2025 Jazmin Fernandez, DO

Dr. Jazmin Fernandez is an exceptional leader and innovator whose commitment to health equity and pipeline development is clearly demonstrated through her co-creation of the F(h)ERN-M Program-Fostering Healthcare's Emerging Research Network- Middle School.

Launched in August 2023 alongside her colleague and classmate, Dr. Marcus Lowe, this groundbreaking initiative aims to expose middle school students from historically underrepresented backgrounds to careers in healthcare and research.

The program was piloted at Landmark Middle School in collaboration with Ms. Carly Blask, an Anatomy and Physiology teacher whose classes served as the inaugural cohort. Ors. Fernandez and Lowe designed and implemented a monthly, organ system-based curriculum that aligned with the school's science content. From September through April, pediatric residents and faculty from Riverside University Health System led dynamic, hands-on educational sessions on topics such as cardiology, pulmonology, epidemiology, musculoskeletal health, nutrition/gastroenterology, and the nervous system.

In April, the program culminated in an immersive half-day field trip to Riverside University Health System Medical Center. Students engaged in a panel discussion with healthcare professionals, toured the hospital, and shared lunch with pediatric residents-an inspiring experience that brought healthcare careers to life. As a special milestone, all graduating 8th-grade participants were gifted personalized white coats embroidered with their names and future career titles, which they proudly wore during their promotion ceremony.

Thanks to the overwhelming success of the pilot year, F(h)ERN-M expanded significantly in its second year. With increased resident and faculty engagement, the program added a second immersive experience-a half-day at Loma Linda University School of Medicine. Students rotated through suture workshops, simulation labs, cadaver-based anatomy teaching, and Narcan/Stop the Bleed trainings. This experience brought together over 130 middle school students from Landmark and Caesar Chavez Middle Schools.

In addition to leading the design and implementation of the curriculum, Dr. Fernandez helped create a dedicated website housing all materials, pre- and post-tests, program history, and photos to support future dissemination and sustainability. The program was awarded a grant from the American Academy of Pediatrics Section on Early Career Physicians in 2023, which has helped fund educational materials and graduation supplies.

Dr. Fernandez's work has garnered significant local recognition, including commendations from the mayor's office and Loma Linda University leadership, underscoring the program's impact on the broader community. She has not only been integral to every aspect of F(h)ERN-M's success, but she has done so while serving as a third-year chief resident for the Primary Care Track of the Loma Linda Pediatric Residency Program.

Dr. Fernandez exemplifies the kind of visionary leadership and community-centered innovation that will shape the future of medicine and medical education. Her work in F(h)ERN-M represents a model for how early exposure, mentorship, and culturally responsive curriculum can cultivate the next generation of diverse healthcare professionals.

2024 Zainab Doleeb, MD

During medical school, Zainab demonstrated outstanding leadership and initiative. She organized health literacy workshops for refugees living at Sojourn House, raising funds to support their recreational programming. She also played a key role in developing a global health certificate course for undergraduate medical learners that was accredited by the medical school. Zainab also took the initiative to expand equity content in obstetrics and gynecology within the CC3 curriculum and the department of obstetrics and gynecology's website, ensuring more inclusive education.

In residency, Zainab continued this work through her involvement with the Network for the Advancement of Black Learners (N-ABL) through the Black Physicians' Association of Ontario where she has helped to foster more supportive learning environments for trainees and increase mental health supports. She also initiated an annual drive to collect Toronto Notes textbooks for international medical graduates (IMGs) helping them prepare for their licensing exams. Zainab continues to volunteer in this realm by leading free CaRMS preparatory sessions for IMGs.

As a member of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology Advocacy Committee, Zainab has shown dedication to serving the broader community through the annual holiday drive. She selected the recipient organization Sojourn House and helped collect items as the Sunnybrook representative. Currently, Zainab is helping to develop a module on Black maternal health for undergraduate medical students. Her commitment to community and equitable access to care is further exemplified by her ongoing efforts to improve her language skills in French, Spanish, and Arabic in order to better serve Toronto's diverse patient population.

Zainab's global impact extends beyond her local community. At the end of her PGY1 year, a devastating civil war broke out in her native Sudan displacing most of her extended family and causing one of the largest humanitarian crises in the world. She channeled her grief into action by volunteering with the Sudanese Canadian Community Association (SCCA). She played a crucial role in helping to evacuate Canadians and securing housing for vulnerable individuals, including a mother-daughter dyad whom Global Affairs Canada specifically reached out to Zainab to help find housing for. Zainab directly worked on a policy that aims to reunite over 3,250 families affected by the conflict. Traditionally, policies at Immigration, Refugee, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) often exclude adults over 22 years old from family reunification programs linked to their parents. Zainab and her colleagues successfully lobbied for the inclusion of women over 22 so that they may be processed for immigration with the rest of their families and ensure that they are not left behind in conflict zones where they may face gender-based violence. Her advocacy also addressed logistical and safety concerns with IRCC and the UN's International Office of Migration (IOM). Through lobbying with MPs and raising her concerns directly to ministers, Zainab and her colleagues have been able to expand refugee programming and secure $203 million in humanitarian aid for Sudan and the region.

Zainab also led an initiative with the Sudanese Doctors Union (SDU) in Canada to gather online resources in obstetrics and gynecology to aid trainees in Sudan providing emergency care during the war. The conflict interrupted medical schools, shut down hospitals, and forced the few remaining functioning hospitals to operate with reduced staffing. Due to shortages, junior trainees were left to manage many conditions independently and requested more support. To help fill that gap, they gathered online materials that could be easily downloaded between internet blackouts and shared among trainees. The resources covered various topics encountered in the field, ranging from the management of preeclampsia to obstetrical hemorrhages to

infectious disease prophylaxis after a sexual assault. While these materials were not a replacement for proper medical training, they helped address the urgent needs created by the extremely challenging circumstances of the war.

Zainab's dedication to promoting social responsibility and advocating for vulnerable populations is exemplary.

2023 Aayush Visaria, MD

Dr. Visaria established the American Preventive Screening and Education Association (APSEA), a non-profit organization focused on reducing the burden of diabetes and hypertension in the local community through community-based health screenings, preventive education, and research. APSEA trains students and volunteers to provide basic health screenings and preventive education, and then provides practical, immersive experiences for students and patients alike to prevent or manage diabetes/hypertension. Prior to establishing APSEA, Dr. Visaria conducted a crude community needs assessment. The assessment identified a high proportion of uncontrolled, untreated, and undiagnosed hypertension among NJ adults of diverse backgrounds. It also identified a lack of routine monitoring of blood pressure and a lack of education among healthcare-related students and professionals on new BP guidelines and measurement techniques as detailed by the AHA/AMA. The high prevalence of uncontrolled blood pressures in the local NJ community negatively affects cardio-metabolic health outcomes. Uncontrolled BP is in part due to lack of awareness about the disease, lack of guidance on lifestyle preventive strategies, and lack of BP monitoring.

Accordingly, the 5-year objectives of APSEA were to 1) From September 2017 to December 2022, teach 500 pre-medical undergraduates (from Rutgers- New Brunswick, New Jersey Institute of Technology, or The College of New Jersey) and medical students (from Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School and New Jersey Medical School) through a rigorously developed training curriculum on hypertension and diabetes screening and preventive education; 2) From September 2017 to December 2022, perform blood pressure and BMI/bioimpedance-based fat percentage measurements on 1,000 NJ participants across 20 community locations in Central and North Jersey. Additionally, Dr. Visaria published an Amazon book (Pocket Guide: Basic Health Screening) and an online course (https://www.udemy.com/course/naditraining/) as components of the training curriculum.

With the establishment of American Preventive Screening and Education Association (APSEA), Dr. Visaria and colleagues developed a lifestyle medicine training curriculum focused on BP measurement and management. The curriculum incorporated both theoretical and practical training components, culminating in a three-part OSCE-style assessment. There was an emphasis on accurate BP measurement technique given recent AHA and AMA guidance on need for improved BP technique among healthcare professionals, as well as preventive lifestyle strategies. From 2017-2023, APSEA trained nearly 1,250 Rutgers, NJIT, and TCNJ undergraduates, and 280 NJMS, RWJMS, and Rowan SOM medical students. Among a sample of 128 Rutgers undergraduate students trained in 2021-2022, 104 (81%) passed assessments, and 58 (45%) attended at least 1 community health screening. Among 29 students with complete data on pre- and post-training questionnaires, the mean (SD) BP-taking confidence increased 1.3 (1.2) points (on a 1-5 point Likert scale; $p< 0.001$). Scores for knowledge-based questions increased by a mean (SD) 2.3 (1.7) points ($p=0.002$). This significant increase was present for all individual questions. Regarding health screening, from 2017-2023, certified students contributed more than 3,100 volunteer hours, and screened nearly 7,000 participants at 360 health screenings across 56 community locations. These locations included Farmer’s Markets, religious places, public libraries, senior centers, collaborative events with local hospitals, festivals, apartment complexes, among others. The most common barriers to controlled BP included 1) lack of medication

compliance, 2) lack of BP monitor at home, and 3) lack of regular PCP visits.

From March 2022 to September 2022, APSEA also enrolled its first cohort of 18 participants interested in a 6-month, lifestyle change-based longitudinal program pairing students ('APSEA Buddy') with participants who would provide personalized lifestyle advice and accountability, along with monthly virtual lectures and screenings done by Dr. Visaria. He also helped participants by driving to their homes and helping them go through their food pantries to understand nutrition labels and differences between healthy and unhealthy food items for diabetes prevention. Among five participants with pre-diabetes who had data recorded, there was significantly improved quality of care, weight loss, reduction in body fat percentage, and reduction in A1c.

2022 Hannah Florian, MD

Dr. Florian is lauded for her work in going above and beyond the call of duty with conceiving, planning, coordinating, and implementing a mobile lab for homebound patients in need.

Dr. Florian's primary care continuity clinic, Duke Outpatient Clinic (DOC), is a safety-net site for patients of Durham and outlying counties with Medicaid, Medicare, and often, no insurance. The clinic has an intensive case management program for the highest need patients (HomeBASE), consisting of team- based care with nurse case managers, social workers, medicine-psychiatry attendings, and a medicine attending. While the team is accustomed to stretched resources and often tasked with finding creative solutions to provide care, the challenges of the COVID pandemic, in addition to the physical barriers, created a unique set of challenges. Dr. Florian saw a tremendous need to reach homebound patients to provide care, so she conceptualized and launched the Mobile Lab Service.

Dr. Florian advocated and reached out to nursing and laboratory leadership at Durham Tech Community College as well as Duke University Hospital. She was instrumental in designing an initiative, obtaining buy-in, and coordinating the monthly schedule of patient visits with Duke Service Access, ambulatory case management and the lab. While maintaining her own rigorous training schedule, Dr. Florian worked and communicated with other participating residents to make sure they had all the information they needed. After a year of planning, Durham Tech Community College and the DOC successfully launched the monthly mobile lab service in August 2021 to reach homebound DOC patients' homes. The multi-faceted team consisted of Durham Tech faculty, learners, and DOC residents to conduct joint visits for assessments, lab draws and other evaluations. Since its launch, the mobile lab service has reached and provided care for more than 30 patients.

Dr. Florian's exceptional community outreach has also created a rich interprofessional learning experience for DOC residents and Durham Tech learners. The successful community partnership has been called a "game changing collaboration." Dr. Florian is often described as one of the finest physicians, always comprehensive and rigorous in her patient management and delivering compassionate care, while also quietly putting in motion the steps needed to address gaps in care delivery to communities with the highest needs. She doesn't just talk about making her patients' lives better, she finds a way and makes it happen.

As expressed by the Durham Tech Mobile Health Team:

"Preventative medicine...mobile version! Partnering with a Duke Outpatient Clinic, our team went to patient homes and provided medical care. This is the type of medicine we need more of because this is what will keep our patients safe and healthy. When the patient can't get access to you, you find a way to get access to them! We are excited to start this journey with Duke!"

The mobile lab collaboration with Durham Tech will continue beyond Hannah's graduation from residency. Durham Tech is on board with expanding the program, and three junior residents have stepped up to follow Hannah's lead to continue the work.

2021 Kevin Nguyen, MD

Dr. Nguyen is a child and adolescent psychiatry fellow at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. He is a champion of providing comprehensive, affirming, and complete care to LGBTQ+ youth and has served as an organizational exemplar and leader. Dr. Nguyen developed a longitudinal curriculum for his fellow residents in best practices for providing care of LGBTQ+ youth, and over time recruited two additional residents to champion the work. The curriculum was accepted as a workshop at the 2020 Association of Pediatric Program Directors National Meeting. The analysis results of the curriculum's impact on trainees, and an accompanying workshop were also accepted at the 2021 Pediatric Hospital Medicine National Meeting.

Recognizing gaps in care, and with encouragement and support from fellow colleagues Dr. Nguyen continued to move forward, and interest in his curriculum began to gain traction. With hundreds of hours of volunteer time he began offering recommended best practices throughout the organization to a broader care team to include:

- Social Work
- Interpreter Services
- Child Life
- Spiritual Care Services
- Medical Staff
- Acute care Nursing
- Perioperative Nursing
- Pediatric and visiting residents
- Medical students

What began as a resident's scholarly project quickly grew into much more as Dr. Nguyen became recognized as an organizational leader in LGBTQ+ health. His competence, approachability, flexibility, and willingness to make himself available at literally all hours, days off, post-call and vacation to answer colleague and faculty questions regarding how to best care for LGBTQ+ youth, speaks to his passion for LGBTQ+ care. Dr. Nguyen exemplifies excellence in all that he does, and he is the consummate ally and advocate. He never becomes frustrated or impatient, and always takes the time to calmly listen and clearly explain himself.

Dr. Nguyen served as a subject matter expert for operationalizing clinical tools supporting best practices for LGBTQ+ youth when his organization transitioned to the EPIC electronic health record system. He specifically targeted areas with demonstrable, meaningful improvements in outcomes. He measured knowledge, comfort, and attitudes pre and post completion of his curriculum and saw statistically as well as clinically meaningful improvements in his colleagues' knowledge of and comfort with the provision of LGBTQ+ and gender-affirming care. He has worked with nearly every patient-facing group in the organization, including registration, to ensure that each clinical encounter begins on an affirming note. His work around optimizing the EHR experience and documentation of sexuality and gender identity has been directly linked to improved documentation of gender identity. Dr. Nguyen has continued to serve as a provider of gender-affirming care, including hormonal therapy and subspecialty referral – in fact, he is one of very few providers in the geographic catchment area who provides this type of care, and has trained multiple colleagues to be comfortable prescribing hormonal therapy and making referrals.

2020 Aditi Sharma, MD

Dr. Sharma is a PGY3, dermatology resident, at the University of California, Irvine. When the shortage of personal protective equipment began to affect the hospitals around the country due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Aditi became motivated to find a solution that would help the healthcare community. She studied the shortage of equipment and realized that focusing on a solution to create reusable and re-sterilizable masks and face shields would be the most beneficial to healthcare workers. Initially, Aditi worked with engineers from the local community to develop prototype Powered Air Purifying Respirators (PAPRs) and face shields using 3D printing technology. They focused their efforts on creating a reusable solution for the PAPR consumables such as the face shield and theair filters. Aditi worked with medical students and the school of engineering at UC Irvine to 3D print and assemble over 20,000 face shields that are currently being used by healthcare workers at the hospital.

What impact has Dr. Sharma's efforts had on the community?

With the face shield solution implemented, she turned her efforts to finding a solution for a reusable filter material. Aditi researched several different options for filter material before landing on the Halyard surgical sterilization wrap as a possible alternative filter material. Interestingly, these surgical sterilization wraps are being thrown away after a single sterilization of surgical instruments. Aditisent the recycled surgical sterilization wrap, along with other candidates to be tested for filtration efficiency in an independent laboratory at Massachusetts Institute of Technology. She discovered that

the surgical sterilization wraps significantly outperform the cloth masks that have been handed out to health care workers and are almost as good as an N95 mask. This inspired her to create repurposed masks from the recycled surgical sterilization wrap as an alternative for hospitals and the local community. Aditi worked todevelop a University of California wide protocol to collect the otherwise discarded surgical sterilization materials so that they may be used to build masks while simultaneously reducing medical waste. Aditi has recruited several talented community members from different fields to help launch her masking initiative. She reached out to local sewing factories and partnered with OC Cutworks to produce 10,000 masks made from the surgical sterilization wrap to provide a mask for every worker at the hospital from custodial services, to cafeteria workers to healthcare workers. Furthermore, she worked with medical students and the school of engineering to efficiently manufacture stainless steel nose pieces for the masks. Even more remarkable, is that her innovative spirit has inspired manymembers from the community to donate their time and resources to provide help with the initiative to better protect health care workers.In order to scale her project to the community and beyond, Aditi is now partnering with Sewing for Lives, a nonprofit sewing organization located all over the United States. This has allowed other hospitals to send their recycled surgical sterilization wrap to nearby sewers to create more masks. UCLA, UCSF and Cleveland Clinic have shown interest in partnering with her on this project to adopt a similar model. This project is truly innovative on multiple levels. It has made a positive environmental and public health impactin a very short time, while also engaging community partners. Aditi has truly demonstrated her dedication to the public health of the community during the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result of her tremendous community effort, she has been featured in the Los Angeles Times and the Orange County Register.