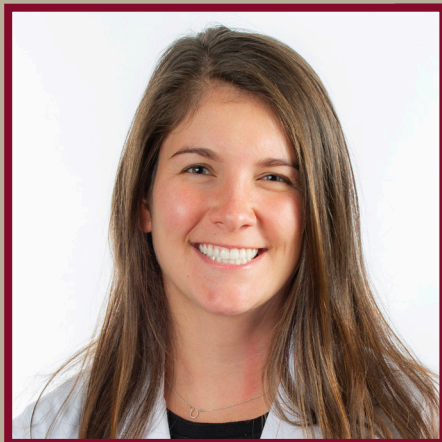
#### **Project 2: Public Health Awareness and Community Activism, Building a Better Waukegan**

“During the summer of 2020, following the death of George Floyd, many took to the streets to display their grievances with systemic racism, specifically in law enforcement. There were many peaceful protests; however, in Waukegan there were instances of vandalism and looting. Shortly after, I started a Facebook page called Building a Better Waukegan, where I wanted to share scientific facts about the ongoing COVID pandemic and

to calm and ease tensions following the vandalism in Waukegan. I reached out to the members of the page to help clean up local shops and businesses that were damaged. Subsequently I also reached out to community leaders who were planning peaceful protests and asked if they needed our support or assistance. With the help of LMSA and SMNA we distributed surgical masks and face shields and promoted physical distancing in order to decrease the spread of COVID during the peaceful demonstrations. To date, the Facebook page has over 1.8K members, and we continue to inform our community of the scientific facts about the COVID pandemic as well as promoting political involvement and teaching people who their local representatives are, where the polling places are located, and when local races are happening. We also promote local businesses to insure Waukegan and the surrounding cities thrive during these troubling times.”

### Project 3: Mentor, LMSA/SNMA/Future Medical Panthers

“2020 was a very difficult year; many pre-meds, M1s, M2s, M3s, and current M4s were having difficulties dealing with virtual learning, prepping for board exams, social isolation, being pulled from rotations due to COVID-19, and being exposed to COVID. I took it upon myself to reach out to many of my fellow students to check in on them to see how they were dealing with this “new normal.” I listened to them and their needs and tried to give them advice in order to cope during this time. I offered them Step prep guidance and advice on how to deal with certain rotations. During this time I also spoke to a local middle school from Round Lake. A middle school student who had participated in Dr. Rasgado’s INSPIRE program over the summer began a club at her school called Future Medical Panthers. She reached out to me to ask if I could spare some time from my schedule to give a talk about my journey into medicine as well as advice on how to enter medical school to their members.”



## M4 Winner: Sallyan Rusnak, MD '21

### Project 1: President, Step Up

- Oversaw all facets of the club that serves to tutor, educate, and mentor North Chicago Community High School students
- Successfully integrated the CATS program (Cross Age Training in Science) as a Step Up event and organized the North Chicago Community High School students’ day at Katz Elementary School teaching the 4th graders science projects
- Hosted two classes of students for a “field trip,” a two-day event at the RFUMS campus including cadaver and pharmacy labs, financial literacy presentations, and campus tours
- Gained valuable experience in communication, logistics planning, community outreach, and team leadership
- Primarily focused on pipeline initiatives to UIM students as well as tutoring services for Lake County.

### Project 2: President, Future Healthcare Professionals Club (FHPC)

- Organized biweekly meetings of FHPC, a mentorship program for North Chicago Community High School students interested in healthcare in conjunction with the healthcare track curriculum
- Brought various health interest groups from RFUMS to teach the students about various medical professions

as well as suturing, vital signs, and blood glucose readings, fostering an environment of interprofessional teamwork and mentorship

- Created a new event with RFUMS's Simulation Lab to teach students about FLS boxes for laparoscopic surgery training
- Gained experience in community outreach as well as how to develop educational modules at a high school level
- Sought to include representation from many backgrounds and populations to better reflect the diversity of Lake County.

### Project 3: Volunteer, Interprofessional Community Clinic (ICC)

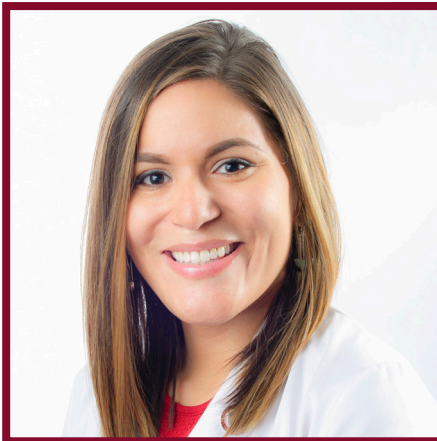
- Volunteered in an interprofessional student-run clinic providing medical care to the underserved population of Lake County.
- Participated as part of a team to interview patients and work to provide treatment and referrals when necessary
- Improved my history taking, clinical skills, and presentation skills while gaining a deeper understanding of the health concerns affecting Lake County.

### Project 4: Presenter, Postsecondary Success Conference

- Served on a career panel offered to rising seniors at North Chicago Community High School on career preparedness and healthcare professions.

### Project 5: General Member, Step Up and Future Healthcare Professionals Club

- Provided tutoring after school to students at North Chicago Community High School 1-2 times a week in any subject, and also helped run FHPC educational programming.



## M4 Honorable Mention: Stephanie Puga-Bernaldo, MD '21

### Project 1: Physiology Small Group Peer Tutor

"This peer tutor group was created by Under Represented Minorities in medicine (URiM), for URiM. Students who attended were enrolled in a post-baccalaureate pre-matriculation pipeline program applying to CMS. Matriculation into CMS was dependent on their performance in medical school level courses. My responsibilities included conducting weekly small group tutoring sessions; creating lesson plans to prepare students

for physiology exams; providing students with guidance, resources, and moral support to ensure academic success; and organizing and conducting mock interviews for students."

### Project 2: Mentor, INSPIRE Program

"INSPIRE is an acronym for 'Influence Student Potential and Increase Representation in Education.' This is a summer research program designed to build a pipeline for local motivated Hispanic high school and college students pursuing higher education in medicine, science, and biomedical research. My responsibilities included



mentoring pre-med students, tracking their academic progress to make sure they maintain a B average throughout the program, and giving a lecture to students about what a career in psychiatry looks like.”

### **Project 3: Member/Volunteer, Medical Organization for Latino Advancement (MOLA)**

“The Medical Organization for Latino Advancement (MOLA) is a local Chicagoland organization with the mission of unifying and empowering Latino healthcare professionals. My responsibilities included being a member of the mentorship program that was built to create a pipeline to healthcare careers for high school, undergraduate, and medical students, and volunteering at various MOLA events throughout the year, such as the Annual Latino Health Symposium.”

### **Project 4: Secretary, Latino Medical Student Association**

“The Latino Medical Student Association’s (LMSA) mission is to unite, support, mentor, and empower Latino students at Rosalind Franklin University. On campus, LMSA works towards raising cultural awareness through educational events such as the annual Día de los Muertos celebration, the Latino Film Festival, and Hispanic Heritage Month events. Off campus, LMSA engages with the Lake County community through partnerships with local elementary schools in predominantly Latino areas to educate students about careers in medicine. LMSA received recognition on campus by receiving the award of: Outstanding New Student Organization (2017) and Team Unity (2018, 2019). My responsibilities included scheduling monthly executive meetings and quarterly general body meetings, acting as the bridge of communication between the general body and executive members, and organizing and promoting events on campus.”

### **Project 5: Mentor & Mentee, RFU Office of Diversity and Inclusion**

“The Office of Diversity and Inclusion at Rosalind Franklin University created this peer mentorship program for Underrepresented Minorities in Medicine (URiM). During my time on campus, I was able to be both a mentee to the upperclassmen as well as a mentor to the underclassmen. My responsibilities included attending monthly meetings to touch base with mentors/mentees, providing support and guidance throughout the academic school year, and attending events throughout the year to promote camaraderie and strengthen the sense of community amongst fellow URiM.”

### **About the Chicago Medical School Service Award for Under-represented Communities**

This holistic award recognizes students who have demonstrated excellent achievement in working with persons and communities that are underrepresented in medicine. Students who have conducted research or volunteer experiences in an underrepresented community (e.g., Black/African, LatinX, Native American/Alaskan Native/Indigenous) and can demonstrate a significant impact on the community as well as a commitment to contributing to the well-being of underserved or disenfranchised communities are encouraged to apply for this award. Two CMS students (one M3 and one M4) are selected to receive the award each year.

Applications are reviewed by the Chicago Medical School Service Awards Committee, which is composed of CMS faculty and alumni, with a student co-chair. This committee’s charge is to highlight students’ work with underserved populations and communities to recognize these efforts and encourage others to explore working with these communities as well. For more information about this award, please contact the Office of Excellence in Diversity and Inclusion.

# Gold Humanism “Champions of Humanistic Care”

*Three members of the CMS community were among the 200 “Champions of Humanistic Care” honored at the Arnold P. Gold Foundation Annual Gala for their compassion, care, and courage during the COVID-19 pandemic.*



**Brenda Affinati, MD, FACP**  
Assistant Dean of Clinical Education and Vice Chair of the Clinical Sciences Department

Dr. Affinati went above and beyond her duties in order to keep all of the M3 and M4 students advancing through their clinical rotations. On top of that she did so in a way that empowered students. She displayed fantastic empathy, was open and honest about her own mental and emotional state, and consistently displayed a fervent commitment to student safety.

**From one of her nominators:** “Dr. Affinati embodies the essence of the humanistic approach because she focuses on the development of trust and respect between her and her students, colleagues, and patients. She understands the fact that although we may be separated by race, religion, creed, and class, we all suffer in some way, shape, or form. She has taught her students that this is the bond that links us all, our human condition.”

“This recognition reflects the dedication, creativity, and resourcefulness of over 400 volunteer clinical faculty that continued to teach our medical students during the COVID-19 pandemic. Their commitment was truly remarkable and resulted in a new class of grateful physicians, well-prepared to enter their residencies.” — Dr. Brenda Affinati



**Natalia Adamska, MD, BSN, RN**  
CMS Class of 2021

Before beginning medical school, Dr. Adamska was a nurse for 15 years. She has been working as an ER nurse throughout medical school, and when the pandemic began and clinical rotations were cancelled, Natalia launched herself back into full time work at the University of Illinois at Chicago Health. Despite limited PPE and vast uncertainty and fear, she went to work every day to take care of those who needed it, all while caring for her children, applying for residency, and completing her medical school requirements.

**“Compassion and humanism have been at the core of my career as a nurse in Chicago’s inner-city emergency departments and my approach to my medical education. This year though, those words were given new meaning, not just for me but for all healthcare workers. There is no choice but to give 100% effort every time you begin a shift, despite how emotionally drained, physically exhausted, and terrified you may be. Treating my patients with compassion has always been a priority for me, but this year it meant giving away a part of me. I’d give it away again, but it is unlikely that in my lifetime anything will ever challenge me more than the last year has.”** — Dr. Natalia Adamska



**Alex Clos, MD**  
CMS Class of 2021 and Co-Founder, GetMePPE: Chicago

As a fourth-year medical student, Alex worked throughout the peak of the pandemic here in Chicago on efforts to get PPE into the hands of healthcare workers across Chicagoland and beyond. He spent countless hours finding alternatives to fit testing, networking with “makers” and large businesses across the state to craft innovative strategies to provide healthcare workers with PPE alternatives when no professionally manufactured PPE options were available. He sacrificed a lot in these efforts, but he would never mention that himself. His priority was helping the healthcare workers, so they in turn could help their patients.

**“March 2020 saw medical students across the U.S. sidelined from their clinical rotations. Their preceptors and mentors continued on, battling a virus they knew little about, often without the protective gear necessary to keep them safe. Despite unimaginable sacrifices over the last year, their unshakeable commitment to preserving the humanity of their patients endures as inspiration for us as we move forward in our training.”** — Dr. Alex Clos

# *M3 Poster Day*

On June 9, Chicago Medical School held its annual M3 Clinical Poster Day. The virtual event featured 132 posters, the largest number of poster submissions since our first Poster Day five years ago! The entries encompassed a wide array of case presentations and other clinical experiences, including research and community service, presented by members of the CMS Class of 2022. Thirty-five faculty judges reviewed the posters and conducted virtual presentation meetings with the authors. Congratulations to our awardees!

## Top Posters Based on a Clinical Case

### Overall Excellence:

“Tolosa Hunt Syndrome:  
A Rare Cause of Cranial  
Nerve III Palsy”

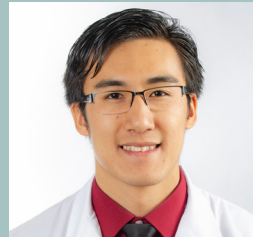


Madelaine Schaufel



Neel Reddy

“Pure Erythroid  
Leukemia”



Matthew Tan

“Sublingual  
Dermoid  
Cyst in an  
Adolescent  
Patient”



Navroop Gill



James Burke



Paul Asheim



Kevin Delfino

“Spinal Cord Dural  
Arteriovenous  
Fistula”



Palwasha Syar



“Phyllodes  
Tumors: A  
Giant Problem”



Kayla Rae Cordova

### Student Presentation:

“‘I Can’t Control Where  
the Pencil Goes’: A Case  
of Adolescent Bipolar II  
Disorder”

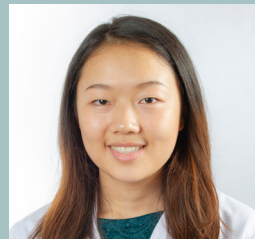


Sarah Laudon



Sarah Davidson

“Post COVID-19  
Longitudinally Extensive  
Transverse Myelitis with  
Myelin Oligodendrocyte  
Glycoprotein Antibodies”



Ellen Yang



Adnan Husein



Jose Martinez-  
Perez

“Transgender Healthcare:  
Understanding the Process  
of Trans Women Undergoing  
Hormonal Therapy and  
Vaginoplasty for Male-to-  
Female Transitioning”



Alison Cottrell

### Educational Value:

“Case Report: Infectious  
Disease vs. Electronic  
Cigarette or Vaping  
Product Use Associated  
Lung Injury (EVALI)”



Apoorva Iyengar



Nicki Patel

“Persistent Abdominal  
Pain in the Pediatric  
Patient”



Zachariah Shalginewicz

“Transposition of  
the Great Arteries:  
Bidirectional Glenn  
Shunt Physiology”



Diya Majumdar



Mohammed  
Akhter



Nadmid Baatar  
Gerelbat

## Top Posters Not Based on a Clinical Case

“Self-Management in  
Glaucoma Patients Amid  
COVID-19 Pandemic: A  
Cross-Sectional Study in  
China”



Yanhan Ren

“Neuroimaging  
Findings in  
Patients with  
COVID-19:  
A Literature  
Review”



Arjun Ahuja



Adnan Husein



Winston Dang



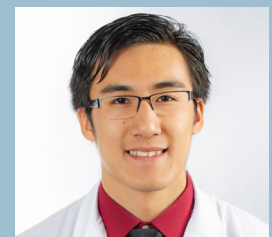
Paul John

“Reducing Teen  
Pregnancy, STDs and  
Increasing Interest in  
Healthcare Careers  
Among Teens of Round  
Lake High School”



Lisandra Ochoa

“The Orbicularis  
Oculi Muscle: Review  
of the Anatomy and  
Physiology in Health  
and Disease”



Ariel Azhdam



IN MEMORIAM

## Russell Robertson, MD

1952 - 2021

*Former Dean and Vice President of Medical Affairs for CMS*



Russell Robertson, MD, former dean and vice president of medical affairs for Chicago Medical School, recently lost his battle against a form of dementia known as Frontotemporal Degeneration. Dr. Robertson is survived by his wife, two children and their spouses, eight grandchildren, his mother-in-law, and two siblings.

From May 2011 to October 2013, Dr. Robertson served as dean of Chicago Medical School and as a professor with tenure in family medicine, the specialty he dearly loved that allowed him to develop relationships with whole families, from newborns to grandparents. He received his medical degree from Wayne State University, where he completed a residency in family practice. He brought years of experience in academic and medical school administration, most notably at Northwestern University, where he served as professor and chair of the Department of Family and Community Medicine. Dr. Robertson welcomed the opportunity to come to CMS, believing that it was uniquely poised to be a “difference-maker” in responding to the demands of America’s evolving health care system, with its focus on interprofessional education and its team-based approach to care where students from the health professions train side-by-side.

While at CMS, he developed clinical partnerships with two major Chicagoland teaching hospitals, Advocate Health and Lutheran General, to advance student education. He also forged a partnership between Chicago Medical School and Heartland Alliance for Human Needs and Human Rights to promote educational, research, and service learning opportunities in international settings. As the Alliance for Health Sciences with DePaul University was launched, Dr. Robertson supported a retreat on translational research in April 2012 between Chicago Medical School and Advocate Lutheran General Hospital, where 12 translational research projects in six different areas of focus were developed.

Dr. Robertson’s commitment to medicine was recognized by the Society of Teachers of Family Medicine Foundation which selected him as a Bishop Fellow for the 2011 academic year. He received the Advocate Award from the Society of Teachers of Family Medicine; the Illinois Academy of Family Physicians conferred the President’s Award; and the Illinois State Medical Society asked him to serve as a member of an Illinois Department of Public Health statewide task force that analyzed physician supply.

As a physician and leader, Dr. Robertson had an impact on the families and communities he served. The Chicago Medical School/Rosalind Franklin University community joins Dr. Robertson’s family, friends, and colleagues in honoring his legacy. ■



*Dr. Robertson at Chicago Medical School’s 2011 White Coat Ceremony.*



## Graduate Medical Education (GME) News

# Congratulations to our graduates!



Some of our **internal medicine residents at the Captain James A. Lovell Federal Health Care Center (FHCC)** had a social gathering at Navy Pier in Chicago to bid farewell to the graduating Class of 2021. The internal medicine residency program at the FHCC has been on the frontline to provide outstanding care to veterans during the pandemic. This was a joyous moment to celebrate and recognize the hard work that the Class of 2021 had put in over the last three years. The event at Navy Pier, attended by resident physicians from all classes of the program and attending physicians, marked an important milestone in the careers of these young physicians. The graduating residents

expressed their gratitude to their attending physicians, support staff, co-workers, and patients, all of whom were indispensable in the training process. We are excited for the graduates as they start their next phase as fellow and attending physicians. *Pictured from left to right: Drs. Edgar Davila (Chief Resident 2020-21), Nitish Nandu, Jabeen Abutalib (Head of Transitional Medicine, FHCC), Charmi Patel, Raul J. Gazmuri (Director, ICU at FHCC), Husam Hafzah, Amna Elahi, Nyembezi Dhlwayo, William J. Cotter (Associate Program Director), Anish Munagala, Mohammed Al-Tameemi, and Chinenye "Jude" Ochiobi.*

On June 9, Chicago Medical School celebrated the graduates of its **Northwestern Medicine McHenry Hospital internal medicine residency program** in a ceremony held at Navy Pier in Chicago. The ceremony celebrated the ten graduating residents in the Class of 2021 and also the seven residents who graduated in the Class of 2020 but were unable to have a ceremony of their own at the time.



# Graduate Medical Education (GME) News



Graduates of Chicago Medical School's **psychiatry residency program** had their graduation dinner on June 10 to celebrate the nine residents in the Class of 2021. Several residents and faculty members also received awards to recognize their outstanding work in education and patient care. *Pictured from left to right: Program Director Paul Hung, MD; Benjamin Shin, MD; Jennifer Harkey, DO; Jackie Rajani, MD; Deepa Nadella, MD; Ahmed Maki, DO; Nishaan Nagarakanti, DO; Spencer Yeh, MD; and Bikram Sharma, MD.* ■

## Congratulations to Our Psychiatry Residency Program Award Recipients:

### Chief Resident Recognition Awards

Loveleen Khehra, MD — Chief Resident for Wellness  
Jasleen Singh, MD — Chief Resident for Medical  
Student Education  
Jackie Raj Rajani, MD — Overall Chief Resident  
Benjamin Seungchul Shin, MD — Chief Resident for  
Academic Affairs

### Collegiality & Humanism Award

Daniel Wasserman, MD

### Dr. Marc Fahami Award

Nikhilesh Raju, MD — Junior  
Pawel Tesmer, MD — Senior

### Resident Teacher of the Year Award

Sally Chu, MD

### Clinical Teacher of the Year Award

Joshua Williams, MD

### Academic Teacher of the Year Award

Laura Colbert, MD, CMS Assistant Professor of  
Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences

### Faculty Service Award

Christopher Sullivan, MD, CMS Instructor of  
Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences ■



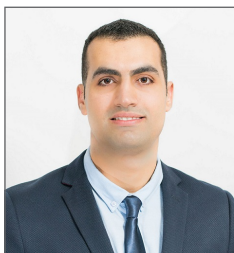
# Graduate Medical Education (GME) News

## *Welcoming Our New Residents and Fellows*

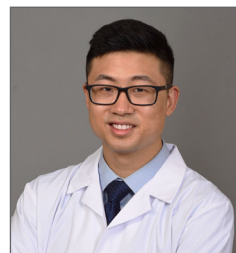
### Internal Medicine Fellows



Dr. Rashid Ali  
*Pulmonary Disease*



Dr. Ali Hamoudi  
*Cardiovascular  
Disease*



Dr. Alexander Huh  
*Cardiovascular  
Disease*



Dr. Clio Musurakis  
*Endocrinology*



Dr. Priya Rimal  
*Endocrinology*

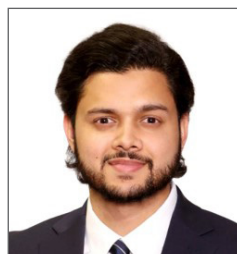


Dr. Kerolus Shehata  
*Cardiovascular  
Disease*

### Internal Medicine Residents — Captain James A. Lovell Federal Health Care Center



Dr. Wajeeha Akhter



Dr. Osman Aman



Dr. Aamani Bavanasi



Dr. Kurian Chandu



Dr. Chijen Lee Chen



Dr. Anum Khan



Dr. Daniel Khan



Dr. Talia Farrukh Malik



Dr. Syed Mumtaz  
Ali Naqvi



Dr. Christopher  
Seyoung Park



# Graduate Medical Education (GME) News

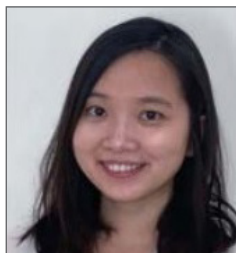
## Internal Medicine Residents — Northwestern Medicine McHenry Hospital



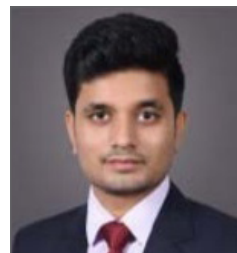
Dr. Hyder Ali



Dr. Syeda Tooba Ali



Dr. Po-Hua Chen



Dr. Aman Dutta



Dr. Anusha Kavuri



Dr. Mariam Khabsa



Dr. Fahad Khan



Dr. Nimisha Madas



Dr. Komal Malik



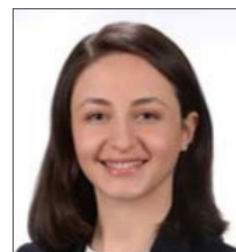
Dr. Siddharth Matta



Dr. Richard Orji



Dr. Saad Waraich



Dr. Gizem Yassa

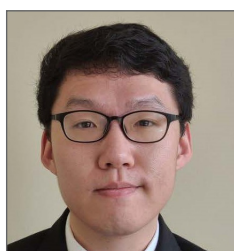
## Psychiatry Residents



Dr. Allison Fassett



Dr. Mohammed Ismail



Dr. Won-He Lee



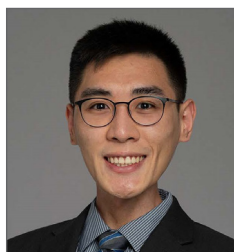
Dr. Pragati Mamtara



Dr. Ghulam Mujtaba



Dr. Yevgeniy Vvedenskiy



Dr. Gary Wu



Dr. John Yang

# Graduate Medical Education (GME) News

## CMS Residents Receive EQUITY Funds

In its effort to promote Quality Improvement (QI) education and practice in medical education, the Graduate Medical Education Committee at Chicago Medical School founded the Residents Quality Council in 2015. The council is led by **Dr. Dima Arbach**, associate program director of the psychiatry residency program, and is composed of representatives from the Psychiatry and Internal Medicine residencies. Part of the council's activities is to encourage and support residents initiating and participating in QI projects.

In April 2021, three QI projects by CMS residents were awarded funding through the EQUITY (Education, Quality Improvement, Training Year) Fund. The EQUITY Fund was created by the Chicago Association for Research and Education in Science (CARES) to provide opportunities for trainees to conduct projects that help veterans improve and maintain their health, resulting in data or evidence that evaluates a current approach or program design, or provides direction for improvement in services provided by the VA.

Projects supported through the Fund are encouraged to include instruction and learning for women veterans under VA care, to support behavioral health and wellness under the VA Mental Health Service, and to help veterans and their caregivers navigate the VA healthcare system. The following projects by CMS residents were awarded funds:

- “Re-evaluating the Appropriateness of the Fecal Immunohistochemistry Test” — **Shreya Desai**, MD; **Shubham Agarwal**, MD; and **Sumaiya Khaja**, MD, all PGY-3.



*Dr. Desai*

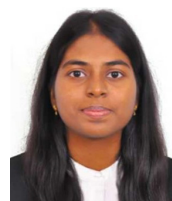


*Dr. Agarwal*



*Dr. Khaja*

- “Fighting for a Chance: Identifying Minority Groups Among the Veteran Population that Need Colorectal Cancer Screening” — **Aathi Lakshmi Mariappan**, MD, PGY-2; **Swetha Paduri**, MD, PGY-3; **Hiteshwar Mangat**, MD, PGY-2; **Charmi Patel**, MD, R '21; and **Nehal Patel**, MD, PGY-3.



*Dr. Mariappan*



*Dr. Paduri*



*Dr. Mangat*



*Dr. Charmi Patel*



*Dr. Nehal Patel*

- “Advanced Directives Update Initiative” — **Shreya Desai**, MD; **Sumaiya Khaja**, MD; and **Hans Wang**, MD, all PGY-3. ■



*Dr. Desai*



*Dr. Khaja*



*Dr. Wang*

# Graduate Medical Education (GME) News

## *Updates from Northwestern Medicine McHenry Hospital*

*The staff of Chicago Medical School's internal medicine residency program at Northwestern Medicine McHenry Hospital share some recent news and accomplishments.*



Hello from McHenry! The CMS Internal Medicine Residency Program at Northwestern Medicine McHenry Hospital is now starting its sixth year of existence. The fifth year was certainly challenging given all the changes and protocols during the worst (hopefully!) of the COVID pandemic. It has also seen many changes for our program.

**Dr. Maryna Shayuk** continues her role as Program Director with **Dr. Prashant Sura** taking on the Associate Program Director role. Dr. Sura even received the Golden Apple Award for Attending Teacher of the Year. **Dr. Preston Cannady** continues his role with the resident program in an advisory capacity. His advice and leadership during the formative years of this program have been invaluable. A new outpatient

resident clinic, under the leadership of **Dr. Erin Davis**, opened in February of 2020. The timing was not great given the pandemic, but it has been a great success so far. We also continue to have the strong support of all our core faculty members — **Drs. Yaremko, Zahra, Baig**, and of course, **Dr. Ted Lorenc**. **Karen Quintana** is the Program Administrator that keeps the whole ship from sinking! We were pleased to discover our Residency Program this year received ACP elite status and the annual residency ACGME survey reflected excellent academic achievements and higher than the average national standards in numerous metrics.

We have many outstanding residents. For a program that started out with the intent to produce



# Graduate Medical Education (GME) News

primary care physicians, we have been amazingly successful at obtaining fellowship spots. Our most recent graduates are moving on to fellowships in endocrinology, hematology and oncology, geriatrics, nephrology, infectious disease, palliative care, critical care, cardiology, and rheumatology all over the country. Many, though, are suspiciously close to beaches! Three of our graduates have moved on to hospital medicine. One of those, **Dr. Vasu Patel**, a former Chief Resident, will be remaining at Northwestern McHenry and will be involved in teaching the residents himself. Another resident will also continue in teaching as a fourth year Chief Resident with the Mercy Health system in Rockford. Three former graduates are coming back and working nights under locum's status.

**Dr. Grace Ying** received the Golden Apple for Resident Teacher of the Year. She is now starting her second year of residency. **Dr. Nayha Tahir** and **Dr. Robin Sherchan** both received AOA honors this past year. They are moving into their third year of the program. **Dr Jonathan Jakubowski**, another former Chief Resident, received the honor of ACP resident of the year.

Our residents have also been extremely prolific in putting out publications in various journals and online platforms. These number close to 25 in both PMID and non-PMID forums just in the past year! They have also done many poster and oral presentations, proof that our residents do the work required when they have a goal to be reached.

But we are not all work! Many of the wellness activities for the year were curtailed due to COVID. Thankfully, when the restrictions loosened up, we had some fun. Over a weekend in April, we rented a large house lakeside in Wisconsin for a resident retreat. This was

basically two days off for them to relax at a house with fellow classmates. They all appeared to have a great time. Many games were played! Significant eating and drinking done by all! I think we actually ran out of snacks after the midnight kitchen raid the first night. Very little sleep occurred that first night, much more the second night as everyone was exhausted. Thankfully no one fell in the water once the kayaks and canoes were out.

We also had a farewell picnic in June of this year to wish all the graduating seniors good luck! This occurred at a local forest preserve. Again, significant eating and drinking done by all. We had a great cookout with hamburgers, hotdogs, Halaal meat and vegetarian choices, and all the trimmings. Water balloons eventually made an appearance and they were the hit of the event.

Graduation night was a beautiful event. We had our program ceremony on June 9. It was held downtown on the Odyssey boat off of Navy Pier. The weather was perfect for a sunset dinner cruise along the skyline. It was very picturesque to watch the fog and mist roll in along the shoreline with the sun setting behind the skyline. We held the recognition ceremony during dessert with family, friends, and faculty in attendance. After that, we were treated to the Wednesday night fireworks show. Sailing was smooth and the event was fabulous. Everyone enjoyed it.

The new interns started their onboarding June 25. We wish them all well during their upcoming three-year career here. We will be having a welcoming party soon. The date needs to be finalized as of yet but, no doubt, it will be a good time and a great chance for them to get to know each other. ■

# STAFF CORNER

## Get to know the people who make CMS a great place to study and work!



### Kara Bass

Senior Administrative Assistant

Department of Foundational Health and Humanities (FSH)

Time at CMS: 1 year

Kara Bass works in the FSH department of CMS, working with the faculty and staff who provide support for first- and second-year medical students. She does a lot of “behind the scenes” work such as budget management, purchasing, scheduling, recruitment support, and exam proctoring. As the acting CMS Room Scheduling Liaison, she’s the central hub of all things scheduling-related for CMS. She manages the M1 and M2 calendars and room reservations to provide a seamless experience for the students, staff, and faculty whether the lectures are held in-person or virtually. She also provides

administrative support for the annual Women in Science & Healthcare (WiSH) Symposium.

When the pandemic disrupted the nationwide residency application process and students were forced to conduct all their residency interviews virtually, Kara stepped in to help. She worked with fourth-year CMS students to arrange times for them to come to campus, making sure each student had a clean, quiet space with a reliable internet connection to conduct their virtual interviews.

“Though she’s only been here a year — and all during the pandemic — Kara has become indispensable to the Department of Foundational Sciences and Humanities and indeed, CMS as a whole,” said Kara’s supervisor. “She brings a great attitude to everything and is a terrific problem-solver. It’s been a joy to work with her, even though we’ve only met in person a couple of times.”

When asked to describe her favorite part of working at CMS, Kara cited the work environment. “People genuinely care about each other and want you to succeed in your role,” she said. “There is always someone available to help and answer questions. Everyone seems to work as a team to ultimately make sure the students are getting what they need out of their medical school education, while also making sure the needs of the staff and faculty are met too. I’ve never experienced this level of professional camaraderie in a workplace before.”

Kara attended the College of Lake County and has an Associate of Science degree in Environmental Sciences. She hopes to continue her education soon at Purdue, focusing on Environmental Policy and Management. Outside of work, she’s a huge nature enthusiast. She spends several evenings a week outside enjoying a walk at the forest preserves, playing tennis, or frisbee golf with friends. When she has to be indoors, she enjoys playing board games, video games, or crafting. She especially enjoys making items that can be used for tabletop role-playing games like sewing dice bags, wood-burning boxes, and even making dice. ■

# School & Department News

## Awards & Accomplishments



*Dr. Leah Bolden*

**Leah Bolden, MD '21, and Lin Lu, MD, PhD,** assistant professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences, both received a Leonard Tow Humanism in Medicine Award. The award recognizes graduating students and faculty members who demonstrate both clinical excellence and outstanding compassion in the delivery of care and who show respect for patients, their families, and healthcare colleagues.



*Dr. Lin Lu*

**Jeffrey Brown, PhD,** a postdoctoral associate working with Dr. William Frost in the Stanson Toshok Center for Brain Function and Repair, was interviewed in an online article published by the BRAIN Initiative.



The article highlights “how neuroscientists are mapping the brain across species – from worms and sea slugs to humans”. The accompanying video created by Dr. Brown was selected as one of the top entries to the BRAIN Initiative’s annual “Show Us Your BRAINs” contest.



**Archana Chatterjee, MD, PhD,** Dean of CMS, was elected to the AAMC Council of Deans Administrative Board for 2021-22. The Council of Deans convenes deans of AAMC member medical schools in the

U.S. and Canada to address issues affecting academic medicine and develop strategies to achieve excellence in medical education, research, and patient care.

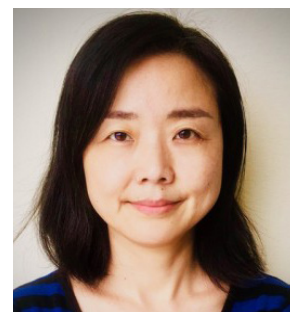
**Mirek Dundr, PhD,** Center for Cancer Cell Biology, Immunology and Infection, assistant professor of cell biology and anatomy, received a one-year, \$109,200 grant from Kansas State University for his research study “Structure-Function Properties in Liquid Organelles.”



**Michelle Hastings, PhD,** director of the Center for Genetic Diseases and professor of cell biology and anatomy, received a three-month, \$11,000 grant from the ForeBatten Foundation for her research study “Antisense Oligonucleotides for the Treatment of CLN3 Batten Disease-Supplement.”



**Eun Jung Hwang, PhD,** Stanson Toshok Center for Brain Function and Repair, assistant professor of cell biology and anatomy, received a \$60,000 Schweppe Scholar Award for her project entitled “Neural Basis of Cognitive Decline in





# School & Department News

Normal Aging.” This grant is available to outstanding junior faculty at Chicago Medical School who have not yet received NIH R01 funding (or the equivalent).



*Sarah Laudon*

**Sarah Laudon**, CMS '22, and **Connor McCormick**, CMS '24, were both accepted into the University of Pittsburgh LEADS/Gleitsman Student Research in Palliative Care Program. Students accepted into this program will work with a faculty mentor on a research or scholarly project of their choice related to palliative care to gain a better understanding of the nature of palliative care, the therapies associated with it, and the benefits it can provide to patients and families.



*Connor McCormick*

Sarah is working on a project studying emotional supports (or lack thereof) among caregivers of children with medical complexity. Connor is working on a project to reduce readmissions in palliative care oncology patients via pharmacy transitions of care program.

**David Mueller**, PhD, Center for Genetic Diseases, professor of biochemistry and molecular biology, received a \$49,230 instrumentation supplement to the NIH grant, “Structure and Mechanism of the



Mitochondrial ATP Synthase and Batten Disease Gene Product, Cln3p.”

**Daniel Peterson**, PhD, director of the Center for Stem Cell and Regenerative Medicine and professor of neuroscience, recently chaired two sessions on Artificial Intelligence for Image Analysis at the 13th European Congress for Stereology and Image Analysis, June 2021, SaintÉtienne, France. This conference was held as a virtual event.



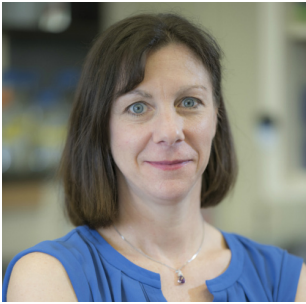
Dr. Peterson was also appointed to the Stem Cell Committee of the American Society for Gene and Cell Therapy.



**Yanhan Ren**, CMS '22, was the Chicago representative in the 2021 University Immersive Program, an international global health education event hosted by West China University and Huaxi School of Medicine. The program consisted of 26 medical

students from China, Russia, and the United States. Students simulated a new pandemic scenario, which is countered with international collaborative effort. Yanhan, along with medical students from St. Louis University, served as U.S. CDC representatives in this simulation event.

# School & Department News



**Beth Stutzmann, PhD**, director of the Center for Neurodegenerative Disease and Therapeutics and professor and discipline chair of neuroscience, received a one-year, \$43,000 grant from Photonic Pharma LLC for

her research study “Drug Discovery Pipeline Targeting Pathologically Leaky Calcium Release Channels in Age-Related Indications.”

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**Jennifer Vu**, CMS '24, was selected for the Chicago Area Schweitzer Fellows Program for 2021-22. Each year, the Schweitzer Fellowship provides 30 graduate students in health-related fields with opportunities to design and implement projects that



improve the health and well-being of underserved Chicago communities. Jennifer’s proposed service project will create telemedicine group visits that focus on educating underserved patients about chronic disease and addressing the health literacy needs of the North Chicago and Waukegan communities.

## Presentations & Publications

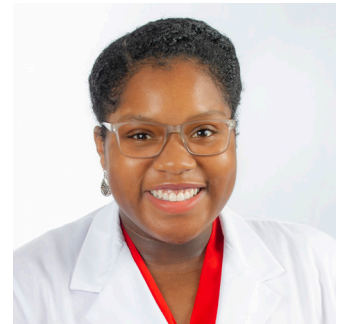
**Zahra Abbas**, MD '21, and **Leah Bolden**, MD '21, presented two posters at the Gold Humanism Honor Society 2021 virtual conference in May. The conference theme was “Humanism and Healing: Structural Racism and Its Impact on Medicine.” Zahra and Leah co-authored both posters, titled “Resources Available to Train Medical

Educators in Health Disparity Course Facilitation” and “Inspiring Institutional Change: Utilizing Medical Students Survey Responses to Motivate the Creation of a Health Disparities and Inequities Curriculum.”

Faculty co-authors included **Melissa Chen**, MD, associate professor of medicine and clinical director of the Interprofessional Community Clinic; **Carl Lawson**, PhD, MPH, MA, RFU director of interprofessional global health and CMS assistant professor of medical education; and **Jeanette Morrison**, MD, vice dean for medical education and associate professor of medicine.



*Dr. Zahra Abbas*



*Dr. Leah Bolden*

.....



**William Agbor-Baiyee, PhD**, director of house and learning communities and associate professor of medical education, presented “The Nature of Learning Communities and the Goals of Medical Education” at the Understanding Medical

Professional Identity Formation and Character Development Symposium, hosted virtually by the Kern Institute for the Transformation of Medical Education.

Additionally, Dr. Agbor-Baiyee was elected to a two-year term on the board of directors of the Academy of Professionalism in Health Care.

# School & Department News

**Maureen Benjamins**, PhD, senior research fellow at Sinai Urban Health Institute and CMS assistant professor of medicine, published an article on religious beliefs related to health, with co-author **Kelly Walters**, MD '20, in the *Journal of Religion and Health*. The article, titled "Religious



*Dr. Maureen Benjamins*

*Beliefs About Health and the Body and their Association with Subjective Health,"* used data from the Sinai Community Health Survey and found high levels of belief in the importance of prayer for health, God's will as the most important factor in getting well, and the sanctity of the body.

Dr. Benjamins also published three studies on racial inequities in cause-specific mortality at the city level, working with colleagues from the Sinai Urban Health Institute, DePaul University, Loyola University, and Rosalind Franklin University.

- The first examined Black/white inequities in diabetes mortality. Published in *Diabetes Research and Clinical Practice*, the study, titled "Diabetes Mortality Across the 30 Biggest U.S. Cities: Assessing Overall Trends and Racial Inequities," found that death rates from diabetes varied widely across the 30 largest U.S. cities, as did racial inequities in rates. Nationally, the Black mortality rate was 2.2 times higher than the white rate, but this varied across cities. Washington, DC was the most inequitable city with the Black population experiencing a death rate over 6 times higher than the white rate.
- The second study looked at racial inequities in influenza/pneumonia mortality. Published in the *Journal of Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities*, the study, "Influenza and Pneumonia Mortality Across

the 30 Biggest U.S. Cities: Assessment of Overall Trends and Racial Inequities," found that the national influenza/pneumonia mortality rate significantly decreased over the past decade, as did the death rate in about half of the cities. The Black mortality rate was higher than White rate at the national level and in about one-third of the biggest cities.

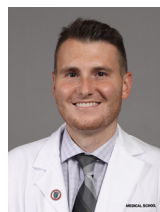
- In the third study, Dr. Benjamins; **Samuel Bunting**, MD '21; and **Peter Lorenz**, CMS '22 (along with colleagues from Sinai Chicago and Loyola University) assessed racial inequities in HIV mortality across the 30 biggest US cities. Across the cities, Black people were approximately two to eight times more likely to die from HIV compared to White people. The inequities improved over time at the national level, but not within most of the big cities. The study, titled "HIV Mortality Across the 30 Largest U.S. Cities: Assessing Overall Trends and Racial Inequities," was published in *AIDS Care* in July.



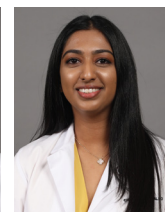
**Virginie Bottero**, PhD, Center for Neurodegenerative Disease and Therapeutics, research associate and lecturer of humanities and health care; **Dallen Powers**, CMS '23; **Ashna Yalamanchi**, CMS '23; and **Judy Potashkin**, PhD, Center for Neurodegenerative Disease and Therapeutics, professor of cellular and molecular pharmacology, co-authored "Key Disease Mechanisms Linked to Alzheimer's Disease in the Entorhinal Cortex," published in the *International Journal of Molecular Sciences*.



*Dr. Virginie Bottero*



*Dallen Powers*



*Ashna Yalamanchi*



*Dr. Judy Potashkin*



# School & Department News



**Archana Chatterjee**, MD, PhD, Dean of CMS and RFU Vice President for Medical Affairs, shared her experiences and expertise in an AAMC webinar on strategies to recruit, support, and develop women

of color to thrive in the ranks of leadership in academic medicine. The May 26 event, titled “Carving a Path to Leadership: Strategies and Interventions,” was part of the AAMC Women of Color and Intersectionality Webinar Series.

Dr. Chatterjee also presented “The Community Role of a Medical School During a Pandemic” on June 8 in a virtual event as part of the BioPathways Entrepreneurial Speaker Series. BioPathways is partnering with Women in Bio throughout 2021 to feature prominent female biotech founders, executives, and leaders in venture capital.

**Walter Francesconi**, research associate; **Fulvia Berton**, research specialist; **Valentina Olivera-Pasilio**, SGPS '22; and **Joanna Dabrowska**, PhD, PharmD, Center for the Neurobiology of Stress Resilience and Psychiatric Disorders, associate professor of cellular and molecular pharmacology, authored “Oxytocin Excites BNST Interneurons and Inhibits BNST Output Neurons to the Central Amygdala,” published in *Neuropharmacology*.



*Dr. Joanna Dabrowska*

**Johnny He**, PhD, director of the Center for Cancer

Cell Biology, Immunology and Infection and professor and discipline chair of microbiology and immunology, gave a plenary presentation titled “Activation of  $\alpha 7$  Nicotinic Acetylcholine Receptor Ameliorated HIV-Associated Neurology and Neuropathology” at the virtual 17th International Symposium on NeuroVirology, June 2-4.



**Hongkyun Kim**, PhD, Center for Cancer Cell Biology, associate professor of cell biology and anatomy, authored an article titled

“UNC-2 CaV2 Channel Localization at Presynaptic Active Zones Depends on UNC-10/RIM and SYD-2/Liprin-alpha in *Caenorhabditis elegans*,” which was recently published in the *Journal of Neuroscience*.

**Ying Liu**, PhD, Center for Cancer Cell Biology, Immunology and Infection, research professor of microbiology and



immunology, published a manuscript titled “Tip110 Expression Facilitates the Release of HEXIM1 and pTEFb from the 7SK Ribonucleoprotein Complex Involving Regulation of the Intracellular Redox Level” in *Aging and Disease*.

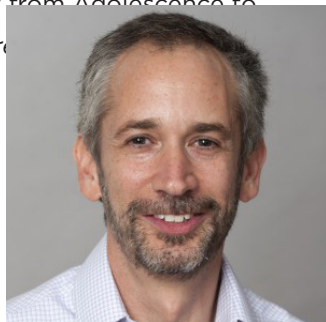
**Max Loh**, PhD '21, postdoctoral research associate, and

# School & Department News

**Amiel Rosenkranz**, PhD, director of the Brain Science Institute and professor of cellular and molecular pharmacology, authored the article “Shifts in Medial Orbitofrontal Cortex Activity from Adolescence to



Dr. Max Loh



Dr. Amiel Rosenkranz

**Gustavo Martinez**, PhD, assistant professor of microbiology and immunology; **Joseph Reynolds**, PhD, associate professor of microbiology and immunology; and **Kristen Patterson**, laboratory research assistant, all from the Center for Cancer Cell Biology, Immunology, and Infection, contributed to a study titled “Toll-Like Receptor 2 Induces Pathogenicity in Th17 Cells and Reveals a Role for Interactor Protein for Cytohesin Exchange Factors 1 (IPCEF) in Regulating Th17 Cell Migration” accepted for publication in the journal **Cell Reports**. The first author was **Kathryne Marks**, PhD '20. Dr. Marks demonstrated that increased expression of the scaffold protein IPCEF inhibits inflammatory T cell infiltration of the brain and spinal cord in a model of



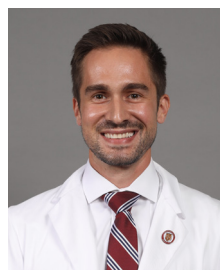
Dr. Gustavo Martinez



Dr. Joseph Reynolds



Kristen Patterson



**James Nardini**, CMS '23, authored an article titled “Stop The Bleed: Why It Matters Now” which was published in the August/September issue of *EM*

*Resident*. The article was written shortly after the King Soopers Supermarket shooting in Boulder, Colorado, and discusses the importance of hemorrhage control initiatives and training for the general public.

**Elina Pliakos**, CMS '22, was featured in the AMA Journal of Ethics podcast *Ethics Talk* in a segment titled “Economic Decision Modeling and Reducing Waste in Health Care.”



**Yanhan Ren**, CMS '22, was the first author of “Portable Negative Pressure Wound Therapy Research Presents a Unique Perspective in Wound Care Management,” which was published in the *Journal of Investigative Surgery* in March 2021.

Yanhan also has a poster and video abstract titled “Novel Surgical Approaches for the Management of Peripheral Ulcerative Keratitis (PUK)” which has been selected for presentation at the 2021 American Academy of Ophthalmology (AAO) in New Orleans in November. This is a collaborative project with Loyola University

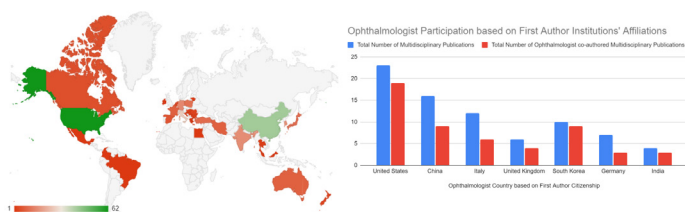
# School & Department News

Chicago Stritch School of Medicine Senior Resident Dr. Sinthu Ranjan, and Chair of Ophthalmology Dr. Charles S. Bouchard.

The video depicted two approaches for the surgical management of peripheral ulcerative keratitis (PUK). The first one involved essentially a deep anterior lamellar keratoplasty (DALK) procedure, which utilized a full thickness donor tissue after removing the endothelium and Descemet membrane. The second procedure involved a crescentic lamellar keratoplasty using a freehand anterior lamellar graft. Specifically, the DALK procedure is a relatively novel surgical approach to the management of PUK. Although DALK and PUK have been described separately in the literature, there have been limited reports of DALK management for PUK.

Yanhan also has a research project titled "Ophthalmologists' Role in Multidisciplinary Thyroid Eye Disease Research" which was presented at Mayo Clinic's

## Ophthalmologists' Participation in Thyroid Eye Disease



Grand Rounds on August 9.

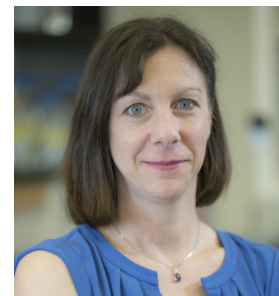


**Henry Sackin, PhD**, Center for Proteomics and Molecular Therapeutics, Professor of Physiology and Biophysics, published (as sole author) a paper entitled, "Hypothesis for Renin-Angiotensin Inhibitor Mitigation of COVID-19" in

the 2021 Elsevier journal, *Medical Hypotheses*. The paper addresses how readily available antihypertensive medications can be used to mitigate COVID-19.

**Beth Stutzmann, PhD**,

director of the Center for Neurodegenerative Disease and Therapeutics and professor and discipline chair of neuroscience, presented "Shared Neuronal Pathophysiology in AD Mouse Models and Human Induced



Neurons" as part of the University of California-Irvine's MIND series. She also presented "Targeting Upstream Pathogenic Mechanisms in Alzheimer's Disease Models for Novel Therapeutic Strategies" at Cedars Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles, California.



**Alex Woods, CMS '22**, authored an article titled "Abametapir for the Treatment of Head Lice: A Drug Review" which was published in the June 2021 issue of *Annals of Pharmacotherapy*.

**Xiaojie Zhao, PhD**, postdoctoral research associate in the lab of Dr. Johnny He, published a manuscript titled "Activation of  $\alpha 7$  Nicotinic Acetylcholine Receptor Ameliorated HIV-Associated Neurology and Neuropathology" in *Brain*.



# School & Department News

## Events and Other News

**Abdul Alraiyes**, MD, FCCP, associate professor of medicine, was invited to teach the first in-person, hands-on course for bronchoscopy at the American College of Chest Physicians on June 3-4 and June 5-6 after the pandemic.



The CMS Office of Excellence in Diversity and Inclusion hosted a guest lecture on June 18 in observance of **Juneteenth**.

Johnathan JeVon White, PhD, presented “The Thirst: Juneteenth and the Existential Quest for Black Freedom.” Dr. White is an assistant teaching professor of U.S. and African-

American Studies at Penn State Greater Allegheny, where he is also co-director of the Stewart and Jones Scholar-Leadership Program and chair of the campus Anti-Racist and Social Justice committee.



**Victor Barragan**, CMS '24, was elected president of his M2 class (the first Latinx Class President at CMS). Victor has also been working at Rush University on a Surgical Dermatology and a Dermatopathology research project.

The **Interprofessional Community Clinic** has been hard at work delivering vital boxes to their patients. This project has been led by the Executive Officer of Community Outreach, **Aashka Patel**, and Panelist **Ashi Shrivastava**, both CMS '24. Vital boxes serve as a way to aid patients in their telehealth encounters with the ICC by providing them with the medical equipment and supplies needed for their appointment as well as longitudinally managing their health. Boxes include scales, pulse oximeters, blood pressure cuffs, thermometers, glucometers, lancets, and glucose testing strips. 32 boxes have been packaged and sent out so far, with more being sent each week. ■

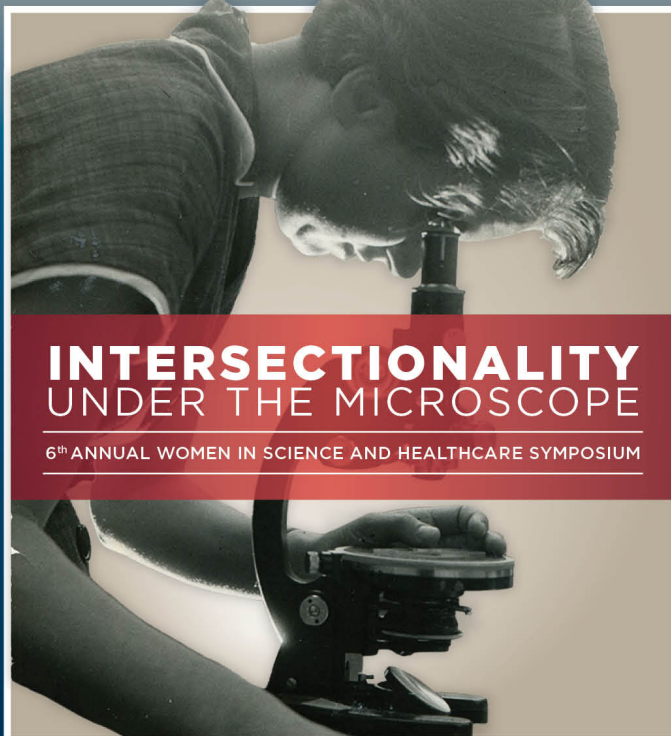


*Aashka Patel*



*Ashi Shrivastava*

REGISTER NOW



## INTERSECTIONALITY UNDER THE MICROSCOPE

6<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL WOMEN IN SCIENCE AND HEALTHCARE SYMPOSIUM

PLEASE JOIN US VIA ZOOM

23  
SEPTEMBER

4-6 P.M.  
CENTRAL TIME

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WiSH



## WiSH Symposium: Intersectionality Under the Microscope

*Keynote speaker: Jioni A. Lewis, PhD*

*"Applying Intersectionality to Center Black Women in Health Equity"*

We want to hear from you!

To submit information or news for upcoming issues, contact  
Candice Kosanke at [candice.kosanke@rosalindfranklin.edu](mailto:candice.kosanke@rosalindfranklin.edu).



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