



CMS NEWS

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Dean's Message



Greetings from the Dean's Office!

A new academic year is in full swing, and our students are back on campus (or at our affiliate sites completing their clinical rotations and electives). The last few months have been packed with events and celebrations as we bid farewell to the graduating Class of 2026, held an award ceremony to celebrate our students' accomplishments, greeted our new residents, welcomed the new Class of 2030 to campus, and marked our incoming students' introduction to their medical school journey with the annual White Coat Ceremony.

On May 29, we celebrated Chicago Medical School's 112th Commencement as 174 graduates received their medical degrees, including two students who graduated with a combined MD/PhD degree. Congratulations to these 174 new doctors. I wish them all the best as they move on to the next stage of their careers, beginning their residencies and fulfilling their calling to improve the health of our nation.

The day before Commencement, we held our annual student awards ceremony, but with a new twist: this year marked our inaugural CMS Aesculapian and Awards Ceremony. This new tradition recognizes student excellence and also marks the transition from learner to physician, as the students received their long white coats and were coated onstage by a family member, mentor, faculty member, or other designee. The awards portion of the ceremony honored students for exceptional scholarship, service, professionalism, and humanism. Among the honorees were 34 Alpha Omega Alpha (AOA) inductees, 8 junior AOA inductees, 28 Gold Humanism Honor Society inductees, 10 Aequitas Health Equity Medical Honor Society fellows, and 63 students who earned Distinction in Basic Science. I am so proud of our graduates and everything they have accomplished so far. If their performance while at Chicago Medical School is any indication, they are off to a wonderful start as they enter the next phase of their professional journey.

Our new CMS Class of 2030 is off to a good start as they begin their medical education. We welcomed a small portion of this cohort to campus early during the JumpStart Summer Program. Now in its second year, this student support initiative is designed to help incoming students adjust to the medical school environment, giving them a strong start to medical education. During orientation week, the rest of the Class of 2030 joined us. The 203 members of our new class have come to us from 16 different states, with nearly 67% coming from Illinois. They come from a variety of backgrounds and experiences: 6 of them have served in the military, 31 of them are first-generation students, and they majored in fields ranging from public health to philosophy to biomedical engineering. But all of them have come here with the same desire to help patients, as evidenced by their collective 8,000 hours of clinical experience.

The Class of 2030 took the next step in their education on August 7 during their White Coat Ceremony. Family and friends gathered to celebrate the incoming

students as they participated in this rite of passage, symbolizing their entrance into the medical profession. Sharon L. Hame, MD Class of '91, gave the keynote address, speaking about the meaning of the white coat and giving students advice for medical school and their future careers. The students also heard from CMS faculty member and Gold Humanism speaker Dr. Catherine Deamant, before finally receiving their first white coats from the faculty who will serve as their mentors over the next four years.

As our M1 students settle into their new role as medical students and our M2-M4 students begin another academic year, the administration and faculty of CMS are working to make sure our students receive the best possible education. To that end, we carry out regular clinical site visits, meetings between CMS leadership and our affiliates' leadership that help make sure that our students, residents, and faculty are receiving the resources and support they need. This summer, I've visited clinical sites both near and far — from Temecula Valley Hospital and Inland Valley Hospital in California, to many of our Chicago sites, including Advocate Lutheran General Hospital, Aurora Medical Center, Advocate Condell Hospital, Stroger Hospital, Elmhurst Hospital, Edward Hospital, and Advocate Christ Hospital.

During my travels, I've also had the opportunity to meet with several of our alumni across the country. I've recently had the pleasure of meeting with Kathy Gohar, MD Class of '00, in California; Ramin Manshadi, MD Class of '94, in Chicago; and Bharat Motwani, MD, an alumnus of our internal medicine residency program and our infectious disease fellowship program, in Iowa. I was also able to meet Robert J. Furman, MD Class of '86, when he visited our campus in June. I always enjoy these chances to catch up with our graduates and learn about their lives, families, and careers, and I look forward to meeting even more alumni this fall at the annual CMS Alumni Reunion Weekend, scheduled for October 23-24.

Our alumni form a supportive network of physicians from all specialties. Their careers have taken them down a variety of paths, including hospital settings, private practice, academic medicine, industry, health system leadership, and global health. Many of our alumni support current students through mentorship, such as the annual Operation M.E.D.S. series that will begin in a few months. Another important form of support is through the various endowed scholarships that alumni have funded to assist students with the financial burden of medical school. I join our students in expressing gratitude to the following alumni for their generous gifts: Larry Kantor, MD 1982,

has established a \$1 million estate gift for endowed scholarships; Aaron Feingold, MD 1976, has established a \$50,000 endowed scholarship to be funded over 5 years; Melvin K. Roseman, MD 1973, and Mrs. Roselynn Roseman made a \$16,000 gift to the CMS Class of 1973 Endowed Mental Well Being Fund; Allen Rogin, MD Class of '65, has left an estate gift of \$187,000 to be directed towards supporting surgical education; and Peter Nierman, MD 1988, has pledged \$10,000 over 5 years towards the Dean Emeritus Theodore Booden, PhD, Endowed Opportunity Scholarship. Additionally, the David Garfield, MD Memorial Endowed Scholarship has been established by Dr. Garfield's family with an initial donation of \$30,000 in 2026 for a scholarship fund for CMS students. Dr. Garfield served as our psychiatry residency program director, education director, and professor during his 30 years at Chicago Medical School, and he is still remembered fondly by the CMS community.

I'll conclude this message with some faculty and leadership updates. Two of our faculty members have recently received new leadership positions: Dr. Maria Gomez has been appointed Assistant Dean of Phase II Medical Student Education, and Dr. Joseph Reynolds has been appointed Vice Dean for Research at CMS, after serving in the interim position since October 2024. Congratulations to Dr. Gomez and Dr. Reynolds, and I am confident that they will use their expertise and knowledge to advance our mission in education and research. I also want to thank Dr. Judy Potashkin, who retired in June, for her 36 years of service to CMS in the roles of professor and discipline chair of cellular and molecular pharmacology. She has left an impact on our medical school in terms of her research, teaching, and service on various committees, and I wish her a happy and well-deserved retirement.

In my next message, I will share news from our October alumni reunion and other fall events. Until then, I wish all our students, faculty, staff, and residents good health and happiness during the months ahead.

Sincerely,



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



Lauren Ehrlich, Alayna Dieter, Maura Devine, and Zachary Cherian

Commencement

Congratulations to the Class of 2026!

Rosalind Franklin University celebrated its 112th Commencement on May 29 at the Credit Union 1 Arena in Chicago, honoring the accomplishments of the Class of 2026 as 174 Chicago Medical School graduates — including two graduates with a combined MD/PhD degree — crossed the stage and received their medical degrees. Family, friends, faculty, and mentors gathered to celebrate this milestone with the graduates.

RFU President **Aron Sousa**, MD, congratulated the Class of 2026 and spoke about some of the joys and challenges they would encounter in their future careers. “It is a great honor to be entrusted with someone’s health,” he said, noting that the graduates were not only well-trained in technical skills and knowledge, but were also ready to listen to their patients and make each patient’s world a better place. “I seek in my newest colleagues the personal and professional attributes that sustain our professions,” Dr. Sousa said.

Student speaker **Dyamond Caples**, one of the graduates from the College of Pharmacy, addressed her fellow members of the Class of 2026, reflecting on the tenacity, perseverance, and willpower that had brought them to that moment. “As we enter our professions, life will continue to throw us curve balls,” Dr. Caples said. “May you always remember to use your stethoscope, mortar and pestle, or microscope as bats to knock those hurdles

out of the park. Be prepared to lead, educate, advocate, and most importantly, collaborate. None of this would be possible if we did it alone.”

Keynote speaker **Teresa K. Woodruff**, PhD, president emerita of Michigan State University and a National Medal of Science recipient, shared the three “ingredients” essential to her work as a pioneer in the field of oncofertility: create opportunities in challenges, build teams that accelerate the pace of work, and maintain optimism even when problems seem intractable.

“As Rosalind Franklin University graduates, you are well-equipped to tackle the seemingly intractable problems of our day. We are counting on you to become the thought leaders and doers of the 21st century,” Dr. Woodruff told the graduates. “Create your opportunities, use your team, and maintain your optimism as you leave this place as graduates who will lead the world to a better place.” ■



Keynote speaker Dr. Teresa K. Woodruff



Aroosha Aamir, with Dr. Jennifer Docheé and Dr. Melissa Chen



Roni Klein



Nikki Barrington Zimmer



Neil Kelekar



Victor Asonganyi



Campbell Goldsmith



Madison Hanshaw



Harsh Patel and George Peek

CMS Aesculapian and Awards Ceremony

On May 28, the day before Commencement, Chicago Medical School held its annual student awards ceremony in downtown Chicago. This is the third year that we've held our own CMS-specific awards ceremony, but this time we added a new element for our graduating students: this year marked the inaugural CMS Aesculapian and Awards Ceremony. In addition to the annual awards recognizing student excellence, the ceremony also marked the transition from learner to physician. Shedding the short white coats they had received upon entering medical school four years ago, the students received their long white coats and were coated onstage by a family member, mentor, faculty member, or other designee.

Congratulations to the Class of 2026 for this important milestone, and congratulations to all the graduates and other students who received awards during the ceremony in recognition of their exceptional scholarship, service, leadership, professionalism, humanism, and more.

Aequitas Health Equity Medical Honor Society

This honor society recognizes students who have demonstrated a strong commitment to advancing health equity and social justice.

Aroosha Aamir
Nikki Barrington Zimmer
Gloria Essien
Aayush Gupta
Caroline Madigan

Kristina Nguyen
Manasvi Paudel
Kayla Talebi
Tommi Tsao
Hyerin Yoon

CMS Dean's Award for Service to the School

Established in 1974 to recognize to graduating students who have been active in school functions and have demonstrated a continuing interest in the future of the school.

Sophia Gallucio
Aayush Gupta
Neil Kelekar

Caroline Madigan
Kristina Nguyen

Chief Prosector Award

Awarded annually to the top dissection team in recognition of excellence in cadaver dissection, clinical anatomy, and teamwork during the M2 Advanced Regional Dissection Elective. Established in 2023 through the generosity of Dr. Mervyn Sahud, CMS Class of 1964.

Talia Gierut, CMS '28
Devin Laux, CMS '28

Nathan Tefilin, CMS '28

CMS Tutoring Excellence Award

Recognizes peer tutors for exceptional performance in academic knowledge, professionalism, creativity, and reliability, selected in collaboration with CMS and RFU academic support leadership.

Campbell Goldsmith

Brittany Wilson-Mifsud

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

Awarded to a graduate who will be continuing their career in the specialty of physical medicine and rehabilitation.

Caroline Madigan

John J. Sheinin, MD, PhD, DSC Memorial Research Award

Presented for originality and creativity in a research project conducted while a medical student.

Bella Han, CMS '27



Martin Gecht, MD '44 Memorial Endowed Award

Recognizes a CMS student's effort in community service projects including leadership, community development, and service to underserved populations.

Gloria Essien

MD with Distinction in Basic Science

Recognize students who initiate and complete an original independent research project during their tenure at CMS.

Bryce Alderson

Sydney Beasley

Zachary Butler

Drake Carter

Angela Chen

Brian Chen

Jin Cheng "Benny" Chen

Zachary Cherian

Eric Cho

Elizabeth Croce

Amogha Dahal

Michael D'Elia

Maura Devine

Alayna Dieter

Lauren Ehrlich

Adam El Hendy Gunnarsson

Laith Fakhouri

Abigail Farkash

Sophia Galluccio

Clara Gannon

Jonathon Garrett

Campbell Goldsmith

Jordyn Greenbaum

Ryan Han

Jessica Hrciar

Leanna Keen

Angela Kein

Patrick King

Margaret Kwiat

James Lai

Anne Leung

Joseph Lewis

Caroline Madigan

Jacob Malakismail

Marcin Marciniak

Evlyn "Hattie" Morehead

Zachary Mortensen

Isabella Niedermair

Rosally Nunez

Briana Ong

Phillip Osak

Akshar Patel

Rahi Patel

George Peek

Josephine Pham

Nadine Pickering

Jack Pinkerton

Sabina Schaffer

Rebecca "Bella" Silver

Audrey Simmons

Martha Smith

Austin Sovell

Siddharth Suresh

Sarah Syed

Dora Tabachnick

Sarah Tiba

Toria Tomasek

Victoria Turcotte

Nathaniel Ung

Keval Vyas

Kyle Wallenstrom

Jacob Wolf

Rana Yakhshi Tafti

MD with Distinction in Research

Recognize students who initiate and complete an original independent research project during their tenure at CMS.

Rebecca (Bella) Silver

Reina Nagasaka

Melvyn Leichtling, MD '48 Oncology Research Award

Established in 1977 to assist students who submit an outstanding research proposal related to the field of oncology.

Mary Nellett

Ronald Bangasser, MD '75 Memorial Award

Recognizes demonstrated leadership in medical school. This award commemorates the commitment that Dr. Bangasser had for organized medicine and service to his colleagues.

Nikki Barrington Zimmer

Ronald M. Reifler Primary Care Award

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.

John "Jack" Hill

USPHS Excellence in Public Health Award

Awarded by the U.S. Public Health Service to recognize a medical student for outstanding involvement in community public health efforts.

Kayla Talebi

From left to right: Gloria Essien; Toria Tomasek and Aroosha Aamir; Aequitas Health Equity Medical Honor Society fellows; Sophia Galluccio; Nikki Barrington Zimmer and Dr. Melissa Chen; Kayla Talebi.



Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Society (AOA)

Election to AOA is an honor signifying a commitment to professionalism, leadership, scholarship, research, and service.

Drake Carter
Angela Chen
Zachary Cherian
Eric Cho
Maura Devine
Alayna Dieter
Laith Fakhouri
Abigail Farkash
Sophia Galluccio
Campbell Goldsmith
Jordyn Greenbaum
Jessica Hrciar
Wen Ting Hu
Neil Kelekar
Margaret Kwiat
Caroline Madigan
Marcin Marciniak

Reina Nagasaka
Isabella Niedermair
Rahi Patel
George Peek
Divesh Sachdev
Sabina Schaffer
Jacob Schuman
Raina Serota
Rebecca "Bella" Silver
Audrey Simmons
Martha Smith
Austin Sovell
Siddharth Suresh
Dora Tabachnick
Nathaniel Ung
Jacob Wolf
Lucienna Wolf

Eric Cho
Gloria Essien
Clara Gannon
Campbell Goldsmith
Michael "Hunter" Green
Jordyn Greenbaum
Aayush Gupta
Jessica Hrciar
Alissa Kainrath
Neil Kelekar
Vincent Loyal
Marcin Marciniak

Reina Nagasaka
Isabella Niedermair
Kristina Nguyen
So Hyeon Park
Divesh Sachdev
Sabina Schaffer
Brandon Sedaghat
Steffy Thomas
Toria Tomasek
Luciena Wolf
Naosuke Yamaguchi
Hyerin Yoon

Junior Alpha Omega Alpha

The following members of the CMS Class of 2027 were inducted into AOA during their third year of medical school.

Olivia Griffith
Firas Moussa
Eliza Mundenmaney
Safoora Murad

Ani Oganessian
Ethan Oliver
Syeda "Lubna" Shah
Ilana Spitz

Gold Humanism Honor Society (GHHS)

The GHHS is a community of medical students, physicians, and other leaders who have been recognized for their compassionate care. Students in this honor society have been nominated by their peers for their service to others, integrity, empathy, and commitment to clinical excellence.

Nathan Au
Nikki Barrington Zimmer

Brian Chen
Zachary Cherian

Leonard Tow Humanism in Medicine Award

Recognizes graduating medical students and faculty members who demonstrate both clinical excellence and outstanding compassion in the delivery of care.

Vincent Loyal

And congratulations to the faculty recipients who were also recognized during the ceremony:

Alpha Omega Alpha Faculty Recipients

In recognition of physician faculty members' dedication to the profession and art of healing.

Kimiko Suzue, MD, PhD

Bharathi Swaminathan, MD

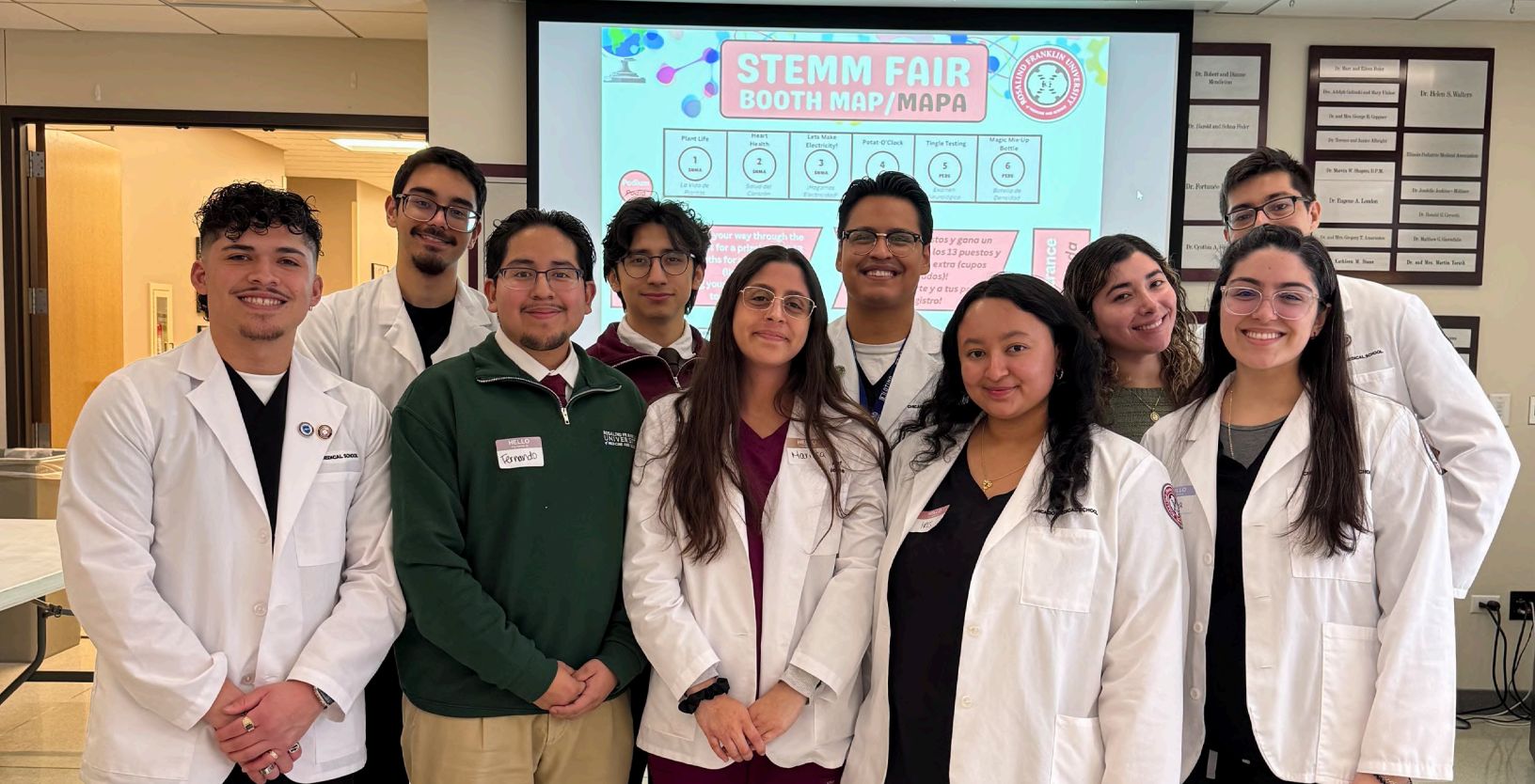
Leonard Tow Humanism in Medicine Faculty Recipient

Recognizes a faculty member who demonstrates both clinical excellence and outstanding compassion in the delivery of care.

Catherine Deamant, MD ■

From left to right: Isabella Han, Reina Nagasaka, Dr. Lise Eliot, and Rebecca Silver; Caroline Madigan with Dr. Bharathi Swaminathan.





LMSA Chicago Medical School students at the community STEMM Fair that they helped plan and organize.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: Latino Medical Student Association (LMSA) Part 2

(Part 1 of this spotlight can be found in the Spring 2026 issue of CMS News)

The **Latino Medical Student Association (LMSA)** chapter at CMS demonstrated an exceptional level of achievement this past year through sustained programming, educational initiatives, community service, and advocacy that consistently reflected the school's mission of advancing health equity, mentorship, and culturally responsive healthcare. Part 1 of this spotlight (published in the Spring 2026 issue of CMS News) featured some of the cultural programming and educational initiatives that the LMSA has organized during the year. This second half of the spotlight will focus on the organization's community service and advocacy efforts.

The CMS/RFU LMSA chapter has engaged in many recent events and initiatives to uplift Hispanic/Latinx and other historically marginalized populations through community events and collaborations with local partners.

Some of these community outreach events aim to improve the health and well-being of local marginalized populations, while others aim to introduce Hispanic/Latinx youths to careers in medicine and science.

In addition to their campus programming, the CMS chapter of LMSA has demonstrated strong leadership in community engagement and service. LMSA members volunteered as Spanish interpreters at a **Diabetic Foot Health Screening** event at the Roberti Community House in Waukegan, in partnership with RFU's Scholl College of Podiatric Medicine, helping to ensure that Spanish-speaking patients could access preventative care and health education. LMSA also volunteered at the **Mano a Mano Back-to-School Resource Fair**, supporting over 100 immigrant families by distributing school supplies, connecting families with health resources, and interpreting for community organizations to improve accessibility for Spanish-speaking participants. Through

these service initiatives, LMSA members directly supported local families while reinforcing trust between healthcare institutions and underserved communities.

The CMS chapter of LMSA is proud to constantly work with their interprofessional partner healthcare programs at RFU, upon their request for LMSA to support their community efforts by volunteering as Spanish interpreters. These opportunities have included volunteering as an organization for the **Mini Medical School and Parent Hero Academy programs** at RFU. Mini Medical School (MMS) is a free program offered by CMS to introduce 4th–8th grade students to the health sciences. Parent Hero Academy runs alongside the MMS program and is aimed at the parents and guardians of MMS students, to empower them with tools to support their children's academic and personal growth. Some of the material is provided in both English and Spanish. LMSA students volunteered to support Mini Medical School and Parent Hero Academy programming, assisting

with health education activities, CPR training facilitation, and Spanish interpretation for families and students within these activities.

One of the most impactful initiatives of the year was LMSA's leadership in organizing the **inaugural STEMM Fair** in December 2025, a collaborative event involving LMSA, the Student National Medical Association (SNMA), Black Men in White Coats, the Pediatrics Interest Group, and the Mini Medical School Pathway program. Designed to increase awareness of science and healthcare careers, the fair welcomed almost 50 kindergarten through 8th-grade students and their families, the majority of whom identified as Latino and/or African American, communities historically underrepresented in STEM and medicine.

Through 13 hands-on booths, children explored concepts such as cardiopulmonary examinations, microscopy, hand hygiene, and neuroscience using interactive activities led by health professional students. The LMSA Executive



LMSA students distributed school supplies at the Mano a Mano Back-to-School Resource Fair.



Students provided translation services to parents of Mini Medical School students during the Parent Hero Academy.



LMSA ran four booths for students in kindergarten through 8th grade during the inaugural STEMM Fair.



LMSA students hosted a "Know Your Rights" series to address immigration policy developments.

Board coordinated the planning process, worked directly with the CMS Office of Community Health and Engagement and the RFU Office of Student Life, facilitated collaboration between student organizations, and worked directly with the RFU HR department to ensure that the STEMM Fair met all requirements for hosting minors on campus. LMSA also designed a “STEMM Passport” system as a creative and fun way to encourage student engagement across all educational stations, providing incentives such as stethoscopes and first aid kits upon full completion.

When it came time to plan the booths for the fair, LMSA proposed 3–4 scientific booths per organization to present scientific concepts in an age-appropriate manner. The booths were intentionally designed to demystify medicine while making learning joyful and accessible, all while being taught by medical students that reflected the participants’ identities and language. By creating an engaging and culturally affirming environment outside

of the traditional classroom, the fair fostered curiosity, critical thinking, and early interest in healthcare careers. This initiative was deeply rooted in LMSA’s commitment to advancing health equity and building trust in healthcare institutions. The morning of the fair, LMSA members also separately volunteered to meet the parents, providing Spanish interpretation services during “Immunity and Vaccine Hesitancy” lessons and CPR training led by a healthcare provider. By including both students and parents, LMSA helped strengthen community trust in science and medicine while aiming to create a sustainable pipeline for future healthcare professionals.

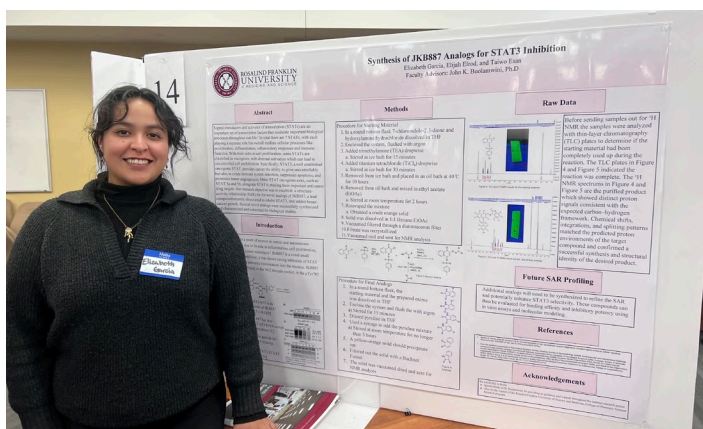
The STEMM Fair was a whole Executive Board commitment, with 12 of the 13 LMSA Executive Board members hosting four booths, as well as the registration and prize table. LMSA served as the central organizing body that guided the vision, planning, and execution of the event, with the LMSA President acting as the primary point of contact for all stakeholders, including faculty,



LMSA students organized and led a Candlelight Vigil for the RFU community following the shooting of Alex Pretti.



Students hosted a reception to celebrate Latinx community and culture on National Latino Physician Day.



LMSA student Elizabeth Garcia, COP '28, presented her research at the RFU Summer Research Poster Session.



LMSA student Iris Siguenza, CMS '29 (right), presented her research at the Society of Student-Run Free Clinics (SSRFC) Annual Conference.

university administration, and community partners. LMSA students also provided the translations for all materials and marketing to ensure accessibility for Spanish-speaking families.

Feedback from the exit surveys created by LMSA highlighted the important impact of Latino representation. Several parents noted that seeing Latino healthcare trainees serving as role models had a powerful effect on their children, reinforcing the importance of representation in STEM fields. Importantly, all families reported that language was not a barrier, reflecting LMSA's intentional inclusion of Spanish-speaking members throughout the event. All responding parties agreed that their child learned something new that day, and that they would recommend this event to other families. Based on this feedback, the goal is that the STEMM Fair will become an annual event and a cornerstone of the LMSA CMS chapter's community outreach efforts. The fair represents a significant investment of over four months of time, energy, and resources to meaningfully engage the Lake County community and expand access to science and healthcare education for historically underserved and under-represented populations in STEM and medicine.

Beyond a single event, the STEMM Fair developed and led by LMSA serves as a foundational component of a broader, longitudinal pipeline to support students from early exposure through professional health care career exposure. By addressing both access and opportunity, LMSA is actively working to reduce disparities in STEM and healthcare representation while strengthening the university's connection to the community it serves.

The CMS chapter of LMSA also remained deeply committed to advocacy and community awareness. In response to national and local immigration policy developments that affected many members of the RFU campus and surrounding community, LMSA organized the **“Juntos en Comunidad (Together in Community)” Know Your Rights series**. This initiative provided students and community members with educational presentations, open discussion spaces, and access to legal resources. In partnership with the Waukegan Center for Immigrant Progress, LMSA hosted a workshop covering emergency preparedness planning, immigration legal screenings, and guidance for encounters with law enforcement or immigration authorities. The event drew over 50 students, 10 faculty members, and

representatives from 17 student organizations that participated in solidarity. The LMSA CMS chapter worked together with physicians from the University of California San Francisco, whom they met at the National LMSA Conference in Chicago, to prepare a presentation on how to navigate ICE in healthcare situations. Feedback stated that students were appreciative of LMSA making a space for community and dialogue around the current situation, citing the importance of students knowing there are others experiencing the same situation, and thanking the organization for supporting and acknowledging their identities and struggles. LMSA also had the honor of organizing and leading a **Candlelight Vigil** that offered a safe space for the RFU community to come together to honor the lives lost and to stand in solidarity with nursing colleagues and others advocating for peace, justice, civility, and humanity in remembrance of lives that were taken too soon.

The CMS chapter of LMSA organized another event on October 1 in observance of **National Latino Physician Day**. LMSA students held a reception in the Rhoades Lobby to celebrate Latinx community and culture; highlight the vital contributions of Latinx physicians, scientists, and healthcare workers; and bring awareness to the statistic that only 4-6% of physicians identify as Latinx. During the reception, LMSA also organized a **paletas fundraising initiative**, raising funds to support chapter programming and to donate to the Waukegan Center for Immigrant Progress.

Through consistent programming, strong community partnerships, and innovative initiatives that address systemic barriers in healthcare and education, the LMSA chapter at Rosalind Franklin University has demonstrated the sustained impact, leadership, and commitment that reflects not only the dedication of its members but also the students' collective belief that empowering future healthcare professionals and strengthening communities are essential steps toward achieving health equity. ■



Attendees at the National Latino Physician Day reception.



Global Health Trip to Mexico

In June, CMS students **Crystal Yumbra**, **Elizabeth Schmidt**, and **Natalie Wolkoff**, all CMS '29, participated in a global health experience at the Universidad Biomedica Guizar y Valencia in Xalapa, México. The students were accompanied by **Ken Kessler**, PhD, director of interprofessional global health, and **Hector Rasgado-Flores**, PhD, Latinx students and community liaison and professor of physiology and biophysics.

During the month-long experience, the students participated in a blend of clinical and cultural experiences. They shadowed physicians and participated in clinical interactions with patients, while also improving their knowledge of medical Spanish. Upon their return, the students delivered presentations reflecting on their experiences and the insights gained through this global health opportunity. ■

Announcing the 2027 Aequitas Fellows

Congratulations to the 20 members of the CMS Class of 2027 who have been selected to be Aequitas Health Equity Medical Honor Society Fellows! These students were selected by a committee of faculty and alumni for their proven leadership, deep commitment to social justice, and clear vision for advancing equity as future physicians. As the new Aequitas fellows begin their M4 year, they are launching health equity-focused projects to drive meaningful change in our local community. Following the successful completion of these initiatives, the students will be formally inducted during the 2027 Commencement and Awards Ceremony program.

We also congratulate this year's faculty and resident Aequitas Fellows, who were selected in recognition of their leadership and dedicated service in the health equity space:

- **Amy Swift-Johnson**, MD '06, associate professor
- **Maureen Benjamins**, PhD, associate professor
- **Ji In "Vivien" Choi**, MD, psychiatry resident

Aequitas was founded with a singular, urgent mission: to build a community of leaders dedicated to the eradication of health disparities in all forms. From its roots in South Dakota advocating for Native American, Black, and Hispanic communities, the society has grown into a national movement. Today, we recognize those within our own Chicago Medical School community who have stepped up to lead that charge. ■



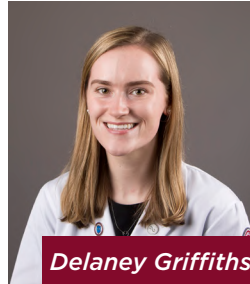
Mia Fidanze



Karan Gowda



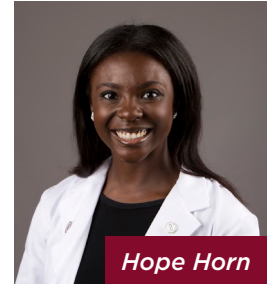
Olivia Griffith



Delaney Griffiths



Danielle Hawryluk



Hope Horn



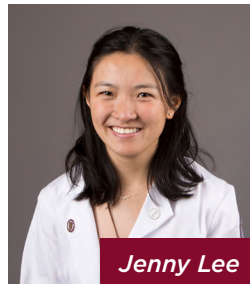
Krishi Korrapati



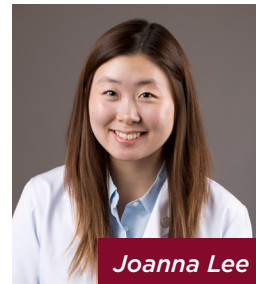
Kyle Labak



Brianna Lau



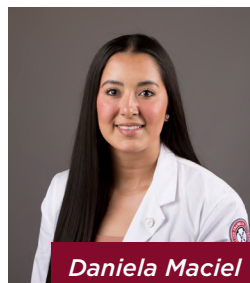
Jenny Lee



Joanna Lee



Jonathan Lo



Daniela Maciel



Brittany Morris



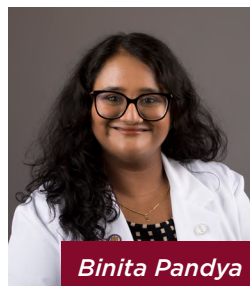
Madelyn Moulton



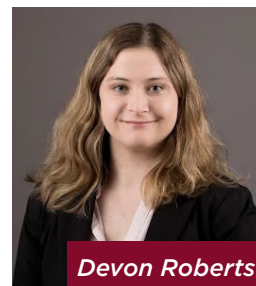
Safoora Murad



Ani Oganessian



Binita Pandya



Devon Roberts



Shivani Sharma

RFU Student Leadership Awards

Rosalind Franklin University celebrated its student leaders in May with LEAD Week, culminating with the annual Student Leadership Awards on May 8. These awards recognize outstanding individual student efforts and those of entire organizations, in areas such as community service, research, and mentorship. Congratulations to the following CMS students and CMS-affiliated student organizations for demonstrating impactful leadership and service!

Chicago Medical School Student Leadership Award

Christopher Currie, CMS '28

At-Large Student Leadership Award

(awarded to one student selected from all 7 of RFU's schools and colleges):

Nancy Shrestha, MD '26

Dr. Rosalind Franklin Rising Student Award

Shantalle Martinez, CMS '28

Commitment to Research Award

Sawyer Maher, CMS '28

Stewardship Award

Daisy Lee, CMS '28

Excellence in Sportsmanship Award

Taw Bee, CMS '29

Ambassador for Student Fitness & Wellness Award

Izza Khurram, CMS '28

Student Voice Award

Ellaina Villareal, CMS '28

Community Member of the Year Award

Andrew Le, CMS '29

Excellence in Tutoring Award

John Draper, CMS '28

Outstanding Ambassador Award

Hyerin Yoon, MD '26

Community and Campus Outreach

Stewardship Award

Jawaad Javaid, CMS '28

Agbai Kalu, CMS '28

Iris Siguenza, CMS '29

Student Organization of the Year Award

Pediatrics Interest Group

Community and Campus Outreach

Project of the Year

Latino Medical Student Association (LMSA),

for the STEMM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics, and Medicine) Fair

Program of the Year Award

Pediatrics Interest Group,

for their "Educate, Empower, and Advocate" series

Team Unity Award

Philippine Medical Association

New Student Organization of the Year Award

Healthcare Engagement, Advocacy, and Legislation (HEAL)

Outstanding Collaboration Award

Surgery Interest Group, Plastic Surgery Interest

Group, Orthopedic Surgery Interest Group,

Association of Women Surgeons,

Emergency Medicine Interest Group, and

Cardiology Interest Group,

for their collaboration on the Suture Workshop

Congratulations and thank you to all the students who make Chicago Medical School, Rosalind Franklin University, and the surrounding community a better place! ■



JumpStart students from the CMS Class of 2030 on the opening day of the program.

JumpStart Summer Program

This summer, we welcomed 31 members of the CMS Class of 2030 to campus a month early as part of the JumpStart program. The students spent the four weeks leading up to orientation week getting an early taste of medical school as they attended lectures given by CMS faculty, met with advisors, participated in workshops and panel sessions, and worked on a health advocacy project.

The JumpStart program, now in its second year, is designed to give participating students a strong start to their medical education, giving them the tools they need to navigate the transition into medical school with confidence and success.

In addition to their curriculum of lectures, study skills workshops, and exams, the JumpStart students had the opportunity to participate in a special session of the medical school's IMPACT Journal Club in July. The session featured a presentation by **Karan Gowda**,

CMS '27, under the mentorship of **Amanda Simanek**, PhD, MPH, CMS associate professor and director of the Michael Reese Foundation Center for Health Equity Research. Karan led a deep dive into equity in research funding, comparing disparities between sickle cell disease and cystic fibrosis, which sparked a lively discussion on the structural issues influencing which diseases get funded and by how much.

The program culminated with the JumpStart Poster Session, held on July 30. Throughout their time in the program, JumpStart students worked in small groups to develop a theoretical advocacy project to address health equity issues in the local community. During the poster session, the students presented their findings, including their clinical research and their proposed plans of action. All of these experiences left the JumpStart participants prepared to begin their journey as medical students. ■



JumpStart students with CMS Dean Archana Chatterjee during the program's closing ceremony and celebration.



JumpStart students at an IMPACT Journal club meeting.



Lovejot Bhullar, Siddharth Anantharaman, and Angelina Tran.



Srehith Sannareddy receives his certificate at the end of the program.



Maria Kaiser presents her health advocacy poster.



Michell Tejera Torres with JumpStart co-director Dr. Netali Ginsberg.



White Coat Ceremony

CMS welcomed members of the Class of 2030 to medical school on August 8 with the White Coat Ceremony, the traditional rite of passage that marks the step of becoming physicians-in-training. Each student crossed the stage to receive their first white coat — a symbol that will identify them to everyone they meet as a member of the medical profession. During the ceremony, students were coated by their learning community mentor (a faculty member who will advise and guide them over the next four years), received advice from CMS leadership and alumni, and reflected on the meaning of the white coat.

“It’s an honor to share this special day with you and your loved ones, and to celebrate the extraordinary group of individuals embarking on a new journey as the next generation of healthcare professionals,” **Jessica Lewis**, MD, assistant dean for student affairs, told the Class of 2030. “The tradition of the White Coat Ceremony marks the beginning of this journey, and it’s a symbolic step into the world of medicine and a life committed to service.”

The modern White Coat Ceremony was popularized by the Arnold P. Gold Foundation, founder of the Gold Humanism Honor Society, and thus serves as a reflection

on and reminder of the importance of humanism in medicine. As students donned their white coats for the first time, they were reminded that the garment is not just a marker of status and profession; it is a symbol of compassion, service, and care.

Archana Chatterjee, MD, PhD, dean of Chicago Medical School, urged the Class of 2030 to always keep humanism at the center of their practice, even in a field that is being shaped by technology and artificial intelligence. “We must constantly answer the question of how we build and sustain caring and compassionate relationships with our patients while operating in a somewhat artificial environment,” she said. “Among all the attributes of a humanistic healer, one of the most important is the ability and willingness to listen.”

Sharon L. Hame, MD ’91, delivered the keynote address, giving the incoming students advice about medical school and their future careers. Dr. Hame is certainly knowledgeable about the CMS experience: in addition to being an alumna herself, her husband and daughter are also graduates of CMS.

Dr. Hame began her speech with a reflection on the white coat the students were about to receive. “We



know it's a simple garment with sleeves and buttons and pockets, but it carries extraordinarily weight," Dr. Hame told them. "When you place this coat on your shoulders today, you have to realize and comprehend that it represents knowledge, responsibility, compassion, humility, and trust."

A nationally recognized orthopedic sports medicine surgeon, Dr. Hame serves as team physician for UCLA Athletics, the Los Angeles Sparks, and USA Basketball, and she recently served as a physician for Team USA at the Olympic Games in Paris. She used her background in sports medicine to prepare students for the careers ahead of them, comparing medicine to a team sport. Although audiences may only remember the touchdown, the home run, or the game-winning shot, Dr. Hame said, there are dozens of people and years of practice hidden behind that big moment. The same is true in medicine: each patient success story is the result of a

team of people combining their years of knowledge and practice, often behind the scenes.

"We all know that championships are rarely won in dramatic plays alone," Dr. Hame said. "They're won by mastering the fundamental skills and years of practice. Although we can make great saves in medicine as we do in sports, we also rely on our education, years of practice, and fundamental base of knowledge to treat patients and provide excellent patient care."

The Class of 2030 also heard from RFU President **Aron Sousa, MD**, who welcomed them to medical school. "We are here to make you the very best physician you can be, who will go out and make a great difference for the patient who's sitting in front of you and the community in which they live. That is our purpose," Dr. Sousa said. "So thank you for joining us in that effort. Thank you joining us in the very noble work of being a physician." ■



FIELD DAY







Dr. Monique Jones (left) demonstrates a delivery in the Simulation Lab.

M1 Specialty Exploration Expo

In May, student leaders from the CMS Class of 2029 organized a Specialty Exploration Expo to help introduce their peers to various specialty options and career paths during their first year of medical school. The interactive experience allowed students to navigate and explore each specialty through simulations and hands-on experiences including a simulated OB delivery, a stroke simulation, a simulated neonatal resuscitation, a code simulation, and experiences with various physical and neurological conditions in the Scholl Foundation Empathy Lab.

The student leaders invited physicians representing eight specialties to participate in the event. The day consisted of opening remarks and a Specialty Navigation Session led by **Monique Jones**, MD '93, assistant dean for career and specialty advising, followed by three consecutive 30-minute interactive sessions led by physicians with groups of 10-20 students at a time. The day concluded with a networking luncheon with a speed-dating format, allowing students to rotate from table to table learning about each specialty from the physician experts.

The student attendees enjoyed the day of career exploration, hands-on learning, and networking. More than 90 students took part in the event, interacting with 10 physicians representing the specialties of

anesthesiology, emergency medicine, internal medicine, obstetrics and gynecology, radiation, urology, pediatrics, and neurology. The M1 student leaders partnered with five specialty interest groups on campus to organize the event.

In post-event surveys and testimonials, students expressed appreciation for the event and the things they had learned.

"I had never considered OB/GYN before," one student wrote, "but after this event and getting a chance to deliver a baby with the simulation, I have such a newfound appreciation for this field, and it has now been put on my radar."

Another student also appreciated the OB/GYN simulation. "I really enjoyed the delivery simulation and the ability to ask questions I didn't even know I had," they wrote. "It reminded me why I went into medicine!"

Yet another student noted that exploring future careers helped them focus on the proverbial light at the end of the tunnel, writing: "The specialty expo gave me the motivation boost I needed and reminded me that all this hard work will be worth it in the end!" ■



1. Maryam Mabib, CMS '29, intubates a manikin. 2. Students used virtual reality goggles, simulator glasses, and other equipment in the Empathy Lab to experience medical conditions like macular degeneration and Alzheimer's disease. 3. Class president Andy Okhuereigbe, CMS '29, one of the expo organizers, practices an intubation technique. 4. Nicole Woloszyn CMS '29, displays a newborn manikin following a simulated delivery. 5. Symphany Lindsay, CMS '29, after completing the obstetrics simulation. 6. William Staehle, MD '11, talks about clinical decision-making while introducing students to the internal medicine specialty. 7. Suzanne Schulte, MD, leads students through a simulated neonatal resuscitation. 8. Mayssa Chehab, CMS '29, performs an ultrasound under the guidance of Netali Ginsberg, MD.

iBio STEMgirls Camp Comes to Campus

Rosalind Franklin University hosted 60 young girls on campus on June 24 as part of iBio's annual STEM camp for girls. STEMgirls is a week-long camp for girls entering grades 3-8, designed to empower female students and introduce them to science, engineering, and biotechnology through interactive experiments, teamwork, and real-world problem solving. Each year, the camp features a field trip to a local STEM-related institution, and this summer the camp partnered with RFU for a field trip filled with fun activities and bioscience programming.

During their visit, the campers rotated in small groups between five stations led by CMS staff, faculty, and students. **Erin Howe**, PhD, assistant professor of biochemistry and molecular biology, welcomed the campers to her research lab in the Center for Proteomics and Molecular Therapeutics. The campers then learned how to set out future goals with **Lizzie Akfaly**, CMS '29; **Lorenzo Bautista**, CMS '30; and Rachael Lange from the Division of Campus and Community Outreach. CMS students in the **First Generation Health Interest Group** taught the campers how to use SOAP notes

(Subjective, Objective, Assessment, Plan) to document patient encounters. Finally, they visited **Amy Pabst**, MD, assistant professor of family medicine, at the Simulation Center, and partook in the Empathy Lab with lab director Lori Thuente, PhD, RN, from the College of Nursing. All coordination was done through a joint effort between Rachael Lange, Shella Blue from the RFU Office of Institutional Advancement, and **Chrysee Gorospe** from the CMS Office of Community Health and Engagement.

This was a great experience for everyone involved, as our students and faculty honed their outreach skills and the visiting campers explored our campus while engaging with STEM concepts. After the camp was over, one of the girls expressed that she had had so much fun at each of the stations, and particularly enjoyed the Empathy Lab. One of the adults from the iBio group commented that they appreciated all the hands-on activities the students did at each station, and that they wished they had more time with us! It was a wonderful opportunity to encourage the next generation of students in science. ■



CMS students Lizzie Akfaly and Lorenzo Bautista.



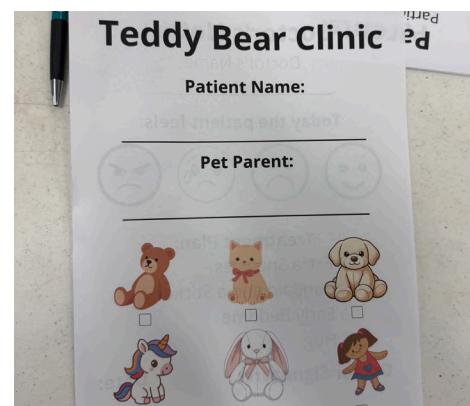
The campers toured Dr. Erin Howe's lab.



The campers visited the Scholl Family Foundation Empathy Lab to "experience" different medical conditions.



Fifteen CMS faculty and staff assisted the campers as they rotated between stations.





Environmental Impacts on Women's Health

CMS faculty and students work to research and teach about the connection between women's health and the environment, in collaboration with the Brushwood Center.

Regina de Leon Gomez, MD, FACOG, LSSGB, assistant professor of obstetrics and gynecology and course director of Clinical Foundations of Medicine, along with several CMS students, participated in a training program over the summer to teach community healthcare workers about the impact that environmental factors like air quality and rising temperatures can have on women's health. During a two-month Maternal and Environmental Health Training program, a collaboration between Rosalind Franklin University, the Brushwood Center at Ryerson Woods, and the Illinois Public Health Association, Dr. Gomez taught Lake County healthcare workers focused on women's health about the connection between medicine and the environment, so that doulas, home visitors, case workers, and community healthcare workers can be best prepared to help patients, especially those who are pregnant.

Two CMS students, **Faith Nguyen** and **Chloe Traeder**, both CMS '29, conducted research during the Maternal and Environmental Health Training program, under the mentorship of RFU's Michael Reese Foundation Center for Health Equity Research and center director **Amanda Simanek**, PhD, MPH. Faith and Chloe worked with Dr. Simanek and **Dr. Monideepa Becerra** from RFU's College of Health Professions to design a pre- and post- survey that was administered to the training participants to help

the Brushwood Center assess changes in knowledge about the impacts of climate and environmental factors on maternal and child health, as well as changes in self-efficacy in talking with others about those impacts. Faith and Chloe are now working on maps for Brushwood Center visualizing the distribution of climate/environmental factors, adverse birth outcomes, and access to reproductive healthcare in Lake County. They plan to present a poster summarizing their work at one of RFU's future research poster sessions.

In addition to everyone who contributed to the training sessions this summer, **Meghana Mohan**, CMS '28, worked with the Center for Health Equity Research and the Brushwood Center as an intern last summer, contributing to the creation of the content used in the training program. Faith and Chloe were then able to build on Meghana's work as they assisted with the implementation of the pilot program. Additionally, Dr. Simanek served on an advisory board that reviewed the program content for accuracy and understandability.

"The students have all been such valued contributors to this work, as well as the faculty and staff of RFU," said **Catherine Game**, executive director of the Brushwood Center. "We love that RFU engages with community partners through collaborations like this!" ■

Live Well Lake County Meeting at RFU

RFU's Michael Reese Foundation Center for Health Equity Research hosted the quarterly meeting of Live Well Lake County (LWLC) on campus on July 17, after nearly four years of cooperation between LWLC and Chicago Medical School's faculty and students.

LWLC, a community-led coalition of over 60 organizations and more than 150 partners working to improve the health and well-being of Lake County residents, is Lake County's largest collective impact initiative to advance health equity. This makes them a natural fit for partnering with our Center for Health Equity Research.

For the past four years, the Center for Health Equity Research has been active in the LWLC coalition, with center director **Amanda Simanek**, PhD, MPH, CMS associate professor, serving on several committees. A number of CMS students have also conducted research with LWLC, under the leadership of Dr. Simanek, and several of these students presented their research at the quarterly meeting.

The LWLC network has been instrumental in developing the Lake County Health Department's Community Health Assessment (CHA) and Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP). For the past year, Dr. Simanek has served on the Steering Committee for the current CHA. Additionally, she previously served as co-lead of LWLC's Access to Care subteam.

This summer, the Center for Health Equity Research mentored four CMS students on the creation of issue briefs focused on social drivers of health in Lake County. **Reem Al-Adwan**, **Gwyneth Edwards**, **Ezijeamaka Nwosu**, and **Alina Puthiyadam**, all CMS '29, presented the briefs at the quarterly meeting. The students discussed the state of health in Lake County and contributed to determining the priorities for the next five-year CHIP.

Our faculty and students remain committed to improving the health and lives of Lake County residents and workers, and we look forward to many more years of collaboration between CMS and Live Well Lake County as we work toward this goal together. ■



Clockwise from top left: CMS students Reem Al-Adwan and Ezijeamaka Nwosu presenting on the state of health in Lake County.

Dr. Amanda Simanek with Christina Hayes, MPH, CPHQ, ASQ-CQIA, Strategic Planning and Quality Improvement Manager, Lake County Health Department and Community Health Center.

Gwyneth Edwards, Dr. Amanda Simanek, Reem Al-Adwan, and Ezijeamaka Nwosu with poster boards showing examples of what the students created as part of their project (Not pictured: Alina Puthiyadam, who was unable to attend the event).





Musician and Scientist

Dr. Hector Rasgado-Flores explored science through music in two recent performances.

In addition to serving as professor of physiology and biophysics and Latinx students and community liaison at Chicago Medical School, **Hector Rasgado-Flores**, PhD, has other important roles: as a pianist and composer who explores the connection between art and science, and between music and health. Dr. Rasgado-Flores showcased his talents in two recent performances in Mexico.

On April 29, Dr. Rasgado-Flores presented a special performance of his *“Suite de los Elementos”* at El Colegio Nacional, one of Mexico’s most distinguished cultural and intellectual hubs. For any scholar, an invitation to perform at El Colegio is a significant professional

milestone, as the institution serves as a premier stage for the country’s highest achievements in the arts and sciences. Dr. Rasgado-Flores performed 14 of his original compositions, while six of his newly completed pieces were premiered by a guest performer, bringing the full suite to 20 movements. This collection features several pieces dedicated to colleagues at CMS, including those who have retired as well as active faculty: “Copper” for **Janice Urban**, PhD; “Selenium” for **Judy Potashkin**, PhD; “Niobium” for **Melissa Chen**, MD; and “Silver” for **Nutan Vaidya**, MD.

Dr. Rasgado-Flores composed his *“Suite de los Elementos”* after being commissioned by El Colegio

Nacional to create a musical work dedicated to the chemical elements in 2011, a year dedicated to chemistry worldwide. The work was premiered at the El Colegio Nacional in 2017, in the same venue that Dr. Rasgado-Flores performed his most recent concert this spring. Ultimately, what began as a tribute to the International Year of Chemistry has evolved into an “emblematic piece of chemistry,” according to El Colegio’s program for the event, proving that the periodic table can be as lyrical as it is logical.

Dr. Rasgado-Flores also performed another concert in May titled “Music, Medicine, and Entropy” at the Aleph International Festival of Sciences and the Arts in Mexico City. The festival was organized by the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), where Dr. Rasgado-Flores studied medicine, piano, and composition simultaneously, before earning his doctoral degree in neuroscience from the University of Maryland. Since then, Dr. Rasgado-Flores has pursued an interdisciplinary path integrating education, research, and music. ■

Scan the QR code below to watch the video of Dr. Rasgado-Flores’ performance of his “Suite de los Elementos” at El Colegio Nacional on YouTube:



Above: Dr. Rasgado-Flores at El Colegio Nacional with Dr. Judy Potashkin and Dr. Melissa Chen, after performing the musical pieces dedicated to them.

Opposite page: Dr. Rasgado-Flores performing at the Aleph International Festival of Sciences and the Arts in Mexico City.



Dr. Rasgado-Flores at El Colegio Nacional.



Dr. Rasgado-Flores at the at the Aleph International Festival of Sciences and the Arts.

Clinical Site Visits

CMS and RFU leadership, including **Archana Chatterjee**, MD, PhD, dean of CMS; **Aron Sousa**, MD, president of RFU; **Subhasis Misra**, MD, associate dean for clinical affairs and associate dean for graduate medical education; and **Frank Maldonado**, MD, executive chair of clinical sciences and associate vice president for medical affairs, visited several of our clinical sites over the summer. During each of these visits, our leadership met with the CMS students currently rotating at that site, as well as residents, faculty, and hospital leadership.

CMS students and residents discussed their educational experiences, and faculty were able to share their experiences as well. This summer's site visits were to Advocate Lutheran General Hospital, Aurora Medical Center, Advocate Condell Hospital, John H. Stroger Jr. Hospital of Cook County, Elmhurst Hospital, Edward Hospital, and Advocate Christ Medical Center. Dr. Chatterjee also visited two of our newer sites, Temecula Valley Hospital and Inland Valley Hospital, both located in southern California. ■



Edward Hospital



Advocate Christ Medical Center



Cook County Health

Graduate Medical Education (GME) News



Psychiatry Residents

Front row, from left to right: *New psychiatry residents Dr. Chidinma Ohia, Dr. Julianna Lazzari, Dr. Neha Piracha, and Dr. Meghan Manian. Back row, from left to right:* *Dr. Chiemeka Okafor, Dr. Phillip Chun, Dr. Olugbenro Bamidele, and Dr. Kevin Huang.*

Welcoming New Residents

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



*Dr. Yacoub
Garabedian*



Dr. Dilan Gokyer



*Dr. Yousef
Hussain*



Dr. Manouj Kumar



Dr. Brian Landry



Dr. Youngjun Lee

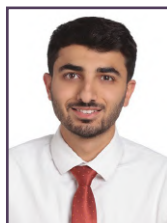


Dr. Eilaf Meenai



*Dr. Muhammad
Saad Jafri*

Internal Medicine Residents — Northwestern Medicine McHenry Hospital



Dr. Laith Alquran



Dr. Idris Anwer



*Dr. Aashutosh
Chaudhary*



Dr. Tathagato Das



*Dr. Mohamed
Elmarasi*



*Dr. Osama
Mustafa*



*Dr. Sanath
Nandeesh*



Dr. Azam Nawaz



Dr. Lalithya Posham



Dr. Ben Ryabov



Dr. Promy Saha



Dr. Syed Shuja



Dr. Aradhya Singh

Residency and Fellowship Graduation

Chicago Medical School held its **37th Annual Residency and Fellowship Graduation** with an on-campus ceremony on June 4. We celebrated the graduates from all our programs as they marked this milestone and prepared to

move on to the next chapter of their professional career. Congratulations to all our graduating Internal Medicine residents, Psychiatry residents, and Internal Medicine subspecialty fellows! ■



Graduates and leadership from the internal medicine residency program,
Northwestern Medicine McHenry Hospital



Graduates and leadership from the internal medicine
residency program, Captain James A. Lovell Federal
Health Care Center



Graduates from the psychiatry residency program,
Captain James A. Lovell Federal Health Care Center



Graduates and leadership from the internal medicine subspecialty fellowship programs, including
Cardiovascular Disease, Interventional Cardiology, Non-Invasive Cardiology, Endocrinology,
Hematology & Medical Oncology, and Pulmonary Disease

Graduate Medical Education (GME) News



*The Psychology Residency Class of 2026. **Front row:** Ryan Stefancik, DO assistant program director; Sidra Parveen, MD; Shermeen Sheikh, MD '22; Ria Datta, MD '21; Ji in Vivien Choi, MD; Paul Hung, MD '10, R '14, program director. **Back row:** Jeremy Wolfe, MD '22; Ryan Shu, MD '22; Muhammad Annas Nouman, MD; James Estaver, MD.*

Psychiatry Residency Dinner and Awards

The CMS Psychiatry Residency Program held its annual awards ceremony on June 6 to bid farewell to the Class of 2026 and to celebrate residents and faculty who achieved outstanding accomplishments over the past year.

Abdullah Damra, MD, received the **Collegiality and Humanism Award**, given in honor of CMS faculty Dr. Chandra Vedak.

Ji in Vivien Choi, MD, and **Carlos Medina**, MD, received the **Marc Fahami Award for Passion in Psychiatry**, awarded to two residents each year for demonstrating a passion for the field of psychiatry.

Chen Bo Fang, MD, was named **Resident Teacher of the Year**, an honor awarded by medical students for excellence in teaching.

Several CMS faculty members also received awards, nominated by psychiatry residents. **Scott Nelson**, MD, assistant professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences, was named **Clinical Teacher of the Year**, and **Atul Sheth**, MD, rotation supervisor, Elgin Mental Health Center, was named **Academic Teacher of the Year**. **Emily O'Hara**, PsyD, clinical psychologist, Captain James A. Lovell Federal Health Care Center, received the **Faculty Service Award**.

The winners of the psychiatry residents' annual poster competition, held in April, were announced at this ceremony. Congratulations to the residents who won awards for their research posters:

- **1st Place: Stephanie Moss**, MD — “Developing an Inpatient Therapy Workbook to Support Military Recruits”

Graduate Medical Education (GME) News

- **2nd Place: Andrew Nunez, MD, and Brandon Fleres, MD** — “Factors Associated with Longer Sentencing in Psychiatric Patients Found Not Guilty by Reason of Insanity for First Degree Murder”
- **3rd Place: Ali Mahmoud, MD, and Abdullah Damra, MD** — “Stress Induced Catatonia in Transitional Age Youth in the Setting of Acute Environmental Stress”
- **Faculty Choice: Soham Shah, MD, and Carlos**

Medina, MD — “Diagnostic Overshadowing in Substance-Related Psychiatric Presentations”

Congratulations to our residents and faculty for their well-deserved awards and honors, and we wish all our recently graduated residents the very best in their future endeavors! ■



Ali Mahmoud, MD; Omar Ruyyashi, MD; and Ryan Shu, MD.



Shifa Khan, MD; Chen Bo Fang, MD; Shermeen Sheikh, MD '22; Ji in Vivien Choi, MD; Sidra Parveen, MD; Kristin Schneider, PhD, professor of psychiatry; and Emaan Mahmood, MD.

Other GME News



Tetz C. Lee, MD, PhD, MPH, PGY-2, internal medicine resident, recently published an essay titled “All the Way Down” in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*. In his essay, Dr. Lee reflected on the art of medicine, and how AI and other technological developments have changed the way medicine is taught.

Additionally, Dr. Lee’s research proposal titled “The Challenge of Door-In-Door-Out in STEMI Transfer: A Cascade Component Analysis” has been approved by the American Heart Association (AHA) to access the Get With The Guidelines — Coronary Artery Disease (GWTG-CAD) registry — the AHA’s national quality improvement registry covering over 700 hospitals across the United States. Access to this dataset requires formal proposal submission and review by a national scientific committee. Dr. Lee served as Principal Investigator on this proposal. ■



Alumni Gathering at Wrigley Field

A group of CMS alumni gathered for a Wrigley Field Rooftop Experience at the Chicago Cubs vs. San Francisco Giants baseball game on June 6. They were joined by other RFU alumni from the College of Health Professions and the Dr. William M. Scholl College of Podiatric Medicine.

CMS alumni attending the game included **Michele Perlis**, MD '88; **Lisa Kasalajtis**, MD '00; **Calvin Klint**, MD '18; **Leila**

Patterson, MD '20; **Stephanie Puga-Bernaldo**, MD '21, MS '17; and **Victoria Hooker**, MD '22. CMS faculty **Nutan Vaidya**, MD, R '88, and CMS staff **Mary Lopez**, MS '16, were also in attendance.

Alumni enjoyed good companionship, beautiful weather, and a Cubs win! ■



Chicago Medical School representatives at the AAN annual meeting: Dr. Terrence Li, CMS alumni, and M1-M3 students interested in neurology.

CMS Alumni and Students at AAN Annual Meeting

Terrence Li, MD, CMS discipline chair of neurology, met with first-, second-, and third-year CMS students interested in neurology at the American Academy of Neurology Annual Meeting in May. He also encountered some familiar faces as he reunited with recent CMS alumni **Tim Bauer, MD '23**; **Travis O'Rear, MD '21**; and **Jordan Newman, MD '21**!

Congratulations to the CMS students and alumni who received scholarships and honors at the meeting: Medical student scholarship winners included **Lily Morache, CMS '26**, and **Gwyneth Robins, CMS '28**. **Tim Bauer, MD '23**, won a Resident Scholarship to the Annual Meeting, and **Andy Chapman, MD '22**, was a recipient of the Enhanced Resident Leadership Program. Andy Chapman recently completed his neurology residency at the University of Virginia Medical Center, and he began a fellowship in Clinical Neurophysiology this summer. ■



Dr. Terrence Li with Jordan Newman, MD '21. Dr. Newman is completing a neuromuscular fellowship and is going to be a neuromuscular attending at the Medical College of Wisconsin in Milwaukee.

Martin Lanoff, MD '85, Volunteers in Vietnam

Martin Lanoff, MD Class of '85, volunteered to teach physiatrists in Da Nang, Vietnam, at the Orthopedic and Physical Rehabilitation Hospital of Danang in April 2026. This effort was affiliated with Health Volunteers Overseas, a U.S.-based volunteer group that invests in health workers, helping to build health system resilience and capacity to ensure that all people will have access to high-quality health care delivered by local health professionals.

Dr. Lanoff traveled to Ghana in March 2025 on a similar mission (as shown in the Spring 2025 CMS newsletter!)

Dr. Lanoff, who holds a position on the CMS faculty as associate professor of physical medicine and rehabilitation, plans to take medical students on this Vietnam mission in the future as an RFUMS/CMS M4 elective. ■



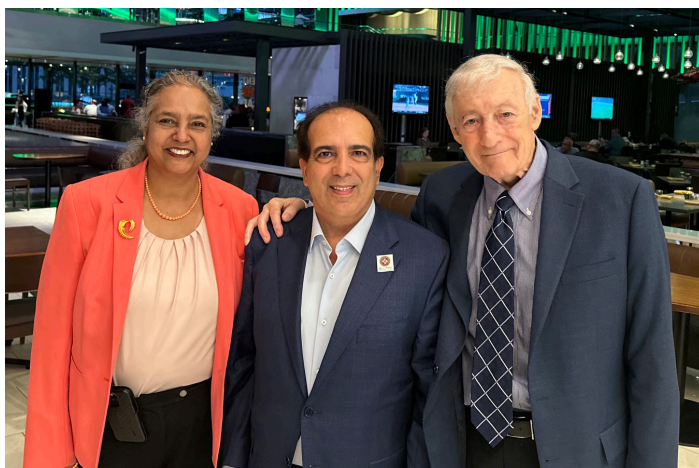
Summer Alumni Visits

CMS Dean **Archana Chatterjee**, MD, PhD, visited several CMS alumni this summer, accompanied by other CMS and RFU leadership. On a June trip to California to visit some of our clinical sites, Dean Chatterjee took the opportunity to meet with **Kathy Gohar**, MD '00.

Later that month, Dr. Chatterjee, CMS Dean Emeritus **Ted Booden**, PhD, and **George Rattin** from the RFU alumni

office visited **Ramin Manshadi**, MD '94, in Chicago, and Dr. Chatterjee later visited **Bharat Motwani**, MD, R '03, F '05 in Davenport, Iowa. Dr. Motwani is an alumnus of our internal medicine residency program and our infectious disease fellowship program.

Also in June, **Robert J. Furman**, MD '86, met with Dean Chatterjee during a visit to our campus. ■



Dr. Archana Chatterjee, Dr. Ramin Manshadi, and Dr. Ted Booden.



Dr. Archana Chatterjee and Dr. Kathy Gohar

Other Alumni News

Mildred M.G. Olivier, MD '88, received the Institute of Medicine of Chicago's Humanitarian Global Health Award for voluntary, longstanding commitment to providing international humanitarian health services.

Kimberley Darey, MD '04, president of Elmhurst Hospital, was unanimously elected as Chair of the RFU Board of Trustees in June.

Kayra Payne, MD '04, senior medical director at Oak Street Health, was featured in a preventive care story of a 104-year-old leading a thriving life. ■



From left: RFU President Aron Sousa, MD, with outgoing board chair, Dr. Karen Miller, and incoming chair of the board, Dr. Kimberley Darey. (Photo credit: Dr. Aron Sousa)

STAFF CORNER

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



Michelle Lotz

Administrative Coordinator, Medical Education,
Clinical Sciences Department
Time at CMS: 4 years

Michelle Lotz joined Chicago Medical School in 2022, starting in the CMS Office of Medical Education. She served as Administrative Coordinator of M4 Education, handling applications, scheduling, and evaluations for all fourth-year electives. She proved to be a valuable resource to students as she assisted them through the processes to schedule, register, and earn credit for completed rotations.

In 2024, Michelle moved to the medical school's Clinical Sciences Department, transitioning into her current role as Administrative Coordinator of Medical Education for the family medicine discipline. In this role, Michelle coordinates the

M3 family medicine clerkship as well as M4 sub-internships.

"I found my way into medical education somewhat unexpectedly, but quickly discovered how much I enjoy being part of the students' journey," Michelle said. "One of my favorite parts of working at CMS is getting to know our students and watching their confidence and skills grow throughout their clinical years."

Michelle's efforts in the Clinical Sciences Department are appreciated by the students, faculty, and clinical partners she works with. "Michelle is an exceptional administrative coordinator who consistently demonstrates professionalism, initiative, and a strong commitment to excellence in supporting the Family Medicine Clerkship and Sub-Internship courses," her supervisor said. "She goes above and beyond her daily responsibilities, continuously identifying innovative ways to improve processes and enhance the experience for students, faculty, and clinical partners. Michelle is highly organized, dependable, and able to manage multiple priorities while maintaining exceptional attention to detail. She approaches challenges with creativity and a solutions-focused mindset, often anticipating needs and resolving issues before they become larger concerns."

Her colleagues also appreciate Michelle's positive nature and disposition. "Beyond her outstanding work, Michelle brings an incredible sense of fun, positivity, and energy to the team, creating a welcoming environment and making even challenging days more enjoyable for everyone," her supervisor continued. "Her dedication, innovation, collaborative spirit, and positive attitude make her an invaluable member of the medical education team and a true pleasure to work with."

Outside of work, Michelle is a busy mom of three girls, ages 4, 9, and 15. "Life is rarely quiet!" Michelle said. "I love spending time with my family and traveling whenever we get the chance." ■

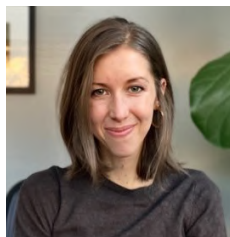
Awards & Accomplishments



Melissa Chen, MD, assistant dean for community health and engagement, medical director of RFU's Interprofessional Community Clinic, and professor of medicine, has been invited to join the inaugural physician leader's cohort of the Women in Medicine® Fellowship, a leadership

experience designed for early- and mid-career women across healthcare. During the fellowship, Dr. Chen will take part in virtual teaching sessions, individual coaching, small-group community engagement, an immersive systems-thinking simulation, and in-person workshops at Women in Medicine summits.

Nicole Ferrara, PhD, assistant professor of physiology and biophysics, Center for Neurobiology of Stress Resilience and Psychiatric Disorders, received a grant from the National Institute of Mental Health for her project titled "Social Experience Guides BMA Mediated Social Development."



Regina de Leon Gomez, MD, FACOG, LSSGB, assistant professor of obstetrics and gynecology and course director of Clinical Foundations of Medicine (CFoM), was named a semi-finalist for ecoAmerica's American Climate Leadership Award. This honor was in recognition of Dr. Gomez's hard work and dedication to climate leadership, especially with regard to the Planetary Health Workshop that Dr. Gomez runs for all first-year medical students during the CFoM course.

Holly Hunsberger, PhD, assistant professor of foundational sciences and humanities, Center for

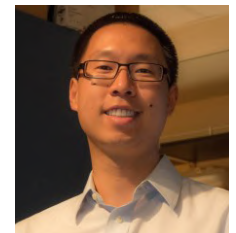
Neurodegenerative Disease and Therapeutics, received the DePaul x RFU Technology AI grant for her project titled "Development of a Non-Invasive Wearable Biosensor for Rodent Research."

This one-year, \$67,000 award is for the purpose of collecting preliminary data, which will be conducted in collaboration with DePaul University's David Hanley, PhD.



EunJung Hwang, PhD, assistant professor of cell biology and anatomy, Stanson Toshok Center for Brain Function and Repair, received a two-year, \$100,000 Brain Research Foundation Seed Grant for her research project "Reactivating Parietal Circuits to Rejuvenate Exploration and Learning in Aging."

Kaiwen Kam, PhD, associate professor of cell biology and anatomy, Stanson Toshok Center for Brain Function and Repair, received a two-year, \$400,000 National Institutes of Health grant for his research study "Machine Learning Discovery of Novel Brainstem Nuclei Controlling Orofacial Behaviors."



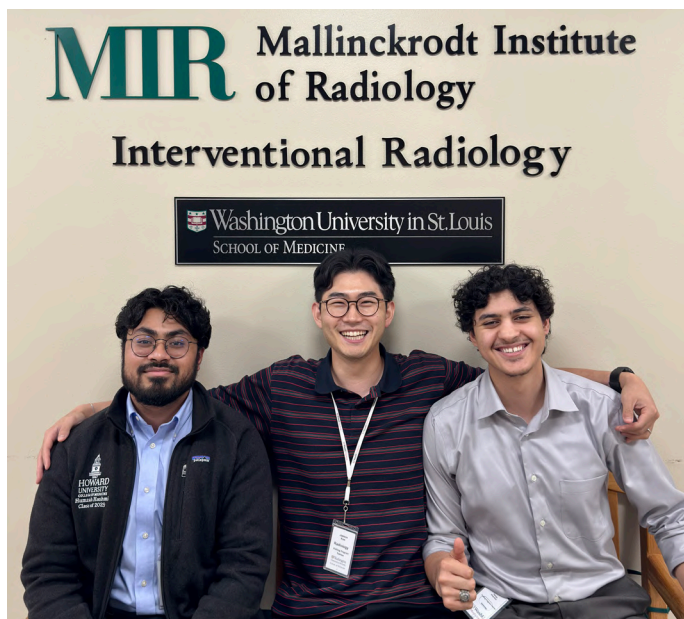
Hongkyun Kim, PhD, professor of cell biology and anatomy, Center for Cancer Cell Biology, Immunology and Infection, began a four-year term as a standing member of the NIH Neuronal Communications study section on July 1.

Jaeson Kim, CMS '29, was selected as a Summer Research Fellow at the Mallinckrodt Institute of

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Radiology (MIR) at Washington University in St. Louis, a 10-week program that brought together a cohort of eight medical students from across the country. Under the mentorship of Dr. Thomas Allen, Jaeson worked in medical physics and phantom model imaging, focusing on Y-90 radioembolization dosimetry — including anthropomorphic phantom modeling, ROI contouring, and lung shunt fraction analysis.

“This fellowship has been a great opportunity to build on my longstanding interest in interventional radiology and get hands-on experience with the physics and imaging methods that underpin IR treatment planning,” Jaeson said.



Jaeson Kim (center) during his fellowship.

Izza Khurram, CMS '28, was a recipient of the Robert and Carol Carpentier Award. This award was created to honor the legacy of Carol Carpentier, a retired social worker whose empathy and generosity touched countless lives, and Robert Carpentier, a U.S.



Army veteran whose discipline, resilience, and ingenuity uplifted everyone around him. Together, they represent a life built on service, skill, and hard work, and the award honors recipients who reflect that same spirit.

Héctor Rasgado Flores, PhD, Latinx students and community liaison and professor of physiology and biophysics, received an unexpected honor this summer: the Universidad Biomedica Guizar y Valencia, located in Xalapa, Veracruz, Mexico, dedicated a classroom to him (and RFU) in recognition of his academic and humanitarian partnership with the university. Dr. Rasgado has had a partnership with the university for several years, organizing multiple global health experiences for CMS students in Xalapa.

The formal classroom dedication took place on May 29, and the classroom is now adorned with a plaque reading (translated into English):

The Biomedical University Rafael Guizar y Valencia
Alto Lucero Campus, Veracruz,
and its Dean, Dr. Francisco Aguilar Rebolledo
proudly dedicate and inaugurate the
**Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Science,
Chicago / Dr. Héctor Rasgado Flores Classroom**
in recognition of their outstanding academic
contributions, commitment to humanism, distinguished
service to social causes, and dedication as agents of
positive change working for the common good and
the well-being of society.

We are very proud of Dr. Rasgado, and proud to be honored in this way by one of our global health partners.



Dr. Rasgado with the classroom dedication plaque.

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Beth Stutzmann, PhD, professor of neuroscience and director of the Center for Neurodegenerative Disease and Therapeutics, was inducted into the Lake Forest Chapter of Nu Rho Psi, the National Honors Society in Neuroscience.



Dr. Stutzmann also received the Foundation for Angelman Syndrome Therapeutics (FAST) Global Science Summit Professionals' Travel Award to attend the foundation's annual conference.

Additionally, the Stutzmann lab was granted a research award for their project titled "ER CA2+ Dysregulation Drives Synaptic Mitochondrial Pathology in Alzheimer's Disease" from the Advanced Imaging Center at Janelia Research Campus to conduct high resolution FIB-SEM experiments related to Alzheimer's disease pathology.

Congratulations to **Paula Taylor**, supervisor for the Essentials of Clinical Reasoning (ECR) course, and **Lainey Toennies**, laboratory technician in the Center for Neurodegenerative Disease and Therapeutics, who won awards at the university's annual Staff Awards on June 4. Paula and Lainey each won the Unsung Champion Award, honoring dedicated staff members for work done behind the scenes.



Lainey Toennies and Paula Taylor



Nutan Vaidya, MD, vice dean for faculty affairs and engagement and professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences, has joined the Faculty and Staff Vitality Group Leadership Steering Committee with the AAMC.

This committee plays a vital role in shaping strategic priorities, fostering engagement, and driving initiatives that support the evolving needs of academic medicine professionals nationwide.

The Faculty and Staff Vitality Group is composed of six Communities of Practice (CoP). Dr. Vaidya has also been appointed Chair of the Resilience and Well-Being CoP within the group. In this role, she will lead the group's efforts to advance tools, strategies, and institutional approaches that support sustainable careers and overall well-being for faculty and staff.

Justin Whalley, PhD, assistant professor of microbiology and immunology, Center for Cancer Cell Biology, Immunology and Infection, received the 2026 CMS Schweppe Scholar Award for his research project titled "Computational Alternatives to Animal Models: Benchmarking AI and Rodent Models Against Human Biology." This one-year, \$60,000 award from the Schweppe Foundation provides support for promising young faculty members in the early stages of their careers in academic medicine.



Presentations & Publications



Robin L. Dyer, MD, OTR, MHPE, CHSE, assistant professor of interprofessional education and clinical simulation, along with Kevin Kingston, MFA, standardized patient educator, presented "It's All Greek (and Latin) to Me: A Medical Terminology Tutorial for Standardized

Patients" at the Association of Standardized Patient Educators (ASPE) Annual Conference, held June 21-24

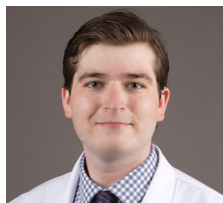
School & Department News

in St. Louis, Missouri. Dr. Dyer worked with her simulation team to develop an interactive virtual tutorial to help standardized patients learn medical terminology to provide effective feedback to the students they work with. The tutorial is being piloted at RFU and will be released to the greater simulation community next summer.

Lise Eliot, PhD, professor of neuroscience, Stanson Toshok Center for Brain Function and Repair, published an article in *Imaging Neuroscience* titled “Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis of MRI-Based Sex Differences in the Human Fetal Brain.” Dr. Eliot co-authored the article with two recent CMS graduates, **Max Paulus**, MD '26, and **Jacob Schuman**, MD '26.



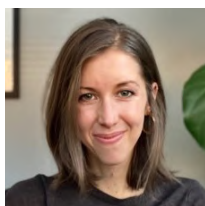
Dr. Eliot



Dr. Paulus



Dr. Schuman



Dr. Nicole Ferrara

Nicole Ferrara, PhD, assistant professor of physiology and biophysics, Center for Neurobiology of Stress Resilience and Psychiatric Disorders, gave a presentation titled “Social Experience Shapes Amygdala-Mediated Social Development” at the Optogenetic Approaches to Understanding Neural Circuits and Behavior Gordon Research Conference, held May 10–15 in Tuscany, Italy.

Dr. Ferrara also published an article in *Physiology & Behavior* titled “Social Instability Alters the Topography of Adolescent and Adult Social Behavior and Amygdala Function,” with RFU co-authors **Rose Jasmin Montes**, research technician, and **Rachel Parker**, graduate student.



Rose Montes



Rachel Parker

On June 19, **Maria Gomez**, MD, associate dean of phase II medical student education and assistant professor of emergency medicine, served as a guest lecturer for UW Madison’s Education Day for PA students transitioning into their clinical clerkships. Dr. Gomez, an ER physician and Tactical Medicine physician, spoke on workplace violence and safety preparedness. The session highlighted the importance of equipping future clinicians not only with medical knowledge, but also with the awareness and practical skills needed to navigate challenging situations and promote safety in healthcare environments.

Dr. Gomez was also interviewed on the Center for Immigrant Progress’ “Soñamos” [“We Dream”] podcast, where she talked about her nonlinear path to higher education and medicine.



Dr. Gomez at UW Madison’s Education Day event.

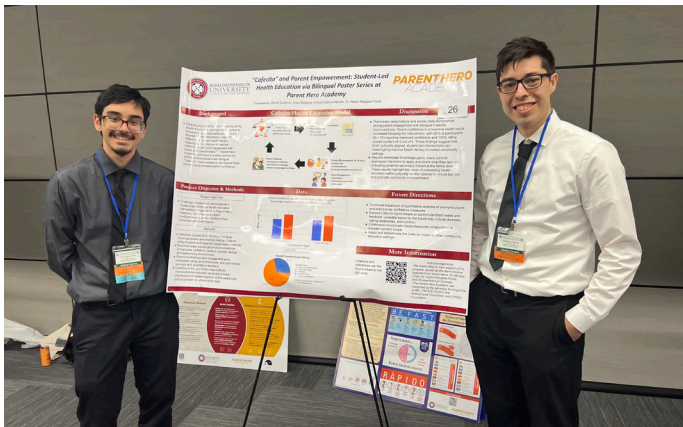


Karan Gowda, CMS '27, recently published a first-author paper in the *European Journal of Hematology* titled “Survival after Diagnosis of Cardiovascular Disease in Survivors of Adolescent and Young Adult Lymphoma.” This work was the culmination of Karan’s summer research as part of the NCI-funded Cancer Prevention Research Training Program at MD Anderson Cancer Center under the mentorship of Dr. Michelle Hildebrandt and Dr. Michael Roth. This work was also presented at the 2024

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American Society of Hematology Annual Conference, where it received an Abstract Achievement Award.

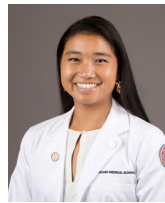
Daniel Gutierrez, CMS '28, and **Arian De La Torre**, CMS '29, presented a poster titled "Cafecito and Parent Empowerment: Student-Led Health Education via Bilingual Poster Series at Parent Hero Academy" at the Latino Medical Student Association Midwest Regional Conference. Other co-authors on the poster included **Arnold Cottecon-Murillo**, CMS '28; **Hector Rasgado-Flores**, PhD, PhD, Latinx students and community liaison and professor of physiology and biophysics; **Melissa Chen**, MD, assistant dean for community health and engagement and medical director of the Interprofessional Community Clinic; and **Chrysee Gorospe**, coordinator of community health and engagement programs.



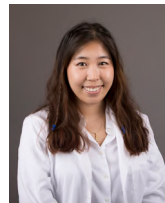
From left to right: Arian De La Torre and Daniel Gutierrez.

Brianna Lau, CMS '27; **Crystal Banh**, CMS '27; **Morgan Perry**, CMS '28; **Brandon Pum**, CMS '28; **Abigail Rousseau**, MD '26; **Khaliun Dashdeleg**, MPH, MD, reproductive immunology fellow; and **Melissa Chen**, MD, assistant dean for community health and engagement and medical director of the Interprofessional Community Clinic (ICC), along with Meredith Fils and Dr. Jeffrey Damaschke from the College of Health Professions, published an article in the *Journal for Student-Run Clinics* titled "Development and Operationalization of a Culturally Tailored Community Breast Health Outreach Model Within a Student-Run Free Clinic." The article

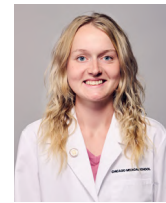
detailed the development of the ICC's "Breakfast and Breast Exams" initiative.



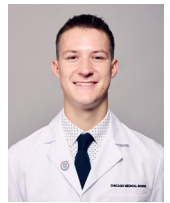
Brianna Lau



Crystal Banh



Morgan Perry



Brandon Pum



Abigail Rousseau



Dr. Dashdeleg



Dr. Chen



Mitchell Leus, MPH, CMS '29, presented a poster titled "Prevalence and Predictors of Advanced Liver Fibrosis/Cirrhosis in Adults with Chronic HBV with and without HIV Co-Infection in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Multicenter Cross-Sectional Analysis" at Northwestern Feinberg School of Medicine's T35 Summer Research Program for Medical Students, sponsored by the National Institute for Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK).

Mitchell is also co-first author on an article titled "Benefit-Risk Considerations of Immunotherapy in Chronic Hepatitis B," published in *Discover Medicine*.

Jessica M. Lewis, PhD, assistant dean of student affairs, recently published a letter to the editor in the *Journal of the National Medical Association* titled "Narrative Privilege: Rethinking the Personal Statement." The publication examines how personal statements in medical school admissions may unintentionally reinforce inequities related to privilege, coaching, and the increasing use of artificial intelligence. The letter encourages continued dialogue about developing more



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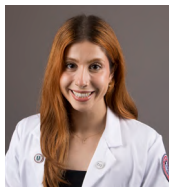
equitable, context-sensitive approaches to holistic admissions while ensuring applicants' lived experiences and potential remain at the forefront of the admissions process.



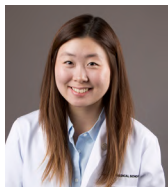
Lisa Michaluk, MEd, director of faculty affairs, gave a presentation titled "From Transition to Impact — Thriving in Interim/Acting Leadership Roles" at the AAMC Group on Business Affairs (GBA), Group on Institutional Planning (GIP), and

Group on Faculty Affairs (GFA) Joint Spring Meeting, held in St. Louis, MO.

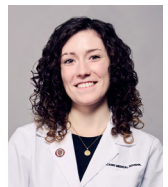
Ani Oganessian, CMS '27; **Joanna Lee**, CMS '27; **Kaitlyn Sweeney**, CMS '28; and **Ellaina Villarreal**, CMS '28, along with Kristine Jennings Burgess from the College of Health Professions, published a community case study article in *Frontiers in Reproductive Health* titled "On-Site IUD Implementation in a Student-Run Free Clinic," describing their work at the Interprofessional Community Clinic.



Ani Oganessian



Joanna Lee



Kaitlyn Sweeney



Ellaina Villarreal

Roxane Rohani, PharmD, MSc, BCACP, associate professor of cellular and molecular pharmacology, Center for Cancer Cell Biology, Immunology, and Infection, co-authored a paper titled "Genome-Wide Association Study of Cardiovascular Disease in People with HIV from the Million Veteran Program (MVP)," published in *AIDS*.



Beth Stutzmann, PhD, professor of neuroscience and director of Center for Neurodegenerative Disease and Therapeutics, delivered invited seminar talks at the following institutions:

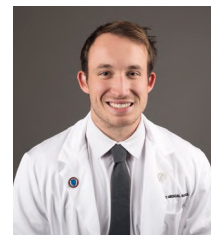


- Rush University, Department of Microbial Pathogens and Immunity, "Neuronal Signaling Deficits in Alzheimer's Disease and Down Syndrome."
- Rush University Alzheimer's Disease Center, "iPSC-Derived Neurons From sAD Patients Demonstrate Pathophysiological Features."
- Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine, Department of Pharmacology, "Shared Neuronal Mechanisms Linking Down Syndrome to Alzheimer's Disease."



Nutan Vaidya, MD, vice dean for faculty affairs and engagement, gave a presentation titled "GFA Mentoring Circles: A Decade Later" at the AAMC Group on Business Affairs (GBA), Group on Institutional Planning (GIP), and Group on Faculty Affairs (GFA) Joint Spring Meeting, held in St. Louis, MO.

Jordan Villa, CMS '28, SGPS '30, an MD/PhD in neuroscience student in Dr. Beth Stutzmann's laboratory, was an invited speaker at the Northwestern Otolaryngology Resident Research Symposium, part of the Northwestern ENT Residency Graduation Ceremony on June 26. His talk was titled "Shortcut Learning in Domain-Adapted AI Models for Diagnosing Middle Ear Pathologies."



Justin Whalley, PhD, assistant professor of microbiology and immunology, Center for Cancer Cell Biology, Immunology and Infection, co-authored an article



titled “VDJ-REMIX: REpertoire Module Identification and eXploration,” published in *Bioinformatics* as part of the Intelligent Systems for Molecular Biology 2026 conference proceedings. Article co-authors were colleagues at the University of Oxford in the United Kingdom.

Events and Other News

Neil Bradbury, PhD, professor of physiology and biophysics, Center for Genetic Diseases, was part of a consortium working with the Human Genome Organization (HUGO) to change the name of the lemur tyrosine kinase (LMTK) kinase family. The HUGO committee approved the change, and LMTK is now officially renamed Lemur Tail Kinase.



Archana Chatterjee, MD, PhD, dean of Chicago Medical School and senior vice president for medical affairs for RFU, was selected to mentor a 2026–2027 AAMC Council of Deans (COD) Fellow — the sixth year in a row that Dr. Chatterjee and CMS have had this privilege. The COD Fellowship Program is designed to enhance the development of future leaders in academic medicine. As part of the program, Dr. Patricia Sime from the Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine will visit RFU to shadow Dr. Chatterjee and observe the role of a medical school dean.

Tsion Habtamu, CMS '28, was featured on the AAMC's website as part of their “Anatomy of an Applicant” student profile series. For this series, the AAMC interviews inspiring medical students, their pre-health advisors, and the admissions officers who accepted



them to learn about the students' journey to medicine. Tsion also talked about her experience in RFU's Pre-Matriculation Program.



Antwione Haywood, PhD, associate dean of student affairs, has been invited by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) to serve a three-year term as a member of the Peer Corps Committee on Diversity. Dr.

Haywood was also invited to present at the HLC Peer Reviewer Updates and Training pre-conference, which will be held on April 17, 2027 in Phoenix, Arizona.

In May, students in the **Vietnamese Medical Students' Association** helped the RFU community celebrate the final week of classes with an Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month ice cream social! Flavors offered included Matcha, Ube, Mango, and Indonesian Vanilla.



School & Department News

During the **Institute of Medicine of Chicago (IOMC) Annual Leadership Awards and Annual Meeting** on June 25, **Archana Chatterjee**, MD, PhD, dean of Chicago Medical School, was welcomed as IOMC's president for 2026-27. During the meeting, RFU President **Aron Sousa**, MD, delivered the keynote address, "Universities as Engines for Community Health." Dr. Sousa spoke about the impact universities can have on the communities they serve, highlighting RFU's free, student-led Interprofessional Community Clinic and Community Care Connection, as well as the RFU Children's Advocacy Center Medical Clinic. In addition to providing invaluable learning opportunities for RFU students, these programs deliver much-needed healthcare services to the Lake County community.

Additionally, **Mildred M.G. Olivier**, MD '88, received the IOMC Humanitarian Global Health Award for voluntary, longstanding commitment to providing international humanitarian health services. The event also inducted the IOMC Class of 2026 Fellows, which included Dr. Sousa; **Amanda Simanek**, PhD, MPH, CMS associate professor and director of the Michael Reese Foundation Center for Health Equity Research; and **Nutan Vaidya**, MD, vice dean for faculty affairs and engagement.

After the meeting, Dr. Chatterjee was interviewed about her upcoming tenure as IOMC president. She talked about the IOMC's mission and goals, in articles published by MSN, USA Wire, Newsbreak.com, Tech Bullion, Entrepreneurs Break, StreetInsider.com, Vocal Media, and others.



Dean Chatterjee at the IOMC Annual Leadership Awards.

A group of CMS students participated in a July tour of murals honoring victims of gun violence in Chicago's Pilsen neighborhood. Led by artist, educator, pastor, and community leader Milton Coronado, the tour explored how public art honors lives lost while fostering healing, resilience, and community connection. Joined by fellows from the Chicago Gun Violence Research Collaborative and researchers from the Sinai Urban Health Institute, students gained a deeper understanding of the lived experiences of Chicago communities and the human impact behind the issues they study. ■





Michael Ellison, EdD, CMS associate dean for admissions (left), with Pre-Matriculation Program (PMP) students Aaliyah Witherspoon, Titane Johnson, Daniela Garza Salinas, Nathan Revadigar, and Kimia Dasteh Goli. After completing the program, Aaliyah, Titane, and Daniela matriculated at CMS with the Class of 2030. (Nathan went to Virginia Tech and Kimia went to Penn State.)

Our faculty and administration provide support and encouragement to students in the PMP pathway program, helping to prepare them for medical school. One of the PMP students expressed her gratitude to Dr. Ellison, writing, "I wanted to thank you for your support throughout the PMP program... I still remember you telling me that my dedication would pay off, and those words stayed with me during moments when the program felt challenging. I am also very grateful for your willingness to participate in so many PMP events and for the genuine support and advice you shared. Your openness, encouragement, and consistent presence made a lasting impression and reflected how deeply invested you are in supporting students."

We want to hear from you!

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



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