



## SPRING 2020 ISSUE 16

### MATCH DAY

Students celebrated this important day with family, friends, and mentors via a virtual platform.

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### STUDENT LEADERSHIP AWARDS

The university celebrated Lead Week by highlighting individuals and student groups who have made an impact at RFU.

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### ALUMNI ATTEND PEDIATRICS PANEL

Several alumni from various pediatric specialties talked to students about their careers at an event organized by students interested in pediatrics.

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# CMS NEWS

## The Chicago Medical School Newsletter



## COVID-19 Quarantine Can't Contain Student Creativity

*How students from across the RFU community have gotten creative and stayed involved in COVID-19 response efforts despite the transition to distance learning.*

Smooth seas don't make skilled sailors, and students from healthcare training programs across the nation have been learning that the hard way. The dynamic COVID-19 situation continues to throw a major wrench in the traditional flow of medical education, especially in light of nearly universal interruptions for students on clinical rotations<sup>1</sup>. Despite this, and recognizing the critical needs of a healthcare system stretched to its limits, hundreds of students have stepped into the arena to make a significant impact on local, regional, and

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## Dean's Message

### Greetings from Dean Archana Chatterjee, MD, PhD

It is my honor to greet you all as the newly appointed Dean of the Chicago Medical School and Vice President for Medical Affairs at Rosalind Franklin University. I am delighted to have this opportunity and look forward to working with you! I have arrived at a strange time with most of us sequestered at home, but these 7 weeks have flown by. I am heartened by the warm welcome and support from everyone — thank you!

It is a time of challenges, uncertainty, and concern. We are eager to return to life as we knew it, but are uneasy with how to emerge from our safe harbors. We want to resume learning, work, and recreation, but what is the best way? Rest assured — we have a talented and dedicated team working together every day in collaboration with the RFUMS administration to determine the safest next steps for our students, staff, and faculty alike. As plans develop we will certainly update you.

During one of my recent student town hall virtual meetings, I was asked what my vision for CMS is. It is very straightforward: I see my role first and foremost as an advocate for students, residents, fellows, faculty, and staff. One of my first tasks is to connect with the many internal and external stakeholders at CMS and RFUMS and begin to form effective professional relationships with them. This will enable CMS to achieve its rightful place among the other medical schools in the region and be recognized locally, regionally, and nationally for its contributions in medical education, research, and service.

I would encourage you to read an excellent article in this newsletter about our students and how they have leveraged their skills to help with the pandemic across Chicagoland. More than 250 of the 700 COVID Rapid Response Team - Chicago volunteers are RFU students, with representation in critical executive and director level leadership positions. I am honored to be part of this dynamic medical school and university, and applaud our students for their creativity and willingness to step up!

In past messages you have heard about the medical school's LCME accreditation visit that was scheduled for April. It was postponed due to the pandemic, and current plans are for a late July virtual visit. Depending on the outcome, a brief in-person visit in early fall will take place.

In closing, I want to say how much I am looking forward to commencement and all the related festivities — my heartfelt congratulations to the Class

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of 2020! While the ceremony is virtual, it in no way lessens the importance and excitement of this momentous milestone. Our graduates have worked hard and I applaud them for the path they have chosen.

I look forward to meeting all of you in person soon!



Archana Chatterjee, MD, PhD  
Dean, Chicago Medical School  
Vice President for Medical Affairs, Rosalind Franklin University

## COVID-19 Quarantine Can't Contain Student Creativity

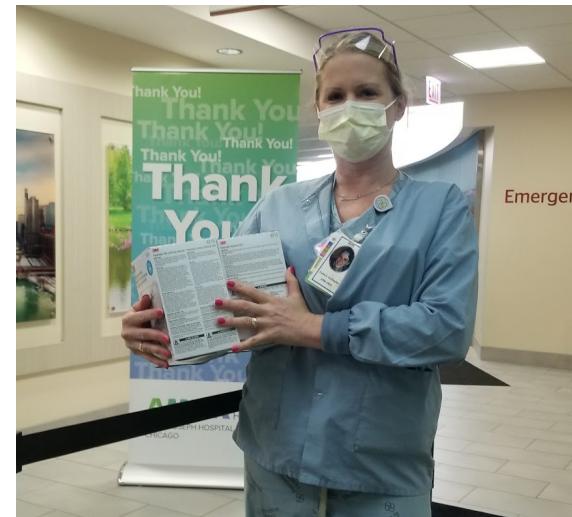
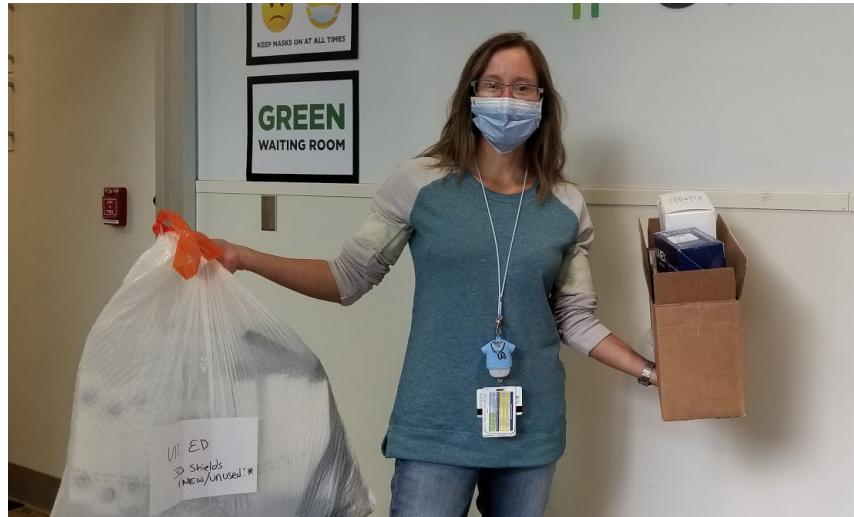
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national response efforts in a variety of creative and innovative ways, led by many student leaders within our Rosalind Franklin University community.

As one of the first cities in the United States to confirm a travel-related case of COVID-19<sup>2</sup>, Chicago and its highly populated medical district continue to battle hundreds of active and suspected coronavirus infections each day. Led by medical student leaders from Rosalind Franklin University, University of Illinois Chicago, and Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine, students

from all seven Chicagoland medical schools teamed up to create the **COVID Rapid Response Team - Chicago** (CRRT-Chicago) — mobilizing hundreds of healthcare students to fill a multitude of critical needs.

Within the team's first 72 hours of operation, more than 500 students across multiple health professions had signed up to help — not only medical students, but nursing, pharmacy, physician assistant, podiatry, MD/PhD, and other healthcare graduate students as well. By March 30, over 700 individuals had offered



**Above left:** A physician thanks CRRT-Chicago for coordinating a PPE delivery to the Emergency Department of UI Health on March 28, 2020. **Above right:** A physician thanks CRRT-Chicago for coordinating a PPE delivery to the Saint Joseph Hospital Emergency Department on March 29, 2020. **Cover image:** Physicians in the Stroger Cook County Hospital Emergency Department receive a PPE delivery coordinated by CRRT-Chicago on March 27, 2020.



CMS student Alfonso Gomez and his family have been instrumental in creating homemade face shields for frontline healthcare workers.

to help — and boy, have they delivered! Individuals from all over the country are taking notice, and RFU students were even recognized by the *Chicago Tribune* for their efforts<sup>3</sup>.

Rosalind Franklin University students continue to provide remote contributions to this student-led initiative. More than 250 of the 700 CRRT-Chicago volunteers are RFU students, with representation in critical executive and director leadership positions across the organization. Much of that student engagement is a result of strong leadership by the RFU Student Dean Cabinet: Alieu Kanu, SCPM '22; Elaf Alsalamy, COP '21; Rachel Chudoba, SGPS '23; Victoria Skinner Mackriss, CHP '22; **Matthew Christensen**, CMS '21; **Benjamin Parker**, CMS '22; and **Matthew Tan**, CMS '22, who coordinated the widespread interprofessional dissemination of CRRT-Chicago volunteer recruitment information.

As members of CRRT-Chicago, student leaders **Emily Root** and **SunYoung Kim**, both CMS '21, established a partnership with non-profit organization Vitalant to

host a Week of Giving series of events from April 12-19, identifying 17 locations across the Chicagoland area for Vitalant to set up much-needed blood drives to address what has quickly become a critical need for blood products. Projects to support the frontline healthcare workforce are led by **Rachel Anderson**, CMS '23; **Emily Crawford**, CMS '23; and **Andrew Chapman**, CMS '22. **Sabah Mahmood**, CMS '22, and **Danielle Sheikholeslami**, CMS '23, on the Fundraising Team help maintain a steady stream of capital for the organization, while **Sara Majewski**, CMS '21, and **Danielle Wales**, CMS '23, of the Public Relations Team contribute to the CRRT-Chicago social media presence.

Quarantined high school students are being paired with virtual tutors from RFU to ensure their education does not suffer as a result of the Illinois stay-at-home orders, a connection built by third-year medical student **Alyssa Kessel**. Fellow CMS leader and third-year medical student **Maureen Ikpeama** has built connections with the Salvation Army Disaster Response headquarters and

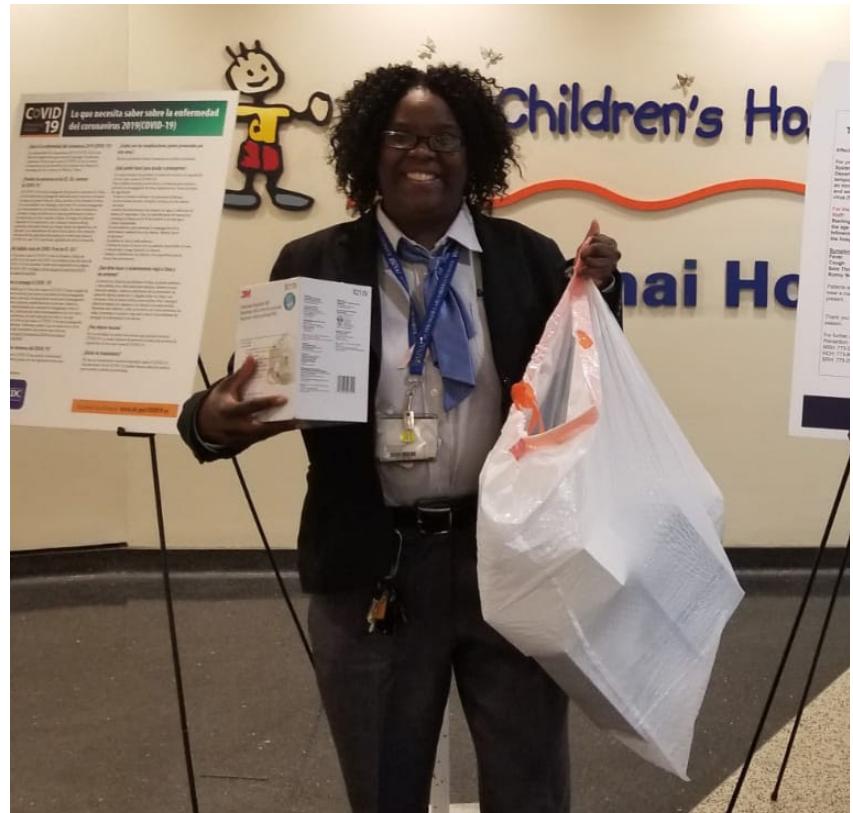
coordinated help for boxed food packages and meal preparation intended for families in need. **Lauren Gard** and **Sean Hormozian**, both CMS '23, round out the Community Outreach leadership team alongside Alyssa and Maureen, as they continue to support and advocate on behalf of local vulnerable populations including low-income families, the homeless population, non-native English speakers, and the incarcerated population. CRRT-Chicago continues to build momentum, even while students balance the distance learning assignments and requirements that have been introduced into their curriculum. Efforts are being made by RFU students Ryan Atkins, CHP '20, and **Sean Greig**, CMS '21, to create an Education Team that will scour COVID-related peer-reviewed literature as it is published, synthesizing the information into an educational newsletter and other engaging and informational platforms.

Yet another division of CRRT-Chicago dedicated itself to addressing the personal protective equipment (PPE) shortage that arose in Chicago as a result of COVID-19. In response to the scope of this challenge, GetMePPE Chicago grew into an organization in partnership with CRRT, devoted solely to the acquisition and distribution of PPE. Chicago Medical School students **Ashley Cohen, Alex Clos, Allison Martin, Lindsay Edwards, Stephanie Kaszuba**, and **Sara Khan**, all CMS '21, make up half of the current operational board of GetMePPE Chicago. They implement a novel approach — developed with the help of **Peter Lorenz**, CMS '22 — to tackle the crisis.

The strategy is three-pronged, with teams dedicated to a call campaign to reclaim PPE from local businesses that are not using it, crowd-funding to purchase PPE, and a PPE fabrication effort. To guide distribution, the team relies on proactive outreach to healthcare facilities to develop

comprehensive needs assessments. This approach is informed by multiple factors including city, county, and state outbreak data, as well as reports from clinical contacts and near-daily dialogue with hospital supply chain managers. **Eric Chow**, CMS '23; **Villania Wen**, CMS '21; and their Data Analysis Team work to optimize the call campaign and monitor student volunteer hours, while exploring data-driven solutions to improve the distribution strategy.

GetMePPE Chicago has made more than 300 unique donations to 40 hospitals and over 100 healthcare facilities in an effort that has been used as a model in other cities around the U.S. Local donations include over 50,000 N95 respirators, 24,000 surgical masks, 17,000 face shields, 5,000 gowns, and a multitude of other items such as hand sanitizer, surface disinfectant, and cloth masks. Partnerships with organizations such as Boston Scientific, Amazon, Schlep, and GetUsPPE have



A PPE delivery is coordinated to Mount Sinai Hospital by CRRT-Chicago on March 28, 2020.

enabled GetMePPE Chicago to facilitate donation of hundreds of thousands of additional items of PPE beyond Illinois.

**Lindsay Edwards**, CMS '21, who has played a crucial role in GetMePPE Chicago's fabrication effort by researching designs and refining prototypes, had this to say of her classmates: "Every single person on this team emulates such a pure desire to help others and the call-to-duty mentality, which is inherently what being a future healthcare provider is all about... It has been truly incredible to see what my classmates have to offer in the midst of a crisis to make a difference — from [applying their] past healthcare experience, communication, organization and innovation to never-ending work ethic and heart, I've never been so impressed by a group of people."

Closer to campus, **Alfonso Gomez**, CMS '21, and his family have made a particularly significant impact on PPE-related community outreach efforts, designing homemade face shields to be sent to workers on the front lines with a focus on the communities surrounding RFU. They've partnered with Chicago Medical School's Latino Medical Student Association (LMSA) to broaden their outreach. "The most rewarding part of this experience was having the opportunity to work with my family," says Griselda Guzman Gomez. "I hope that this experience encourages others to have love, compassion, and humility for all people."

**Blake Benner** and **Andrew Ji**, both CMS '21, are contributing at the RFU campus level through a focus on student wellness. Through outreach to Student Life, they're identifying resources and references for students struggling to cope with the stressful circumstances brought on by this pandemic. They're also sprinkling in some fun, partnering with Dr. **William Agbor Baiyee** of CMS to bring free access to virtual group gaming platforms to students, as a way for students to unwind and come together in a socially distance-minded way.

They say necessity sparks innovation, and there is perhaps no greater example of student-coordinated mass mobilization in the country than those being led here in Chicago. Despite largely working from home, our RFU students are in the thick of it, finding novel ways to continue using their medical education — and in many cases, extensive prior work experience — to provide critical support to a healthcare system in dire need at such an unprecedented time. Their initiative shines a positive light on the future of healthcare beyond the COVID-19 pandemic, knowing these altruistic, motivated, and impressive student leaders have a full career ahead of them to continue impacting the medical community in such meaningful ways.

*Additional information is available by contacting [RFUcovidResponse@gmail.com](mailto:RFUcovidResponse@gmail.com) or [getmePPEchi@rfums.org](mailto:getmePPEchi@rfums.org).*

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*Article provided by CMS Class of 2021 student leaders. All photos credited to GetMePPE Chicago.*

# CMS Students Answer the Call at the FHCC

Nine medical students, all members of the CMS Class of 2021, have been volunteering at RFU's academic partner, the Captain James A. Lovell Federal Health Care Center (FHCC), answering phones in the FHCC's COVID-19 Call Center. The students have handled well over a hundred calls, anything from patients wondering if they should get checked for virus-like symptoms, to patients asking what they should do about their scheduled appointments, to those needing guidance about masks and social isolating.

**Zhaoyang (Vill) Wen** is happy to help. "This is a challenging and scary time for everyone, and it gives me courage when I am able to comfort others," he said.

**Uros Rakita** volunteered after being pulled from his rotation. "I was searching for a way to help the community address this unprecedented pandemic. I am grateful for this opportunity to help the military and veteran community navigate within the healthcare system, and daily life in general."

Other student volunteers included **Yevgeniy ( Eugene) Vvedenskiy, Charlotte Van Schooten, Christopher Park, Joshua Moran, George Chen, Nevil Parikh, and Timothy Siebach.** ■



**Above:** Timothy Siebach (front), and Charlotte Van Schooten (back) speak with patients while Christopher Park (center) waits for his next caller; Joshua Moran volunteers in the Lovell FHCC COVID-19 call center.

**Below:** Pictured left to right: Lovell FHCC PA-C David Lash, call center staff supervisor; CMS student Yevgeniy "Eugene" Vvedenskiy; FHCC Cmdr. Josephine Nguyen; and CMS students Timothy Siebach, Zhaoyang "Vill" Wen, Joshua Carmen Moran, Charlotte Van Schooten, Christopher Park, and Uros Rakita.





# Student Dean Corner

Each quarter, student dean  
**Matthew J. Christensen**  
will give updates on the  
projects he will be working on  
throughout the year.

*[Editor's Note: This message was written in March, near the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic.]*

If there was one thing that could take medical students' attention away from the monumental changes that will be made to the USMLE Step 1 scoring system, it had to be a media-dominating and routine-altering disease pandemic of international proportions. With how rapidly the COVID-19 situation has continued to evolve, anything written in this article about coronavirus will certainly be outdated by the time it is published. I appreciate our faculty leadership doing what they consider to be in the best interest of our students and university community, and recognize how difficult I am sure many of those decisions have been.

I would also like to recognize the RFU student leaders contributing to the COVID Rapid Response Team-Chicago volunteer efforts. Their leadership and innovation during these difficult times are inspiring not only for the courage and selflessness they have demonstrated, but for the significant

positive impact they have made on the front lines of this pandemic throughout the Chicagoland area:

- Executive Strategy Team: **Allison Martin**
- PPE Allocation: **Ashley Cohen, Alex Clos, Peter Lorenz, Matthew Tan**
- Community Outreach: **Alyssa Kessel, Maureen Ikpeama, Sean Hormozian, Lauren Gard**
- Healthcare Worker Support: **Rachel Anderson, Emily Crawford, Andrew Chapman**
- Data Analysis: **Eric Chow**
- Blood Drives: **Emily Root, Sun Young Kim**
- Public Relations: **Sara Majewski**
- Fundraising: **Sabah Mahmood, Danielle Sheikholeslami**

Thank you for stepping into the arena at such a difficult time. Your hard work and altruistic nature does not go unnoticed.

Despite the sweeping implementation of distance learning, student leaders from across the university continue to find innovative ways to stay engaged on campus as well. The Executive Student

Council (ESC) has created a constitution review committee, which is hard at work combing through and proposing revisions to the ESC Constitution to ensure it reflects the goals and interests of all RFU student organizations. While the news of a postponed LCME reaccreditation visit was disappointing, your student leaders and I look forward to working with Dean Chatterjee and the entire CMS community to maintain preparedness no matter when the formal visit comes.

With the end of the 2019-20 academic year upon us, there are a number of impressive accomplishments and monumental milestones achieved this year that deserve to be recognized:

- Congratulations to our M4 class for such an impressive Match list and your successful graduation from medical school!
- Congratulations to our M3 class for navigating your clinical clerkships and learning to apply your medical knowledge to truly take care of patients!
- Congratulations to the M2 class for completing the inaugural preclinical blocks of our new CMS curriculum!
- Congratulations to the M1 class for adjusting to the rapid pace of medical school and successfully completing your first year!
- Congratulations to the dozens of award-winning students recognized by the Office of Student Life!

Finally, as the academic year comes to a close, I leave you with best wishes for the future:

- Good luck to all students preparing for USMLE Step 1 and Step 2!
- Good luck to the M2 class as you transition to your clinical rotations!
- Good luck to the M3 class as you prepare your residency applications!
- Good luck to all newly elected student leaders,

from Class Councils to student organizations!

- Good luck to all our graduates as you advance to the next phase of your medical career!

It has been a privilege to serve as the Student Dean of Chicago Medical School for the 2019-20 academic year. Our university has a bright future ahead.



Matthew J. Christensen, ENS, MC, USNR  
Chicago Medical School Student Dean, 2019-20  
Chicago Medical School Class of 2021

## Announcing the Incoming CMS Student Dean:



**Courtney Harris**  
**CMS Class of 2022**  
**Student Dean, 2020-2021**

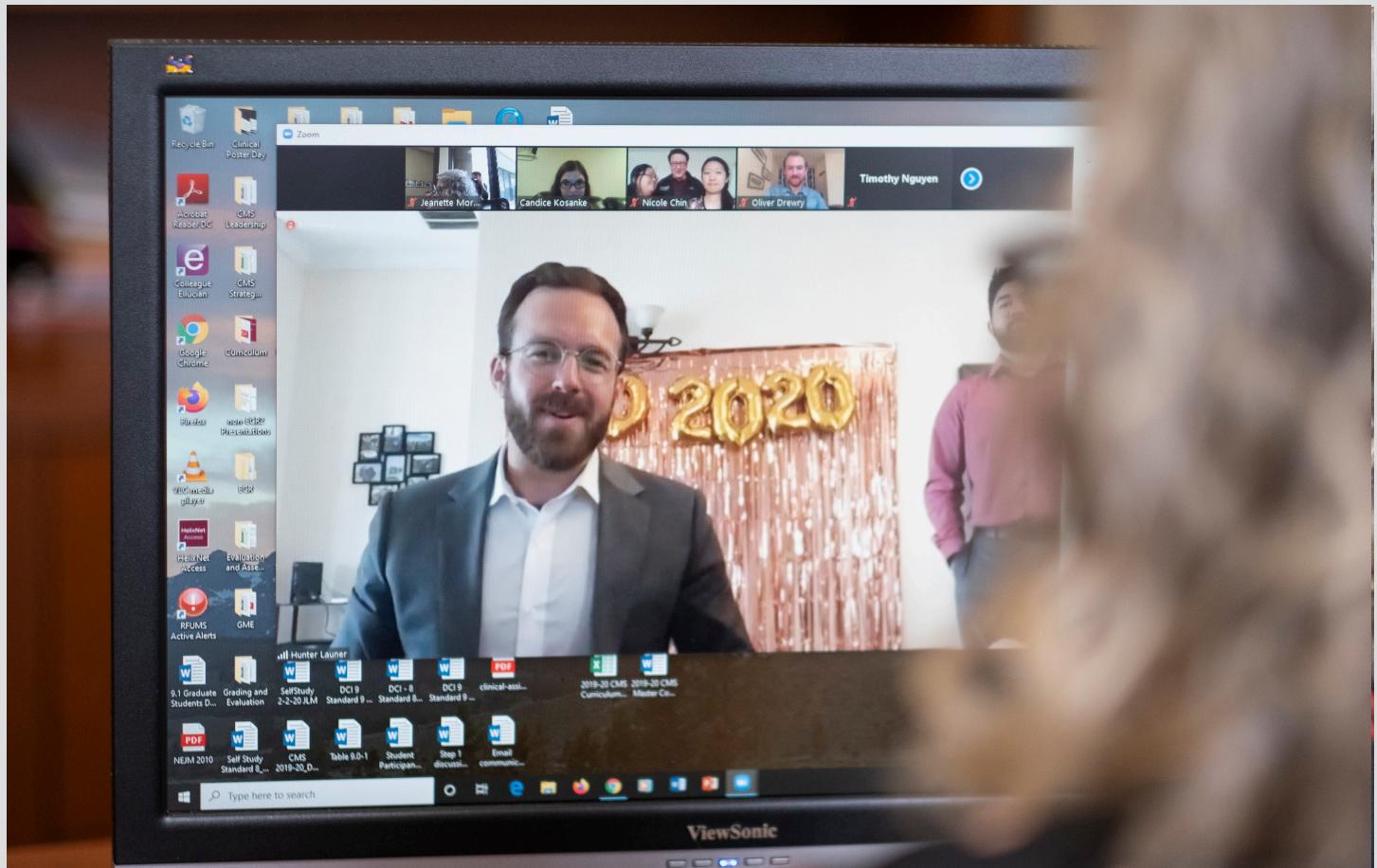
# Match Day

On March 20 — the same day IL Governor J. B. Pritzker issued the stay-at-home order that would go into effect the following day — students, faculty, and staff came together for a virtual celebration of an annual rite of passage: Match Day, when fourth-year medical students across the country learn where they will be going to complete their residency training. Of course, many elements of this year's celebration were different — students celebrated through Zoom Webinar instead of gathering in person, and they received their match results at 11 a.m. via email instead of opening an envelope. But at the same time, many elements were familiar: the celebration with friends and family, the speeches from students and administration, the excitement of

looking to the future while celebrating the years of hard work that had led to that moment.

"Today we celebrate with you, your family, and friends, albeit in an untraditional way," **Ronald Kaplan**, PhD, then the interim dean of CMS, said in his address to the Class of 2020. "We are so incredibly proud of you, and send you our hearty congratulations. The world needs you; go forth and be great physicians."

**Hunter Launer**, M4 Class President, also congratulated his classmates and assured them that they had the strength to meet the current challenges and those to come, including finishing



*Hunter Launer, CMS' 20, Class President, congratulates his classmates and delivers a speech during the virtual Match Day celebration.*

medical school in isolation and beginning residency in the midst of a global pandemic. “What lies ahead with residency and with this pandemic may be our greatest challenge yet,” he said. “Let the accomplishments of our class on this spring day serve as a reminder that hard work, grit, and passion can overcome any challenge.”

CMS continued its strong record of successful residency placement, with a 98 percent match rate. Students matched to top residency programs across the nation, including Mayo, Baylor, Yale, Emory, Kaiser, Stanford, Tulane, Vanderbilt, Duke, UCLA, Northwestern McGaw/Lurie Children’s, Rush, Loyola, and Advocate/Aurora.

“Our 98 percent match rate is a direct reflection of the hard work, commitment and sacrifice of CMS students, faculty and staff,” said Dr. Kaplan. “Even as the coronavirus upends our routines and cherished traditions, our students continue to model professionalism, compassion and respect. Our university community is proud of these future physicians.” ■



This year, Jacqueline Valkanet, clinical affairs and training administrator, who creates the Match Day map each year, placed the pins showing where CMS students matched.



Students, faculty, staff, and administration participated in the Match Day live stream, held via Zoom Webinar, while family and friends of students were able to watch and send messages of congratulations through Zoom’s chat feature.



Nicole Chin, CMS' 20, held a sign up to her webcam during the live stream to announce her match into family medicine at West Suburban Medical Center.



Oliver Drewry, CMS' 20, thanks CMS faculty and administration as Jeanette Morrison, MD, senior associate dean for student affairs and education, watches the live stream from her office.

# Encouraging Healthy Eating Habits in Adolescents

*Prevent Cardiovascular Disease, Start Early*

Article submitted by  
Amber Fearon, CMS '20

## Introduction

The American Heart Association (AHA) reported that only 1.5 percent of adults and fewer than 1 percent of children consume a recommended healthful diet.<sup>1</sup> Approximately 32 percent of children are now overweight or obese, and rates of high cholesterol (~8.5 percent), hypertension (11 percent), and type 2 diabetes are on the rise among children and adolescents.<sup>2</sup>

Adolescence (ages 10 to 19 years old) is a crucial period of physical, cognitive, and social development, during which the identities, values, and behaviors of our youth are also forming. By providing evidence-based nutrition counseling during this crucial time, healthcare providers have the opportunity to shape patients' lifelong behaviors and foster healthy living. Early incorporation of healthy eating practices

can prevent nutritional deficiencies, limit growth stunting, and decrease risk of adult diseases, such as diabetes, hypertension, and cardiovascular disease (CVD). A 2016 study found that high (diastolic) blood pressure and LDL cholesterol in youths is independently linked to CVD later in life.<sup>1</sup> Many of the modifiable risk factors of these diseases, including obesity, smoking, and physical inactivity, can increase the risk of atherosclerosis, which has been found to begin as early as childhood.<sup>3</sup> These behaviors are often learned early, and by intervening to prevent them, we may be able to decrease the leading cause of death in adults (CVD).<sup>1</sup>

Thus, this age range presents a unique opportunity to involve adolescents in their health early to support healthy, long-lasting dietary and lifestyle behaviors. This article discusses a summary of evidence-based



nutrition recommendations that are intended to be easily translated to patient counseling in a primary care setting for adolescents and their parents.

## Recommendations

The AHA's Scientific Statement recommends a dietary pattern that emphasizes fruits, vegetables, nuts, legumes, whole grains, and fish.<sup>4</sup> This is not a specific diet to follow, but rather a pattern of eating that focuses each meal around a variety of fruits and vegetables (often called a "plant-based diet"), while still incorporating a variety of healthy foods. Furthermore, experts recommend limiting red meat; sweets; nontropical vegetable oils;<sup>1</sup> and items high in saturated fat, trans fat, sodium, and cholesterol.<sup>4</sup> Importantly, this does not mean individuals need to cut these items from their diet completely. By providing instructions on how to refocus meals around heart-healthy foods, we can change our patients' dietary patterns and encourage adolescents to look for a healthy snack (such as an apple) instead of one high in saturated fats (such as chips). This dietary pattern has been shown in multiple studies to reduce the risk of atherosclerotic CVD.<sup>4</sup>

By focusing on a well-balanced, plant-based diet, studies have shown that we can reduce obesity and disease development (diabetes, CVD, etc.) while also improving adolescents' physical and cognitive growth. Furthermore, research has suggested that improvement in nutritional status in adolescents may also increase school attendance and educational performance.<sup>5</sup>

Well-balanced diets also reduce the risk for development of the most common micronutrient deficiency among adolescents, iron deficiency anemia (IDA), by providing a variety of nutrients to meet their needs. However, because of the high prevalence of

IDA (greater than 20 percent in women of reproductive age), the World Health Organization (WHO) recommends weekly iron and folic acid supplementation for all menstruating adolescent girls and women. In certain regions where the prevalence of IDA is greater than 40 percent, daily iron supplementation is recommended for these women.<sup>6</sup> No other supplements are recommended by the WHO for adolescents without any health conditions.

## Healthy Eating Tips for the Family

Many families understand the importance of healthy eating, but feel they do not have the time or the ability to incorporate it into their lives. For providers, we suggest helping families locate the biggest area of need and focus on improving that first. For example, if time is their biggest issue, the provider should focus recommendations on meal planning. Changes should be made gradually, and ample support from the healthcare staff should be provided in the form of resources, education, and follow-up. The following are quick recommendations by a registered dietician that can help every family make healthy choices.

- **Meal plan, together.** Make a healthy meal plan once a week with your children and shop together. Be sure to allow your adolescent to make some of the choices, and guide them to healthier options. Meal planning can help to reduce cost and improve healthy choices. Remember, each meal does not need to be a fancy meal. Use [www.choosemyplate.gov/](http://www.choosemyplate.gov/) for further resources and ideas for healthy food choices and healthy quantities of food.
- **Make a single meal for the whole family.** While each individual may be on a slightly different diet (for example, low salt for the parent with CVD), making one meal will reduce the workload and encourage healthy role models.<sup>1</sup> A 2016 study found that children's diet quality and choices were closely related to their parents' diets;<sup>7</sup> thus, by exposing everyone to healthier foods



together, better eating habits are formed earlier and last longer.

- **Repeat healthy vegetables regularly.** Present adolescents with healthy foods that they think they don't enjoy in multiple different ways, and make sure that everyone else at the table eats and enjoys it (or at least pretends to!). By trying broccoli steamed, roasted, or in a soup, you increase the chances of your child eating and eventually enjoying it.<sup>1</sup>
- **Buy fresh fruit for snacks.** Chopping fresh fruits early in the week or having a fruit bowl readily available offers an easy, healthy alternative snack for your adolescent.<sup>1</sup>
- **Let your children make choices about their food.** By involving adolescents in the process of shopping, cooking, and eating, they regain some control and will be more capable of making the right choices later on in life. Furthermore, if you make preconceived notions about what your child will or will not eat, the child comes to expect that. Allowing adolescents to regain that control can actually help with acceptance of new foods.<sup>1</sup>

### Conclusion

In conclusion, plant-based diets with a wide variety of healthy foods can have a myriad of health benefits, including reduction in cardiovascular disease risk factors. It is important to counsel and educate adolescents early on, and include them in their healthcare decision-making to form sustainable healthful habits. Families must remember that changes don't have to be all or nothing. Gradual incorporation of healthy foods into every meal can help to start and maintain a healthier lifestyle. Physical activity is also an important component of healthy living in adolescents, but specific recommendations are beyond the scope of this article.

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# Meet the OSAE Team!

The Office of Student Affairs and Education (OSAE) provides a variety of medical student success services and programming to help students succeed at CMS and beyond. This year, OSAE restructured their programming based on student feedback.

## OSAE Success Tools:

- OSAE launched the **M1-M4 Academic and Career Advising Sessions**, adding more required sessions and expanding content to include medical student loan repayment information and student counseling services.
- OSAE created a new interactive **CMS M1-M4 Planning Guide** (available on InSite) to help students stay informed and aware of the next steps in medical school progression at CMS.

## OSAE Success Teams:

- **Academic Success Team:** Dr. Mike Moninger and Dr. Gordon Pullen
- **Career Success Team:** Dr. Lucy Hammerberg, Ms. Allegra Bohlen, and Ms. Fiona McMahon
- **M4 Education Team:** Dr. Brenda Affinati, Ms. Danielle Priester, and Ms. Gina Hartlaub ■



*The Academic Success Team:  
Dr. Mike Moninger and Dr. Gordon Pullen*



*The Career Success Team and the M4 Education Team: Gina Hartlaub, Fiona McMahon, Danielle Priester, Allegra Bohlen, Dr. Brenda Affinati, Dr. Lucy Hammerberg, and Jen Southworth.*

# Student Leadership Awards

During the week of April 27, student leaders from across RFU were honored for the work they have done to benefit their classmates, their school, and the community. Congratulations to the following individuals and student organizations from CMS who were recognized for their leadership impact! ■



**Student SIMS** received the Outstanding Educational Service Award

*For providing frequent, high-quality, interprofessional, pre-clinical trainings.*



**Student National Medical Association (SNMA) & Latino Medical Student Association (LMSA)** received the Outstanding Collaboration Award

*For hosting the Black History Showcase.*



**Latino Medical Student Association (LMSA)** received the Team Unity Award

*For consistently adapting to the needs of the local community.*



**Matthew Christensen, CMS '21** received the Outstanding Representation of a Student Voice Award

*For advocating for peers and others on various leadership boards, councils, and committees.*



**Payal Shukla, CMS '22** received the Stewardship Award

*For being an exemplary mentor to new students and providing guidance and inspiration to students after orientation.*



**Haleigh Hunter, CMS '22** received the Outstanding Ambassador Award

*For going above and beyond her duties to promote RFUMS to prospective students.*



**New Life Volunteering Society** received the Outstanding Community Service Award

*For their collaborative work with underserved populations, fellow medical students, and the greater Chicago area.*



**Outreach for Health** received the Outstanding Student Organization Award

*For hosting the Interprofessional Health Fair and their service with the Community Care Connection.*



**Walk with a Future Doc** received the Outstanding Established Program Award

*For hosting events for community members that promote health and wellness.*



**Kelechi Emuchay, CMS '22** received the Helix Award

*For hosting the Men of Color/People of Color Luncheons.*



**James Roberts, CMS '22** received the Outstanding Service in Tutoring Award

*For demonstrating reliability and innovative ways to tutor students.*



**Ariel Azhdam, CMS '22** received the Outstanding Community Member Award

*For his commitment to creating safe, inclusive, and welcoming residential spaces.*



**Matthew Christensen, CMS '21** received the CMS Student Leadership Award

*This award recognizes a student who demonstrates commitment, dedication, service to the university and the community, and exemplary leadership qualities. Nominees are chosen by the Council of Deans.*

# *Celebrating Excellence, Success, and Diversity in Medicine*

This virtual event was held to celebrate the Class of 2020 URM students' recent residency matches.



Monica Branch, MD '17 (upper right), talked to graduating CMS students about the lessons she learned in her first years of residency.

"Celebrating Excellence, Success, and Diversity in Medicine" was an event held in honor of the members of the Class of 2020 who come from minority groups underrepresented in medicine (URM). Students, faculty, and two special guest speakers connected via Zoom on April 9. The graduating students celebrated their recent matches and looked forward to the start of their residencies.

The first guest speaker was Niva Lubin-Johnson, MD, FACP, immediate past president of the National Medical Association (NMA) and a senior attending physician at Mercy Hospital and Medical Center in Chicago. Dr. Lubin-Johnson has dedicated her medical career to being an advocate of quality health care for all, especially the underserved and underrepresented. She spent 29 years working in

private practice in the south side of Chicago, in the same neighborhood where she grew up.

She has been equally dedicated to working toward equity in the numbers of African Americans who enter and complete medical school. She is also committed to gender equity in medical school and the healthcare industry: she serves as chair of the AMA Women's Physician Governing Council, and in 2017 she was selected to be one of the founding advisory members of TimesUp Healthcare, an organization committed to gender equity for all who have careers in the healthcare industry.

When addressing the graduating CMS students, Dr. Lubin-Johnson encouraged them to be involved in advocacy during their professional careers — both for their own benefit and the benefit of their patients. She talked about physicians' responsibility to become advocates in health research, healthcare, and health equity.

The second speaker was a recent graduate of CMS: **Monica Branch**, MD '17, a third-year resident (and oncoming chief resident) in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at Schwab Rehabilitation/University of Chicago who completed her intern year in Internal Medicine at University of Illinois at Chicago/ Advocate Christ Medical Center.

During her time at CMS, Dr. Branch was active in multiple service and leadership roles, including SNMA CMS Chapter President; RFUMS Franklin Fellow; Co-Chair of the RFUMS Ambassador Program; and Graduate Assistant in the RFUMS Department of Enrollment and Strategic Management, the Office



Dr. Niva Lubin-Johnson



Dr. Monica Branch

of Diversity and Inclusion, and the Community Care Coach mobile clinic. As a current PM&R resident, she is actively involved in promoting resident wellness, as well as being a patient advocate for the medical needs of the marginalized community of patients that she serves.

Dr. Branch presented the graduating medical students with advice for being successful in residency, drawing from her own experiences in the first years of her residency. She advised them on topics like the value of having a mentor, the benefits of staying organized, and the importance of being kind and extending grace to everyone. She also encouraged them to look for ways to learn a lesson from everything they do during residency.

"Take every opportunity to make residency a learning opportunity," she said, citing the COVID-19 pandemic as an example of how interns and residents can use their circumstances to brush up on skills they might not be familiar with. "You can always find ways to create a learning experience within the work that you're doing." ■

# House Council Activities

In February, the CMS House Council organized a (pre-pandemic) social event at Flight Club Chicago, a downtown social darts club. The event was intended to foster CMS spirit, enhance vertical and horizontal interactions between medical students and mentors in different houses, and create an opportunity to have fun. ■





# EMRA CORD National Emergency Medicine Conference



*The EMRA National Medical Student Council (including CMS student Matthew Christensen, back row, far right).*

Only a few short weeks before the entire world seemed to shut down in the midst of COVID-19, the Emergency Medicine Residents Association (EMRA) and Council of Residency Directors in Emergency Medicine (CORD-EM) met in New York City for the CORD Annual Assembly. This national conference serves as an annual opportunity for emergency medicine physicians, educators, residents, and students alike to learn about the cutting edge of clinical and academic emergency medicine, while also discussing and voting on proposed changes to EMRA national policy. More than 300 attendees participated in this conference, including **Matthew Christensen**, CMS '21, who has continued to establish himself as a national leader within EMRA and the emergency medicine community as a whole.

CORD also serves as one of two annual assemblies of the EMRA National Medical Student Council, on

which Matthew has begun his second consecutive term as the EMRA Student Delegate to the Medical Student Section of the American Medical Association. Upon completion of the 2019-20 term, Matthew was named Medical Student Council Member of the Year out of 25 eligible national student leaders, recognized by his peers for outstanding leadership, initiative, and productivity that far exceeded the expectations of his position.

The three-day conference began Saturday morning with the Medical Student Forum, hosting a panel of residency program directors before breaking into group sessions tailored for first-, second-, and third-year students along with advising sessions specifically for unique situations osteopathic and international medical students may encounter. That afternoon included meetings for each of EMRA's 18 committees, including the military medicine-centered Government Services

Committee, on which Matthew currently serves as the Medical Student Representative for the United States Navy. The day wrapped up with the EMRA Leadership Mixer and Social, a networking event for committee leaders and council members to unwind and get to know each other.

Sunday was packed from beginning to end, starting with the EMRA Leadership Academy graduation ceremony for the class of 2020 and welcome address to the class of 2021. Matthew was recognized as a graduate of the EMRA Leadership Academy class of 2020. This was followed by the Medical Student Council (MSC) business meeting, where the incoming 2020-21 MSC met to discuss national operations and develop formal recommendations for proposed EMRA policy changes. These policy recommendations were then presented later that afternoon at the EMRA Public Hearing, where Matthew testified to the EMRA Grand Council on behalf of the MSC to provide the medical student perspective around the 12 proposed policy resolutions, including two that he had co-authored. Sunday concluded with EMRA Quiz Show, an energetic Jeopardy-style

game show featuring teams of residents from across the country competing for various prizes.

The conference concluded on Monday with the Representative Council Meeting, where delegates from residency programs across the country met to discuss current events and make decisions that will inform EMRA operations for the upcoming year. The next national emergency medicine conference will be the ACEP Annual Assembly, scheduled for October 26-29, 2020, in Dallas, TX.

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*For more information about nationwide emergency medicine conferences, contact the EMRA Medical Student Council at [MSC@emra.org](mailto:MSC@emra.org).*

*For more information about the EMRA Medical Student Council, please visit <https://www.emra.org/students/meet-the-medical-student-council/>*

*For more information about EMRA Committees, please visit <https://www.emra.org/be-involved/committees/>. ■*



*During the Program Director Panel, five emergency medicine residency program directors from around the country (all seated onstage) answered questions from the students in the audience.*

# The Treatment and Prevention of Type II Diabetes with a Plant-Based Diet

*Article submitted by Eric McLeod, CMS '20*



## Introduction

Diabetes mellitus is one of the most prevalent and morbid chronic diseases, affecting millions of people in the United States. During the past few decades, the American diet has progressively begun to include greater quantities of highly processed, calorie-dense foods. This has led to an increased incidence of type II diabetes, often developing at younger ages than we previously thought possible. Although advances in modern medicine have allowed us to better treat this condition to decrease the incidence of complications and early mortality, the burden of this disease on quality of life remains high. Diabetes can negatively affect quality of life by leading to amputations, an increased risk

of stroke and myocardial infarction, renal failure requiring dialysis, and vision loss. Although having a traditional Western diet can cause an increased risk for a wide variety of health conditions, the purpose of this article is to examine some of the evidence existing in the literature to determine whether and to what degree a plant-based diet can be used for the treatment and prevention of type II diabetes.

## Facts

One study published in the *Diabetes Care* journal in 2006 randomly assigned individuals with type 2 diabetes ( $n = 99$ ) to a low-fat vegan diet ( $n = 49$ ) or a diet following the American Diabetes Association (ADA) guidelines. They found that 43 percent

of patients in the vegan group and 26 percent of patients in the ADA were able to undergo a reduction in their diabetes medications. Hemoglobin A1C decreased 0.96 points in the vegan group and 0.56 points in the ADA group.

Another study published in 2016 looked at the association of a plant-based diet with the incidence of type II diabetes in three long-term, prospective cohort studies including over 200,000 participants in the US. They found that a plant-based diet was inversely associated with the development of type II diabetes, with a hazard ratio of 0.51 and p value of less than 0.001.

Another study randomly assigned participants with non-insulin-dependent diabetes to a low-fat vegan diet or a conventional low-fat diet for 12 weeks to determine which diet provided better glycemic control. They found that participants in the vegan group experienced a 28 percent mean reduction in their fasting serum glucose, which was significantly greater than the 12 percent decrease in the conventional low fat diet group (p less than 0.05).

### Conclusion

Overall, there is a strong body of evidence suggesting that a plant-based diet can greatly reduce the risk of developing type II diabetes and can provide improved glycemic control, often reducing the need for pharmacotherapy. As a result, public health recommendations should emphasize a plant-based diet for the treatment and prevention of type II diabetes. However, cultural and socioeconomic barriers remain and must be addressed if our society is to reap the full health benefits of a more plant-based diet.

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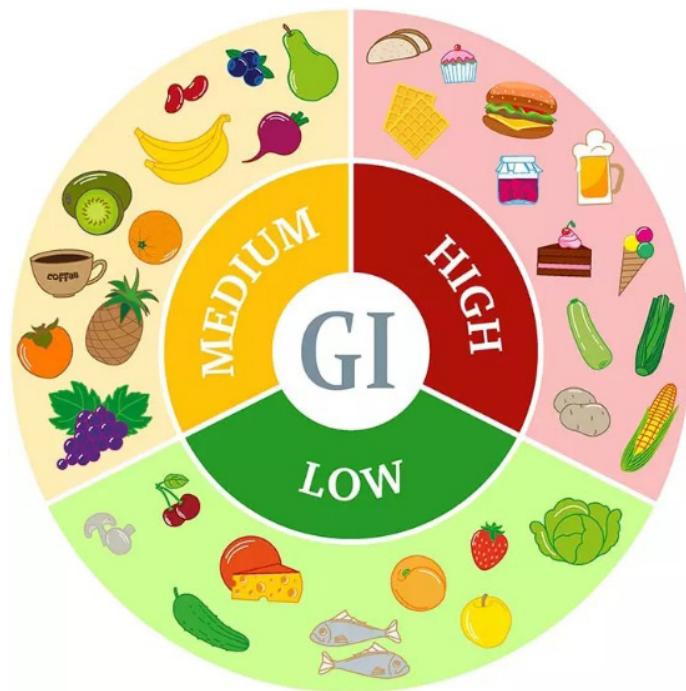
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Plant-based foods have relatively low glycemic index values.

# STUDENT SPOTLIGHT:

## Resuscitation Outreach

**Resuscitation Outreach (RO)** is a student organization devoted to engaging and educating members of the North Chicago, Chicagoland, and Waukegan communities on the benefits of compressions-only cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) methods. Students conduct outreach and fundraising focused on community-wide preparedness for cardiac arrest emergencies, with the ultimate goal of increasing the survival rate from out-of-hospital cardiac arrests within the community. One of the ways the organization carries out its mission is by holding CPR training events at community sites.

National Two Step CPR is an event that happens across the country every February to train the public in hands-only CPR. The training consists of only two steps and can be taught in under five minutes. A group of CMS students first participated in this effort three years ago and had the largest turnout

in Illinois. From that event, the student organization Resuscitation Outreach was born, and smaller events aimed at training people in hands-only CPR were held continuously throughout the year.

This February, RO held National Two Step events at both the Waukegan Public Library and the Field Museum. Between the two sites, CMS students were able to train 700 people in hands-only CPR. Currently, 70 percent of all heart attacks happen in the home, and when someone collapses in public, CPR is started only 46 percent of the time. Yet when CPR is initiated, a person's chance of survival goes from 10 percent to 45 percent! Because of this, RO strives to train the public to be knowledgeable and confident in what steps to take until Emergency Medical Services (EMS) arrives. ■

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*Article and photos provided by Kelsey Johnson, CMS '22.*





# Alumni News

## CMS Alumni Attend Event for Students Interested in Pediatrics

Four CMS alumni attended a student mentoring event on campus on February 27: **Daniel Polk, MD '80**; **Peter Nierman, MD '88**; **Shilpa Shankar, MD '14**; and **Eraj Din Hashmi, MD '16** (along with Edwin Harris, DPM '70, an alumnus of the Dr. William M. Scholl College of Pediatric Medicine). The alumni — who represented the fields of pediatrics, child psychiatry, neonatology, and pediatric orthopedics — participated in a panel discussion about their career specialties in this event organized by CMS students interested in pediatrics. ■

**Right:** CMS alumni Dr. Din Hashmi and Dr. Polk.

**Below:** Students attend the pediatrics panel, with panelists Dr. Nierman, Dr. Harris, Dr. Din Hashmi, Dr. Polk, and Dr. Shankar.



# Alumni News

## Other News

**Trevor J. Lewis**, MD '92, participated in a "COVID-19 Response Q & A" with students and faculty via Zoom. Dr. Lewis, who is the current Interim Chair of Emergency Medicine at John H. Stroger Hospital of Cook County, talked about his experience on the frontlines of the pandemic, working hard to save lives and flatten the curve.

**Kaleem Malik**, MD '96, was recently named the 2020 disaster services hero by the American Red Cross of Chicago and Northern Illinois. He has served in Chicago-area emergency rooms for his entire career, goes on medical mission trips to developing countries, and responds to disasters worldwide, including the 2010 Haiti earthquake, the 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami, Hurricane Katrina in 2005 and most recently, Hurricane Dorian last year.

Dr. Malik was profiled in the *Daily Herald* article "Why a Chicago-area doctor feels called to serve people in their most critical moments," where he discussed his career in trauma medicine, his current work during the coronavirus pandemic, and the importance of hope.

**Cynthia Sirard**, MD '96, was promoted to chief medical officer of Leap Therapeutics, Inc., a biotechnology company focused on developing targeted and immuno-oncology therapeutics.

**William R. Hartman**, MD '03, PhD '99, appeared April 14 on WGN-TV Chicago's morning program to discuss testing of plasma from recovered COVID-19 patients and its potential to help treat patients currently suffering from the disease.

**Jason Luke**, MD '06, director of the Cancer Immunotherapeutics Center at the University

of Pittsburgh Medical Center, received the Sy Holzer Endowed Immunotherapy Research Fund Award to advance innovative research in cancer immunotherapy.

**Charity H. Evans**, MD '07, MS '07, MS '03, was named the inaugural chief of the newly created Division of Acute Care Surgery at the University of Nebraska Medical Center.

**Sidharth Mahapatra**, MD '09, PhD '07, participated in a virtual event to celebrate the release of the fourth volume of *Synapses*, the creative journal of Chicago Medical School. Dr. Mahapatra talked about writing as a form of catharsis and how this has helped him throughout his career as an intensivist in the Division of Critical Care at the University of Nebraska Medical Center.

**Hamad Chaudhary**, MD '10, lecturer of surgery, spoke to student members of Chicago Medical School's ENT Interest Group on March 2. Dr. Chaudhary discussed the field of otolaryngology, why he chose to become an ENT doctor, the steps he took to achieve his goals, and what his typical day looks like, among other topics.

Chicago Medical School welcomes the following alumni to its faculty: **Gladys Hollant**, MD '90, assistant professor of medicine; **Jodi Chase**, MD '91, instructor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences; **Sheri Schreiber**, MD '92, lecturer of obstetrics and gynecology; **Nadia Khan**, MD '04, lecturer of pediatrics; **Hamad Chaudhary**, MD '10, lecturer of surgery; **Eman Abdel-Latif**, MD '11, lecturer of pediatrics; **Sonia Christian**, MD '13, lecturer of medicine; **Sorabh Kothari**, MD '16, instructor of medicine; and **Kunal Patel**, MD '16, lecturer of medicine. ■

# STAFF CORNER



## Paula Taylor

Essentials of Clinical Reasoning (ECR) Course Coordinator,  
Clinical Sciences Department  
Time at CMS: 34 years

CMS students (and many Scholl students) are familiar with Paula, who coordinates and oversees the day-to-day activities within the year-long Essentials of Clinical Reasoning (ECR) 1 and 2 courses. These are required courses for all first- and second-year medical and podiatry students. Paula works with the course director and the ECR team to coordinate and schedule the students so that they satisfactorily pass all mandatory components of each course, including Basic Life Support Certification Classes, HIPAA/OSHA Courses, lectures, labs, demos, workshops, assignments, Education and Evaluation Center (EEC) exams, oral exam, and written exams.

Paula also coordinates the preceptorship for

second-year medical students — guiding all 180 M2s through the process of getting assigned to a preceptor, making sure they have all of their requirement paperwork completed for each site, confirming that each student attends four sessions with their preceptor and turns in four history and physical (H&P) exam write-ups, assigning these H&Ps to be reviewed by faculty throughout the year, and overseeing that each M2 completes one interprofessional session and H&P write-up with a podiatrist.

And as if all that doesn't keep her busy enough, Paula also coordinates the two-week Clinical Skills Course that all CMS students complete during the summer

between their second and third year of medical school, as well as the M4 Clinical Skills Elective.

Paula first came to CMS in 1986, working part-time in the Department of Medicine as a clerk. In an era before email and mass digitization, Paula's job duties included filing, making copies (on the one Xerox machine that was shared by all the clinical departments), and answering phone calls and taking messages when staff would go to lunch. "Each day was filled with different assignments, and it was how I learned so much," Paula said.

Paula was then promoted to Administrative Secretary, working for the vice chair and chair of the Department of Medicine for about five years. When the chair, Dr. David Trace, was promoted to Dean for Clinical Affairs, Paula continued working with him as his Administrative Secretary as well as working with the Introduction to Clinical Medicine (ICM) course director. Paula later transferred to the curriculum office, where she worked until her promotion to her current role, ECR Coordinator. Over the past 10 years in this role, Paula's job responsibilities have increased as both ECR courses have grown.

Over the last few months, Paula has faced a new challenge: how to make sure all the students were able to finish their ECR requirements when the university had switched to remote learning and working from home due to COVID-19. Paula helped coordinate the remaining mandatory activities through Zoom or Google Meet. As a final challenge, the ECR1 students needed to meet individually with a preceptor for an oral exam, so Paula worked with the rest of the ECR team to schedule 280 different 15-minute meetings over a span of three days.

"Paula has consistently gone above and beyond for the faculty, staff members, and most importantly, the students," Paula's supervisor said. "Not only is she hardworking, she has impeccable integrity and is trustworthy. She is a talented multi-tasker and she is able to anticipate the needs of everyone

on our team, including the students. Her skills are noteworthy and admirable.

"Whenever we are in need of any work to be done, without hesitation, Paula jumps in to help out, no questions asked. She is a team player. Intuitively, she knows exactly what is expected. She demonstrates the highest standards for herself and consistently meets them. She makes this very demanding job manageable and makes our team successful. I honestly don't know how we would run a successful course without her!"

Despite the challenges — or maybe because of them — Paula loves her job at CMS. "My favorite part of working here is the work that I get to do each and every day with the ECR course directors and with the students," she said. "There are so many moving parts to the ECR1 and ECR2 courses so it's challenging, interesting, and busy, but I wouldn't want it any other way."

She also cites the work environment as one of her favorite parts of working at CMS.

"I will always be grateful to CMS because I was able to raise my two sons (Travis will be 27 and Dallas will be 20 this year) and continue to work and be there for them when they were sick, when they had days off from school, field trips... whenever I needed time off, I was able to take time off and not worry, and that was so important to me as a mom," she said. "The people I have worked for have been wonderful and caring people that understood the value of family. I also have met some of my best friends here and consider them to be life-long friends! I feel very fortunate to work here and to love what I do!" ■

# School & Department News

## Awards & Accomplishments



**William Agbor Baiyee**, PhD, assistant dean for educational research and student learning, has accepted an invitation to serve as a Thread Co-leader and member on the leadership team of the Leadership Excellence in Educating for Professionalism

(LEEP). LEEP is a mentored faculty development program of the Academy of Professionalism in Health Care that focuses on core areas of professionalism such as professional formation, organizational professionalism, resiliency, and social justice.

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**Matthew Christensen**, CMS '21, was interviewed on the podcast *COVID-19 Conversations: Common Sense Conversations on the Coronavirus Pandemic* on March 16 to discuss the pandemic's impact on medical students and medical education on an institutional and national scale. During his episode, titled "How Coronavirus Affects Med Students and Medical School," Matt talked about the measures currently being taken by medical schools and governments, and how medical students, residents, and physicians are responding to these recent challenges.

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**Michelle Hastings**, PhD, professor of cell biology and anatomy and director of the Center for Genetic Diseases, received a one-year, \$572,075 grant for her

research study "Reading Frame Correction for the Treatment of Batten Disease." Dr. Hastings also received a one-year, \$31,000 research grant from the Sebastian Velona Foundation to study "Antisense Oligonucleotides for the Treatment of CLN8 Batten Disease."



**Johnny He**, PhD, professor and discipline chair of microbiology and immunology and director of the Center for Cancer Cell Biology, Immunology, and Infection, received a one-year, \$1 million grant from the National Institutes of Health for his research study "HIV Infection and Latency In Astrocytes."

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**David Mueller**, PhD, professor of biochemistry and molecular biology, served as a reviewer for the NIH's 2020 Pioneer Award, which supports "individual scientists of exceptional creativity who propose highly innovative and potentially transformative approaches to major challenges in the biomedical or behavioral sciences towards the goal of enhancing human health."



**Daniel Peterson**, PhD, professor of neuroscience and director of the Center for Stem Cell and Regenerative

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# School & Department News



Medicine, received a \$50,000 grant from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) for his research study, "Reprogramming Cell Fate for Repair."

Congratulations to **Emily**

**Root**, CMS '21, who has been selected to receive a 2020 Excellence in Public Health Award from the United States Public Health Service (USPHS) Physician Professional Advisory Committee. The USPHS Excellence in Public Health Award recognizes medical students who are involved in public health issues in their community to protect, promote, and advance the health and safety of our nation. The award encourages students working with faculty to continue their strong efforts in public health.



## Presentations & Publications

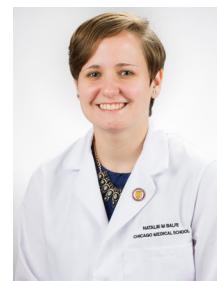


**William Agbor Baiyee**, PhD, assistant dean for educational research and student learning, was a panelist for a session on starting learning communities in medical schools and co-presented on the topic "Implementing an Exploratory Qualitative Study of Medical Student Professional Identity Formation in Learning Communities," at the 2019 Learning Communities Institute Annual Conference at the University of Kansas School of Medicine, Kansas City.

**Asha Kumari**, PhD, microbiology and immunology postdoctoral research associate; **Natalie Balfe**, CMS '20; and **Neelam Sharma-Walia**, PhD, associate professor of microbiology and immunology, co-authored "Concurrent Control of KSHV Life Cycle through Chromatin Modulation and Host Hedgehog Signaling: A New Prospect to the Therapeutic Potential of Lipoxin A4," published in the *Journal of Virology*.



Dr. Asha Kumari



Natalie Balfe



Dr. Neelam  
Sharma-Walia

**Kwang Poo Chang**, PhD, professor of microbiology and immunology, recently authored two articles: "Effective Delivery of Cancer Vaccines with Oxidatively Photo-Inactivated Transgenic Leishmania for Tumor



# School & Department News



“Immunotherapy in Mouse Models,” published in *OBM Genetics-Molecular Cancer Therapeutics*, and “Eukaryotic Microbe-Based Manipulation of Host Immunity for Disease Control and Prevention,” published in the *International Journal of Immunology and Immunobiology*.

Dr. Chang was also invited to give a presentation at the Colombia Leishmania & Chagas Annual Meeting, held April 1 in Medellín, Colombia, although he was unable to participate due to the current bans on international travel.

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**Melissa Chen**, MD, assistant professor of medicine and clinical director of the Interprofessional Community Clinic (ICC), gave two presentations as part of the ICC Lunch and Learn Series, a program hosted by the ICC and the RFU Office of Diversity and Inclusion. Her first presentation, “Poverty: A Mental Model” addressed barriers the under/non-insured population experiences, stigmas that some providers have towards these patients, and the impact poverty can have on the ways in which patients access healthcare.

Her second presentation, delivered via Zoom, was titled “Race in the Time of Corona: COVID-19 and Our Health Disparities.” Over 60 people attended the event. Guest speakers included **Carl Lawson**, PhD, MPH, MA, RFU director of interprofessional global health and assistant professor of medical education, and **Maureen Benjamins**,



*Dr. Melissa Chen*

PhD, health disparities epidemiologist and assistant professor of medicine at CMS.

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**Ahmet Sinan Copur**, MD, professor of medicine, gave a presentation titled “Approach to a Patient with Cough” during clinical sciences grand rounds on March 11. Dr. Copur addressed how to approach the cough as a symptom and discussed how to diagnose and treat cough in the clinical setting.

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**Carl C. Correll**, PhD, associate professor of biochemistry and molecular biology, gave a presentation titled “A Primer on Evidence Based Medicine: Illustrated with a Prediabetes Case” on February 26 as part of the medical school’s joint Clinical Sciences/Foundational Sciences &

Humanities grand rounds series. Dr. Correll discussed how to use the PICO model to organize and focus clinical questions.

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**Joanna Dabrowska**, PhD, PharmD, associate professor of cellular and molecular pharmacology and neuroscience, presented a seminar titled “Oxytocin Receptors Facilitate Fear Memory to Predictable Threats by Inhibiting Output



# School & Department News

Neurons of the Bed Nucleus of the Stria Terminalis (BNST)" to the Department of Anatomy and Cell Biology at University of Illinois at Chicago.



**Lise Eliot**, PhD, professor and acting discipline chair of neuroscience and executive chair of the Department of Foundational Sciences and Humanities, presented "Dump the Dimorphism: A Meta-synthesis of the MRI Literature and Challenge

to the Claim of Binary Brain Sex" at the Intersectional Analysis of the Sexed/Gendered Brain Conference held March 4 at the University of Leiden's Lorentz Center in The Netherlands.

**Raúl J. Gazmuri**, MD, PhD '94, FCCM, professor of medicine and director of the Resuscitation Institute, was invited to give a presentation titled "From a Pressure-Driven to a Perfusion-Centered Resuscitation Strategy" at the third annual Houston Shock Symposium, held March 6-8 in Houston, TX. Dr. Gazmuri was also a panelist at the symposium, participating in the panel "Cardiogenic Shock: Hemodynamic Debates."

Dr. Gazmuri also published an article titled "Constitutive Cyclophilin-D Ablation in Mice Increases Exercise and



Cognitive-Behavioral Performance under Normoxic and Hypoxic Conditions" in the scientific journal *Physiology & Behavior*.



**Michelle Hastings**, PhD, professor of cell biology and anatomy and director of the Center for Genetic Diseases, and **Fran Jodelka**, lab manager,

were co-authors on the article "Fetal Antisense Oligonucleotide Therapy for Congenital Deafness and Vestibular Dysfunction," published in *Nucleic Acids Research*. Dr. Hastings also co-authored the review article "Fetal Gene Therapy and Pharmacotherapy to Treat Congenital Hearing Loss and Vestibular Dysfunction," published in *Hearing Research*.

*Dr. Michelle Hastings*



**Biana Kotlyar**, MD, education director and assistant professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences, a graduate of Chicago Medical School's psychiatry residency program, gave a presentation via Zoom on April 6 on "Mental Health and Coping During COVID-19." The event, part of the university's observance of National Public Health Week, was a collaboration with the student organization Students Interested in Psychiatry.

# School & Department News



**Aron D. Mosnaim**, PharmD, PhD, FCS, professor of cellular and molecular pharmacology and psychiatry and behavioral sciences, published a paper titled "Two  $\beta$ -Lactamases Resistance Genes Detection in Nosocomial Bacteria of Veterinary Interest" in the Journal of Advanced Veterinary Research. The research was a collaboration with members of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine of the University of Chile in Santiago, Chile.

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**Cherilyn Mae Acorda Palochak**, CMS '20, was invited to speak at the annual Military Refractive Surgery Safety and Standards Symposium (MRSSS), held in San Diego, CA, this January. Cherilyn won Best Scientific Paper Presentation for her research on combined oral acetaminophen-opioid derivatives on post-operative pain following photorefractive keratectomy, and was scheduled to share her work at the American Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgery (ASCRS) annual meeting in Boston on May 16-17 (the annual meeting was later moved to a virtual platform).



Cherilyn, front row on the far left.

**Judith Potashkin**, PhD, professor of cellular and molecular pharmacology, and **Virginie Bottero**, PhD, research associate and lecturer of microbiology and immunology, co-authored "Transcriptomic and Network Analysis Identifies Shared and Unique Pathways Across Dementia Spectrum Disorders," published in the *International Journal of Molecular Sciences*.



Dr. Judith Potashkin



Dr. Virginie Bottero



**Héctor Rasgado-Flores**, PhD, director of diversity, outreach, and success and professor of physiology and biophysics, performed his musical composition "Suite de los Elementos" ("The Elements Suite") along with chamber musicians from the Midwest Young Artists Conservatory at Brushwood Center in Highland Park, IL, on February 22. The suite for piano contains 14 short pieces, each dedicated to a different chemical element.

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**Mary Russell**, MS, RD, LDN, FAND, CMS lecturer of nutrition, and **Wendy Phillips**, MS '10, RD, CD, CNSC, CLE, NWCC, FAND, a regional vice president for Morrison

# School & Department News

Healthcare, were featured in the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics' webinar "Climbing the Clinical Ladder: A Conversation with an Influential Leader," a series of one-on-one interviews with accomplished individuals in the field of nutrition. Ms. Russell interviewed Ms. Phillips, who shared her tips for getting involved in grassroots advocacy and leadership positions, strategies for learning and applying clinical skills to promote career growth, and ways to access resources to engage in meaningful networking opportunities.



Wendy Phillips

Council on Aging in Barrington, IL, on Feb. 16.



**Janice H. Urban**, PhD, director of the Center for Neurobiology of Stress Resilience and Psychiatric Disorders and professor and discipline chair of physiology and biophysics, co-authored "Contribution of NPY Y5 Receptors to

the Reversible Structural Remodeling Of Basolateral Amygdala Dendrites in Male Rats Associated with NPY-mediated Stress Resilience," published in the *Journal of Neuroscience*. Dr. Urban was working with researchers from the University of Alberta (Edmonton, AB, Canada).



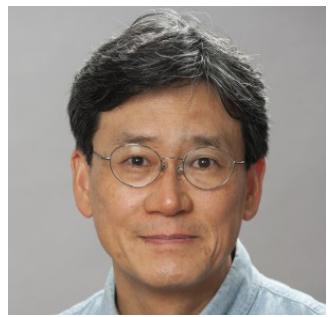
**Neelam Sharma-Walia**, PhD, associate professor of microbiology and immunology, recently published two works: an article titled "Kaposi's Sarcoma Associated

Herpesvirus Infection Induces the Expression of Neuroendocrine Genes in Endothelial Cells," published in the *Journal of Virology*, and a book chapter titled "Antibody-Targeted Nanoparticles for Cancer Treatment," published in the book *NanoBioMedicine* (Springer, 2020).

**Carl White**, PhD, associate professor of physiology and biophysics, and **Donghee Kim**, PhD, professor of physiology and biophysics, co-authored the study "Ca<sup>2+</sup> Oscillations in Rat Carotid Body Type 1 Cells in Normoxia and Hypoxia," published in the *American Journal of Physiology-Cell Physiology*.

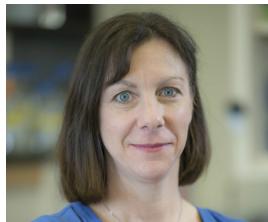


Dr. Carl White



Dr. Donghee Kim

**Grace "Beth" Stutzmann**, PhD, director, Center for Neurodegenerative Diseases and Therapeutics, participated in a panel discussion of the latest clinical trial results and future treatment for Alzheimer's disease at a program hosted by the Alzheimer's Association for the Barrington Area



## Events and Other News

In February, several **Alpha Omega Alpha (AOA)** students from the **CMS Class of 2020** volunteered at Sarah's

# School & Department News

Circle, a home/resource center for women who are homeless, have experienced domestic violence, or are at risk for trauma. The ten CMS students prepared dinner for approximately 50 women.



On February 29, RFU held its annual **St. Baldrick's Day** event, which raised more than \$4,000 for the St. Baldrick's Foundation, a charity that funds grants for childhood cancer research. Five individuals agreed to go bald for a good cause and had their heads shaved by volunteers from the Lake Bluff Sport Clips salon during the on-campus event.



Rosanne Oggiano, DO, BS, assistant professor and Clinical Skills course director & lab director, at the St. Baldrick's Day event.

On February 27, the CMS, Scholl, and CHP Classes of 2023 held the annual **Cadaver Memorial Service**, a ceremony that gives students the opportunity to honor and express gratitude for the individuals who chose to donate their bodies to science.



*The interprofessional group of students who organized the ceremony, with clinical anatomy faculty Dr. Mark Grumet and Dr. Monica Oblinger.*



*Students were given the opportunity to write notes of gratitude to the donors or their families.*

The **CMS Class of 2020** demonstrated their generosity and commitment to serving the needs of the community by donating a total of \$2,890 towards the Chicago COVID Relief Fund and \$2,806 to the Chicago Food Bank. ■

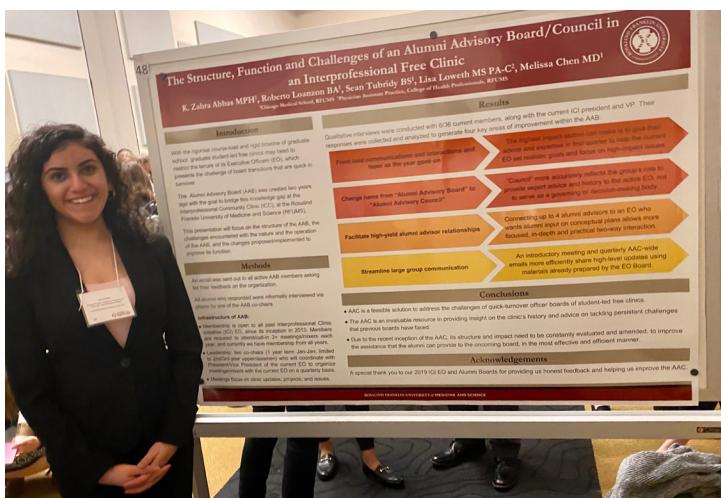
# ICC Students Present at Conference



Dr. Melissa Chen with a RFU students at the conference.



Megan Chan, CMS '22; Peter Lorenz, CMS '22; Khanh Phuong Tong, SCPM '22; and Kieran Palumbo, CMS '22.



Zahra Abbas, CMS '21, with her poster.

An interprofessional group of 17 students and two faculty members represented RFU's Interprofessional Community Clinic (ICC) at the Society of Student-Run Free Clinics Conference in Orlando, FL in early March. CMS students and faculty presented the following lectures and posters:

- **Peter Lorenz, Megan Chan, Kieran Palumbo** (all CMS '22), and Khanh Phuong Tong, SCPM '22, gave an oral presentation titled "Safety Event Reporting."
- **Alicia Edwards** and **Emilia Norlin**, both CMS '21, gave an oral presentation titled "Expanding the Reach of Outreach: Using Crowdsourcing to Fundraise for a Student-led Free Clinic."
- **Zahra Abbas**, CMS '21, presented her poster "Structure, Function and Challenges of an Alumni Advisory Board/Council in an Interprofessional Free Clinic."
- **Varsha Swamy** and **Alissa Resnikoff**, both CMS '22, presented their poster "Treatment Plan Guidelines for Hypertensive Patients in a Student-led Free Clinic."
- **Melissa Chen**, MD, ICC clinical director and assistant professor of medicine, and Yovanna Pomarico, MBA, assistant professor of biomedical sciences in the College of Health Professions, presented a poster titled "Developing Competence of Medical Interpreters at a Student-led Free Clinic" at the corresponding meeting of the Student-Run Free Clinic Faculty Association. Dr. Chen also gave a presentation titled "SRFCFA: How Do We Connect?" as part of her ongoing role as Communications Chair of the organization. ■

# Many of our alumni are currently serving on the frontlines of the pandemic. We salute them all, and feature a few of them here.



We want to hear from you!

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



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