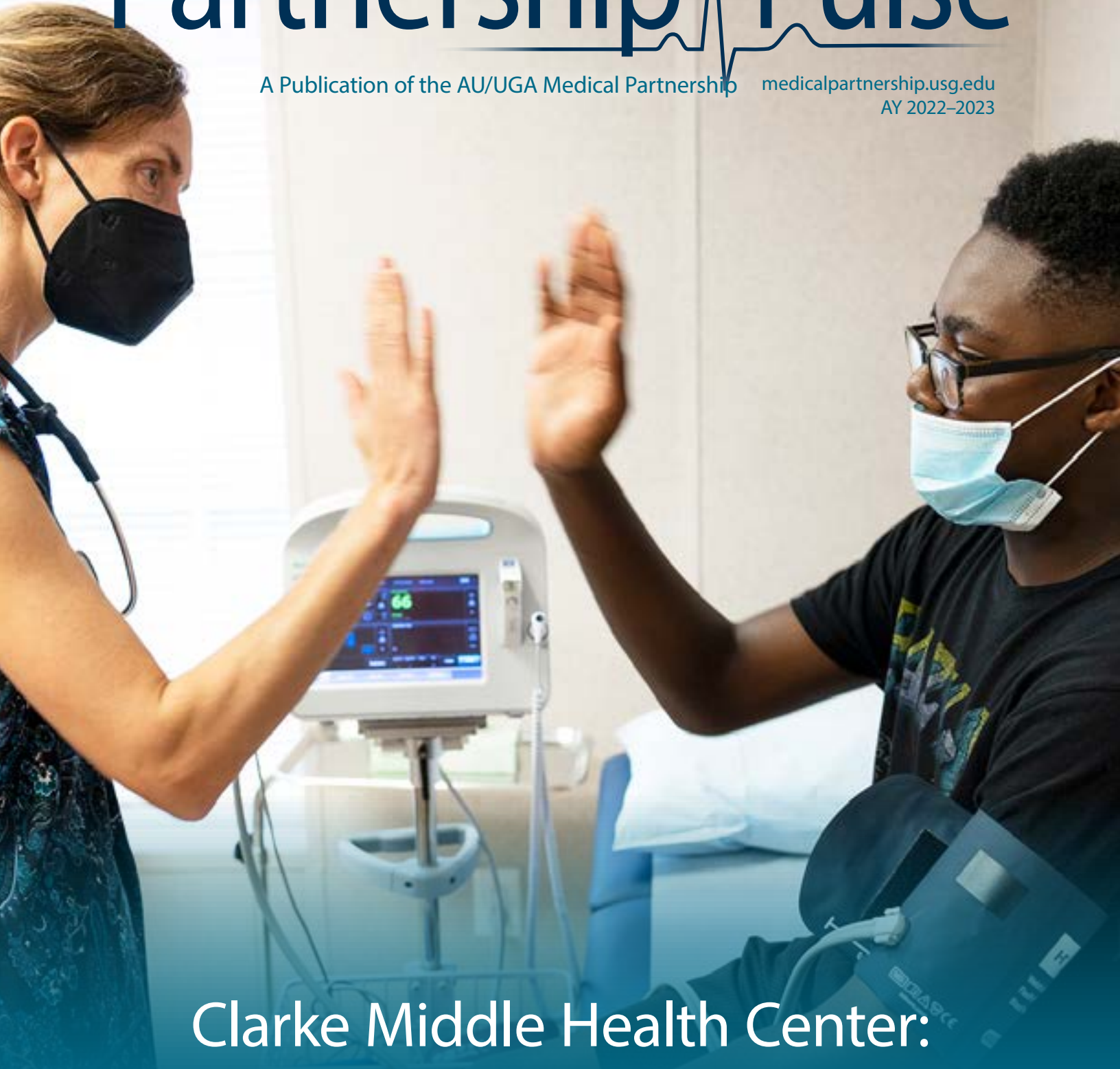


Partnership Pulse

A Publication of the AU/UGA Medical Partnership

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AY 2022–2023



Clarke Middle Health Center:
Providing Health Services
to Athens Families

Partnership Pulse

Augusta University and the University of Georgia have partnered to create a four-year medical education program to assist in alleviating the statewide shortage of physicians that threatens the health of Georgians. The AU/UGA Medical Partnership combines the significant instructional and research resources of UGA, the state's flagship land-grant research university, with the expertise of the Medical College of Georgia, AU, Georgia's only public medical school. A partnership of two prominent state institutions, bolstered by a supportive medical community and the energy of Athens, creates an unparalleled opportunity for the education of future physicians.

AUGUSTA UNIVERSITY
**MEDICAL
PARTNERSHIP**
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From the Campus Dean



It's been an exciting year in Athens, and we are proud to highlight many of the things our campus has accomplished with this issue of the Partnership Pulse.

This May, we graduated our last class of 40 students. It marks the end of an era at the Medical Partnership, but we are excited as our class expansion continues to move us to 240 total students by fall of 2024.

In March 2022, Dr. Kent Nilsson, professor of medicine, became the first physician in the Southeast and fourth in the United States to implant a wireless dual chamber pacemaker. Nilsson was also the first physician in Georgia to implant the single chamber version in 2014. We are truly honored and humbled that trailblazing physicians like Dr. Nilsson are educating our students here in Athens.

Our Athens Free Clinic also expanded its efforts to partner with the Clarke County School District to bring a school-based health center to Clarke Middle School. The center brings free medical care, mental health services, and legal services to students, staff, and families in the school district. The clinic also includes partnerships with the UGA College of Law, the UGA College of Family and Consumer Sciences, the UGA Mary Frances Early College of Education, and the Georgia Department of Health. The health center is this issue's cover story, and you can read more on page 22.

I want to thank each of you for your dedication to our students and to the success of the Medical Partnership. We wouldn't be where we are today without your unwavering commitment to our campus. It takes a team working together to have a successful educational program for our medical students. Every member of our team is vital to our success, vital to our day-to-day work, and vital to us continuing to thrive.

I also want to thank the leadership at Augusta University and the University of Georgia, along with our state leaders for the support you have shown our campus since we opened our doors in 2010!

My deepest gratitude to you all,

Michelle A. Nuss, MD
Campus Dean for the AU/UGA Medical Partnership

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Nilsson Implants One of the World's FIRST WIRELESS, DUAL CHAMBER PACEMAKERS

By Lindsey Derrick



In March of 2022, Dr. Kent Nilsson successfully implanted one of the first wireless, dual chamber pacemakers in the world into a patient. This accomplishment made Piedmont Hospital the first center in the Southeast and fourth in the U.S. to implant this new device. It was only the 32nd implant in a human in the world.

A cardiologist at Piedmont Athens Regional Hospital and professor of medicine at the Augusta University/University of Georgia Medical Partnership, Nilsson has become an expert in implanting single chamber, wireless pacemakers. He was called upon again to test the dual chamber version as part of the clinical trial for the Abbott Aveir DR Leadless (wireless) Pacemaker System.

With this procedure, the hospital joined the ranks of leading medical centers and universities in the country. The three locations ahead of Piedmont for the implantation were the University of Arizona, Cleveland Clinic, and Cornell University.

"The dual chamber wireless pacemaker is honestly one of the most transformative technologies in cardiology. Ever," said Nilsson. "When the dual chamber launches, it will completely change the field."

HOW DOES A PACEMAKER WORK?

A pacemaker is a device implanted into the chest to stabilize an irregular or slowly beating heart. A traditional pacemaker is inserted through an incision in the chest and is then connected to wires (leads) that have been inserted into the heart through the subclavian vein. The device sits beneath the skin and on top of the chest muscle, and the wires deliver electrical pulses to correct the heartbeat.

In 2014, Piedmont joined a clinical trial to test single chamber leadless—or wireless—pacemakers, which are put directly into the lower right ventricle of the heart via the femoral vein and do not require the chest to be opened for implantation. Nilsson gladly came on board for the trial.

Piedmont was the first center in Georgia and 15th in the country to implant a wireless pacemaker. By the time the 2014 trial for the single wireless pacemaker was complete, Nilsson had implanted over 30 devices.

Although traditional pacemakers have come a long way (the first implantation in 1958 failed within three hours and the patient went on to have

26 pacemakers in his lifetime), Nilsson said this wireless technology is the biggest advancement in the field since the invention.

BENEFITS OF WIRELESS PACEMAKERS

The wireless pacemaker is about 90% smaller than the average pacemaker and the surgery lasts around 30 minutes. The battery life is also comparable with a traditional pacemaker's 10-12 years and could be longer in some cases.

Patients also will not have an incision scar on the chest or a bump protruding from the skin.

"The psychological aspect of not seeing an incision or having something protruding out of your skin is beneficial," said Nilsson. "Just being able to not broadcast to the world that there is something wrong."

Another advantage is the elimination of several complications associated with traditional pacemakers. One in 10 patients see complications with pacemaker leads. Some also experience pocket infections, hematoma, lead dislodgment, and lead fracture.

Wireless pacemaker patients will also see a shorter, less complicated recovery time. There are no restrictions with taking showers or getting the area wet, and there are also no mobility issues. Traditional pacemaker patients are not able to move their arm above their shoulder for six weeks after surgery.

"It's same day discharge and people are up and moving around and doing everything they need to do," said Nilsson.

The single chamber wireless pacemaker was approved by the FDA in 2016, and Nilsson is now teaching other physicians how to implant the device.

"I'm one of 10 proctors teaching close to 5,000 physicians how to implant," said Nilsson. "The reception nationwide has been overwhelming. Everyday my Twitter is blowing up with pictures of people doing their first single chamber implant."

Single chamber pacemakers connect to one chamber of the heart while the dual chamber version connects to both chambers on the right side of the heart. Dual chamber pacemakers are the standard of care for pacemaker patients in the United States, so this new technology will affect more patients than the single chamber version.

"Dual chambers are 95% of what we do," said Nilsson.

FIRST IMPLANT OF THE NEW DEVICE

Nilsson kicked off the first dual implantation of the dual chamber, wireless pacemaker in March 2022 with a meaningful milestone. "Almost eight years to the day after we implanted the single chamber, we put in the dual chamber," he said.

Sixty-four-year-old Anna McKuhen was Nilsson's first patient. She was the first in the Southeast to have the dual chamber pacemaker implanted.

"I am all about new technology, so when they asked if I'd like to be a part of this trial, I said sure. It sounded exciting," said McKuhen. "The technology amazes me."

McKuhensaidshewasinterestedinreceiving the wireless pacemaker, in part, because of

the greatly reduced recovery time.

"My recovery was fantastic," said McKuhen. "I did not have any problems whatsoever. I was only confined to a week of not lifting heavy objects. I've had zero problems."

Nilsson implanted four dual pacemakers by the time the trial concluded in September of 2022.

Nilsson hopes the dual chamber will be FDA approved this year and soon widely available.

"I would say this is the future of pacemakers 100 percent," said Nilsson. "Everyone is trying to catch up at this point. This is really transformative technology."



Celebration of Graduation held in honor of the Class of 2023

by Lindsey Derrick

The Class of 2023 celebrated their achievements at the Celebration of Graduation at the University of Georgia Center for Continuing Education & Hotel on Saturday, May 13, 2023. Thirty-seven students, along with their friends and family, gathered for this momentous occasion.

The ceremony began with a procession led by Dr. Michelle Nuss, campus dean, along with the Medical Partnership faculty. Nuss opened the ceremony with remarks to the graduates.

"Wherever your residency training takes you, wear your new longer white coats with pride and privilege, but of much greater importance, with humility," Nuss told the graduates. "Listen carefully and compassionately to the patients you will care for. And remember that what makes you a physician and a future caretaker for patients is not the white coat. It's the qualities you already possess – your compassion, your discipline, your altruism, your intelligence – the things that make you, uniquely you."

Dr. Matt Crim, an assistant professor of medicine at the Partnership, provided the keynote address at the ceremony.

The Class of 2023 was then presented by Dr. DeLoris Hesse, associate professor of anatomy and embryology, and Lynn Ramsey, assistant director of academic success programs.

Crim, Hesse, and Ramsey were all chosen for their roles by the Class of 2023.

Associate dean for medical education and interim campus associate dean for student affairs, Dr. Scott Richardson, presented two awards during the ceremony—the Amarachi Anukam Community Service Award was presented to Dr. Zac Adams, and Dr. Clive Slaughter received the Educator of the Year Award. Dr. Ellen House was also named Educator of the Year, but was unable to attend the ceremony.

The ceremony concluded with the presentation of the class gift from Adams and Dr. Kyle Ulversoy and the Hippocratic Oath led by the 2023 Leonard Tow Humanism in Medicine awardee, Dr. Lia Bruner.





Tenth annual Match Day is a perfect score: AU/UGA Medical Partnership celebrates 100 percent match rate

By Lindsey Derrick

Resident applicants at the Augusta University/University of Georgia Medical Partnership gathered on Friday, March 17 in George Hall on the UGA Health Sciences Campus for Match Day, an event celebrating the next step in their medical careers.

“This is the tenth successful match at the Medical Partnership, and we are pleased to announce that every student from the Class of 2023 matched into a residency program,” said campus dean, Dr. Michelle Nuss.

“The accomplishments of these 37 MCG students have landed them at top-tier residency programs across the nation. The students will be going to 16 different states in 14 different specialties, with 54 percent staying in the southeastern United States and 54 percent joining primary care programs. Thank you to the faculty, administrators, staff, and physician mentors in our community who have devoted their time and efforts to educating our future physicians.”

Individual boxes addressed to each member of the Class of 2023 were opened at noon. Inside each box was a personal letter revealing where the student will pursue his or her postgraduate medical

education. To honor St. Patrick’s Day, this year’s Match Day theme was the color green.

An annual event, Match Day takes place after students participate in interviews and visits to residency programs in Georgia and across the country. To determine the post-graduation assignments, the students ranked residency programs where they would like to complete their training, at the same time the residency programs ranked the student applicants. The lists are then submitted to the nonprofit organization National Resident Matching Program (NRMP) in Washington, D.C., which uses an algorithm that aligns the choices of the applicants with those of the residency programs. Most students were matched via the NRMP, but some students participated in smaller match programs, including ophthalmology. The final pairings are announced simultaneously across the U.S. at noon on Match Day.

Some of the most popular specialties from the Medical Partnership Class of 2023 included Family Medicine (7), Pediatrics (6), Internal Medicine (3), Anesthesia (3), and Psychiatry (3).

AU/UGA Medical Partnership participants in Match Day 2023 received the following residency appointments. They are listed by name, residency institution, and specialty:

CLASS OF 2023 RESIDENCY APPOINTMENTS				
Last Name	First Name	Institution Name	Specialty	State
Adams	Charles	Emory University SOM	General Surgery	TN
Adams	Matthew	U Texas at Austin Dell Medical School	Family Medicine	SC
Adams	Zachary	U Alabama Med Ctr-Birmingham	Pediatrics	AL
Ahmed	Michael	U Alabama Med Ctr-Birmingham	Anesthesiology	AL
Baron	Sophie	U Connecticut School of Medicine	Pediatrics	PA
Blom	Emily	Medical College of Georgia	Internal Medicine	GA

CLASS OF 2022 RESIDENCY APPOINTMENTS				
Last Name	First Name	Institution Name	Specialty	State
Bonvillain	Annelise	Medical College of Georgia	Anesthesiology	GA
Cooper	Clare	PGY1 -Piedmont Athens Regional - GA PGY2 -U Colorado SOM - Denver	Transitional Radiology - Diagnostic	GA CO
Crawford	Tyler	U North Carolina Hospitals	Surgery -Preliminary	NC
Cuneo	Christopher	UC Irvine Med Ctr - CA	Orthopaedic Surgery	CA
Curry	Megan	Washinton Hospital	Family Medicine	PA
Francis	Lily	Medical University of SC	Psychiatry	SC
Gerald	Rachel	Boston Univ Med Ctr -MA	Family Medicine	MA
Grinstead	Mary	Spectrum Health/Michigan State Univ	Pediatrics	MI
Grossnickle	Charles	PGY1 -Medical University of SC PGY2- Medical University of SC	Transitional Radiology - Diagnostic	SC SC
Harbin	Kathryn	U Tennessee Health Sci Ctr- Memphis	Pediatrics	TN
Hyder	Syed	U Alabama Med Ctr-Birmingham	Internal Medicine	AL
Jackson	Ladonya	Massachusetts Gen Hospital	Medicine -Preliminary	MA
Kahf	Sebastian	UCLA Med Ctr- CA	Anesthesiology	CA
Kang	Sejoong	Emory Univ SOM- GA	Family Medicine	GA
Layman	Thomas	Medical University of SC	Psychiatry	SC
Mansoura	Maryam	Childrens Hospital LA-CA	Pediatrics	CA
Martin	Tanner	U Tennessee Health Sci Ctr- Memphis	Pediatrics	TN
Park	Daye	Oregon Health Sciences University	Urology	OR
Patel	Aakash	Kresge Eye Institute/Wayne State Univ	Ophthalmology	MI
Patterson	Jasmine	Harvard South Shore- MA	Psychiatry	MA
Perlman	Alexis	Floyd Medical Ctr- GA	Family Medicine	GA
Pride	Laura	Duke Univ Med Ctr- NC	Vascular Surgery	NC
Reese	Robert	Georgetown Univ/Washington Hosp	Ophthalmology	DC
Sardar	Tejas	U Kentucky Medical Center	Surgery- Preliminary	KY
Schoenl	Samantha	U Cincinnati Med Ctr	Medicine-Pediatrics	OH
Spivey	Jonathan	University of Utah Health	Family Medicine	UT
Sreenivasan	Sujay	University of Buffalo SOM	General Surgery	NY
Sweeting	Alexander	Brown Univ/Rhode Island Hosp	Internal Medicine	RI
Teshager	Dina	Carolinas Medical Ctr	Family Medicine	NC
Ulversoy	Kyle	PGY1 - Brookwood Baptist Health PGY2- U Alabama Med Ctr- Birmingham	Transitional Radiology - Diagnostic	AL AL
Yun	Pomi	Johns Hopkins Hospital	Child Neurology	MD

CLASS OF 2022				
Relja	Socorro	Atlanta Medical Ctr	General Surgery	GA
Kangas	Lindsey	Atrium Health Navicent Med Ctr	General Surgery	GA

Community & Population Health Site Spotlight:



By Lindsey Derrick

Drug use and overdoses are an epidemic in the United States.

According to the National Center for Drug Abuse Statistics, those numbers rise every year—over 96,700 people die from drug overdoses in a year, and half of people 12 and older have used illicit drugs at least once.

In 2016, Acceptance Recovery Center (ARC) opened its doors in Athens to join the fight against addiction.

ARC is a recovery residence that strives to provide addiction care, support, and education. Each resident must complete a five-phase foundation program in no less than 12-months.

ARC can accommodate 64 residents (20 women and 44 men), and they have served over 330 individuals since their 2016 opening. ARC's program coordinator, Michelle Medlock, said they have served more residents in the past, but recently cut back on their capacity to better give more individualized care.

Residents at ARC work full time and must attend community supports meetings. Residents must also give back to the community—ARC residents have served over 400 community service hours since 2016.

ARC also offers alumni care for its program graduates—it is a 12-month program offered to those who have completed ARC's foundation program and want continued accountability and support after they complete the program. ARC alumni care also accepts others who have completed recovery programs elsewhere.

Those in alumni care can complete the program on site or at home.

ARC's residential assistant and community engagement specialist, Danielle Bonanno, also praised ARC for being all-inclusive.

"We serve a very diverse group of individuals, and this has been life changing for our trans clients," said Bonanno. "We have trans residents who have had complete lack of trans affirming care, and this has really opened the door for them."

Dr. Suzanne Lester, the director of community and population health (CPH) at the Augusta University/University of Georgia Medical Partnership, first visited ARC with the CPH HIV outreach team.

Lester was so impressed with ARC that she wanted to bring them onboard as a CPH site for the Medical Partnership.

"We were so compelled by their program and residents that we wanted to formalize the relationship and make them a regular site," said Lester. "Their program is outstanding in that they are committed to pivoting according to their residents needs as they present—pregnancy and newborn care, family reunification, relapses, gender affirming care for their trans residents, assistance with marketplace health insurance applications, employment assistance, and general community-based encompassing substance use disorder care. The patients we saw there were incredibly welcoming to our medical students and the care that we offer."

Medical Partnership students and faculty visit ARC to provide primary health care and check-ups to the residents. Second-year students rotate through the site twice per month with Dr. Lia Bruner, associate professor of medicine at the Medical Partnership. Lester and her HIV team also rotate through ARC every two weeks.

"ARC is a remarkable program, and I think our students will get a great experience there," said Bruner.

Medlock said this partnership brings a whole new level of care to ARC.

"The reason why we chose to partner with the Medical Partnership is because the service that is offered to our residents, and by proxy the service we offer them, is invaluable," said Medlock. "The people we serve are high risk and high need and have long histories of substance use disorder and incarceration and homelessness and sometimes have never had any regular medical care."

Medlock said their residents do not have the best association with medical care.

"Their idea of medical care is emergency rooms when they



overdose and whatever the jail has offered to them irregularly during their incarceration history," said Medlock. "We have people who have chronic medical conditions that have been untreated for years and decades, and we haven't had many resources for them. We try to support our residents all the way around, and this is a service we haven't been able to provide for them."

With the students also coming to the ARC site itself, residents don't have to leave the comfort of their surroundings to get care.

"It's been amazing to have this primary care that's happening right on our site, so they don't have to feel any fear," said Medlock. "It's not this insurmountable goal they'll never be able to get to."

Medlock said she has been impressed with the professionalism the Medical Partnership students have shown and appreciates the respect they have for ARC residents.

"The students are amazing. They called and asked what they should wear because I mentioned most residents have fear

associated with medical care, and fear has been a barrier for them. They asked if it would be helpful if they wore T-shirts or would they be okay wearing scrubs and lab coats," said Medlock. "I was really impressed they even considered that."

As ARC passes this seven-year milestone of serving those in need, Medlock is happy they can now provide the service of health care.

"We're teaching them healthy habits and ways to care for themselves, and hopefully they can carry with them throughout their life," said Medlock. "We are teaching them how to take care of themselves."

To learn more about ARC, visit: <https://arc-ga.org/>

Bigger Vision Community Shelter

By Lindsey Derrick

On a rainy day in Athens, a white van and a tent sit outside Bigger Vision Community Shelter. People are flocking to the van and the tent—some from inside the Bigger Vision building and others walk in from the street.

The big white van and the tent mean one thing—the Augusta University/University of Georgia Medical Partnership's Athens Free Clinic is on site providing free health care to those in need.

The Medical Partnership's Athens Free Clinic joined forces with Bigger Vision in 2022 to make the shelter one of the campus's newest Community and Population Health (CPH) sites.

Dr. Laurel Murrow, associate professor of medicine at the Partnership, leads the team of second-year students who go to Bigger Vision and said taking the mobile clinic to the shelter made sense.

"The whole idea is that the mobile clinic can go out into the community where it is needed. We know from seeing patients in traditional clinics that our homeless population has a hard time accessing care. Many people don't have a car or a way to a clinic, so if you can bring the clinic to them it eliminates that barrier," said Murrow. "We were originally seeing guests in a room inside Bigger Vision, and it wasn't working well. Ever since we started taking the van, it's been so much better because people see the van and the tents, and they just flock in."

Bigger Vision was founded in 1998 when Ann Clark noticed the Salvation Army's homeless shelter had an overflow of citizens standing outside each night. Clark then partnered with St. James United

Methodist Church to host an overnight emergency overflow shelter. It was originally named the Community Overflow Shelter, but eventually became known as Bigger Vision.

Their goal is to provide shelter and assistance to those experiencing homelessness. Bigger Vision currently houses up to 35 guests per night, and they also have over 10,000 meals donated annually.

"We believe that safe, comfortable housing is a right that should be extended to all individuals, regardless of their race, age, religion, gender, or any other identifying factor," said Ryan Hersh, executive director of Bigger Vision.

If someone is in need of a place to stay, they reserve a spot at the shelter via a call-in system at 4:00 pm each day. Guests receive a bed, homemade meal, showers or laundry on an alternating schedule, and breakfast in the morning.

Bigger Vision also offers their Abundant Life Program—a program designed to help those in homelessness obtain their GED and certified job skills training.

The alliance with the Medical Partnership allows Bigger Vision to offer primary on-site health care (chronic disease management, acute care, counseling on prevention, screening tests) to their guests.

Murrow and her team of nine M2s go to Bigger Vision every other Wednesday.

"The work at Bigger Vision is important because it provides a new way for our homeless neighbors to access primary care in the community," said Murrow. "It can be challenging to make it to medical appointments under these circumstances, so this clinic comes to the patient."

"The primary goal of this partnership is to help provide increased access to medical care for our guests," said Hersh. "While Bigger Vision plays a small role in accomplishing this, we are grateful that our facility can be utilized for the doctors and students to meet with our guests and discuss their needs. Additionally, it is important to engage with our community partners in providing solutions to issues that our guests face, and working with this group has been the perfect fit."

Murrow said they can also request labs from local hospitals and send prescriptions to a pharmacy of the patient's choice.

"When the team is here, they can receive and respond to individuals as they arrive at the facility without the need for an extensive wait, mountains of paperwork, or referrals that might lead to dead ends," said Hersh. "Guests who have met with physicians and students



have secured new referrals, prescription refills, and information related to other local organizations that can respond to their medical needs."

Murrow also recognizes that this partnership is helping the students as well.

"Our students have to problem solve when it's not immediately known how you're going to get care for somebody. Medicines can be expensive or maybe they don't have a social worker," she said. "They really have to solve problems on the fly."

"Patients are always more complex than the cases we do within our school setting, so it's giving us tools on how to implement the things that we are leaning on to patients. And these patients have more complex situations, so implementing what we are leaning is very helpful," said Grace Snuggs, a third-year at the Partnership. "It's giving us the opportunity to expand our repertoire of patients and see different communities and different needs in Athens."

Both Murrow and Hersh hope that by working with this community site, the students will have a bigger understanding of what the homeless population needs.

"Some students have had an inkling they want to do primary care or might want to work with underserved people, and now they're doing it, there's a bigger commitment in that now that they've experienced giving back to the community," said Murrow.

"This provides the students with a deeper understanding of what this population goes through on a day-to-day basis when they aren't being seen in a clinic setting and how this might contribute to some of the medical issues they face," said Hersh. "I'm hopeful that this broadens the compassionate nature of these students and compels them to advocate for this group in their personal lives and professional careers."

"Hopefully it's building trust," said Murrow. "Sometimes there is a lack of trust in the medical community. We're real faces on the street, so hopefully that helps get their questions answered."

Hersh said he is humbly grateful for this partnership.

"This partnership has provided incredibly important care and resources to our guests and has helped improve their safety and comfort in the process," he said. "Trust is difficult to build with many members of this population, and having this team here to help us build that has been incredibly helpful in ways we didn't imagine."

If you or someone you know needs a place to stay, please call Bigger Vision at (706) 340-6062 ext. 2 at 4:00 pm daily to reserve a bed for that evening.

For more about Bigger Vision, visit their website: <https://biggervisionofathens.org/>



Cognitive Aging Research and Education Center

UGA departments team-up to fight Alzheimer's

By Lindsey Derrick

Alzheimer's is a disease that has touched the lives of countless Americans.

There are currently over six million Americans living with Alzheimer's or related dementia, and by 2050, that number may rise to 16 million.

With this staggering statistic in mind, Drs. Jenay Beer and Lisa Renzi-Hammond at the University of Georgia College of Public Health decided to take a stand.

They wanted to mold a unique center that tackled dementia from all angles—diagnostic, education, support, and training.

The cause also hit close to home for both professors—Renzi-Hammond's grandmother, Evelyn, and Beer's grandmother, June, both were diagnosed with dementia.

Their idea and work blossomed into the Cognitive Aging Research and Education (CARE) Center.

"We see dementia differently. That is why we built the CARE Center—a clinical, research, and outreach space where we deliver education on dementia risk reduction, conduct cutting-edge research and provide planning and support for persons with dementia and their care partners," said Renzi-Hammond.

Beer and Renzi-Hammond recruited members from departments around UGA to bring their expertise to the center—Dr. Bernadette Heckman, director of clinical training in the department of counseling and human development services at the Mary Frances Early College of Education, and Dr. Larry Sweet, director of the Clinical Neuroscience Laboratory in the Franklin College of Arts and Sciences.

Also brought to the team was Dr. Don Scott, Augusta University/University of Georgia Medical Partnership's campus director of geriatrics and palliative care.

Scott serves as the medical director of the CARE Clinic, the clinical arm of the center.

"I have been working with Lisa and Jenay for several years on various projects. They would help me teach some cognitive

science in the residency program, and I would teach some geriatric medicine principles to their students," said Scott. "Three years or so ago we began discussing the idea of starting a center that would focus on clinical evaluation. The basic idea was to improve access to clinical services and advance the field in education and research for people with Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias (ADRD)."

Scott has been a geriatrician for 30 years and was excited to be part of the center.

"I've witnessed firsthand the growing problem of ADRDs in our aging society, and the suffering and toll these diseases take both on the person with the disease and their families. I witnessed the devastation of this disease in my own father, and that is no small part of my motivation. My heart goes out to these families," said Scott.

The CARE Center officially launched in 2019 at the Institute of Gerontology on UGA's Health Sciences Campus and provides both in-person services and eventually telehealth services that include dementia screening, diagnosis, care planning, and community education.

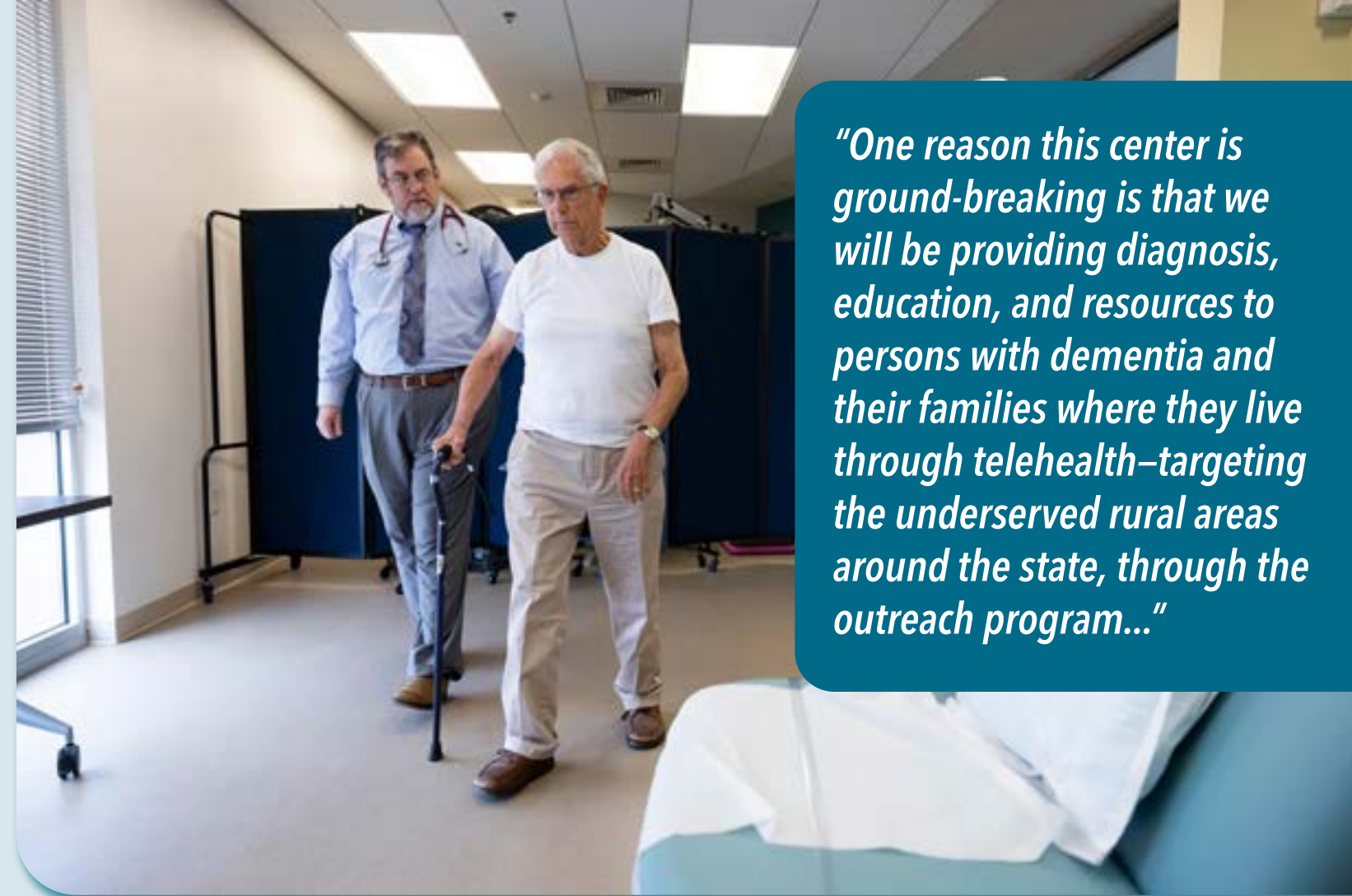
The center also allows for UGA graduate students to assist with assessments.

These faculty members and students from across UGA have teamed up together to provide assessments to 115 patients so far.

"My focus is evaluating the patient's cognitive status, determining if they have dementia, and, if they do, diagnosing what disease or conditions may be causing their dementia," said Scott. "As part of this process, I perform a thorough medical history and physical exam and often order blood tests and a brain MRI or brain PET scan. I then discuss the pros and cons of treatment with the patient and family."

With support of grants, including one from the National Academy of Medicine and seed grants from UGA as part of the Rural Engagement Faculty Workshop and Presidential Interdisciplinary Seed Grant programs, they plan to launch a telehealth arm this year and continue building their post-diagnosis support to include more financial, legal, and traditional counseling services.

The telehealth aspect will also help address the lack of



"One reason this center is ground-breaking is that we will be providing diagnosis, education, and resources to persons with dementia and their families where they live through telehealth—targeting the underserved rural areas around the state, through the outreach program..."

dementia care in rural areas.

"One reason this center is ground-breaking is that we will be providing diagnosis, education, and resources to persons with dementia and their families where they live through telehealth—targeting the underserved rural areas around the state, through the outreach program," said Scott. "It is no surprise that access to a specialist for diagnosis and treatment is quite limited. Typical wait times to see a neurologist or geriatrician (if you can find one) are typically six months. We hope to improve access to diagnosis and treatment, especially in more rural areas where such access is even more limited and often substantial travel to see a specialist is involved."

"Rural healthcare systems often lack the neuroimaging equipment, cognitive testing tools, and advanced laboratory facilities needed to diagnose and treat Alzheimer's and dementia, so the CARE Center is creating infrastructure and addressing economic barriers to diagnosis," said Beer.

The Center's work is also already getting recognition—on April 20, 2023, the CARE Center team received the Team Impact

Award at the Research Honors Banquet during UGA's Honors Week.

As the center continues to see patients, Scott is excited to see the center not only join the fight of this disease, but also spread education to current and future healthcare professionals.

"Alzheimer's Disease (AD) is the 6th leading cause of death in the U.S., and it is a very chronic and devastating disease, both for the person who has it and their families," said Scott. "The prevalence of AD is increasing rapidly due to the aging of the population. And this is only AD. There are other forms of age-associated dementia that are rapidly increasing as well. Bringing education to current providers or students, like primary care doctors, medical students, medical residents, social work students, pharmacy students, is a big part of our mission."

For anyone who would like more information or who would like to help support the CARE Center, please contact carecenter@uga.edu or call (706) 542-2539.



Mental health in the World of Medicine

By Lindsey Derrick

Practicing medicine is undoubtedly a selfless act. Physicians spend hours looking after the well-being of others but often neglect their own.

To address this area of need and support mental and physical well-being of medical students on campus, the Augusta University/University of Georgia Medical Partnership began the Office of Personalized Health and Well-being in January of 2020.

Dr. Cathy Snapp, the Medical Partnership's campus director of behavioral health, wanted to start the office to have a space that focused on improving mental and physical health.

"We really wanted to have a designed part of our campus that is dedicated to the well-being of our students, faculty, staff, and residents," said Snapp.

The office's goals are to improve the personal health and resiliency of next-generation physicians, to train students and residents how to care for patients while increasing responsibility for their own health, and to research effective training models of health and well-being to export to other academic medical centers in the state.

"In the past decade there has been a focus on mental well-being of medical students

and physicians in general because of the overwhelming prevalence of depression, anxiety, and other mental challenges that the medical career path is known for. A lot of efforts now are focusing on students and residents to really put more of a focus on their own mental well-being," said Casey Bassett, assistant director of behavioral health.

"This is our love and our passion," said Snapp.

A big goal of the office has been to ingrain the importance of well-being before the students fully enter the frantic career of medicine.

One in three medical students reports symptoms of depression, and one in nine experiences suicidal ideation, so it is critical to stress the importance of mental health early on.

"Patient care begins with physician well-being," said Snapp.

"And the initial step of physician well-being is medical student well-being," added Bassett, "so we are trying to encompass that from the very beginning of their training as future physicians."

Chandler Johnson, a third-year student at the Medical Partnership, said it is easy to let mental health fall to the side while in medical school. Johnson knew she would be stressed, but likened medical school to a "fire hose of information."

"I have found that it is easier to neglect mental health in medical school," said Johnson. "Obligations, meetings, deadlines, and tests never seem to ease up for involved medical students. It is easy to be distracted by these things and spend less attention on yourself than you may need at that certain time."

"Those stressors begin the first week of medical school and tend to snowball," said Snapp.

"They have such a limited amount of time and they're given so much new information in any given week that something has to give," said Bassett. "The tendency is for their own personal habits to take a back seat. Students who may use exercise to help handle stress, that's the first thing that goes because they think they don't have enough hours in the day to do that anymore because they have to be so dedicated to studying."

Snapp and Bassett have worked on organizing events and workshops for students, faculty, and staff such as applied nutrition cooking classes, painting vases for patients in hospice, yoga, and emotional regulation retreats.

"We've worked on mindfulness and focusing and shifting the mindset from something that is not helpful, not constructive, to something more positive and being able to apply that in the moment. Simple practices," said Bassett.

"Medical education is focused on disease, but the tide is changing in that we are now

seeing the need for health promotion for our physicians," said Snapp.

"In the past, medical education has not included these things, it was more a rite of passage and students just dealing with stressors on their own and figure out how to handle it all," said Bassett. "Now institutions are saying, no, this is our responsibility. Medical education doesn't have to be that way."

Snapp and Bassett said the tendency to neglect well-being during residency and as a physician is "turbocharged."

The Council of Emergency Medicine Residency Directors estimate that up to 400 physicians take their own lives per year. The risk for suicide is 2.27 times greater among women and 1.41 times higher among men versus the general population.

National Physician Suicide Awareness Day is recognized annually on September 17 to bring awareness to the issue.

Snapp said it's impossible to have it all, but the goal is to start small.

"It's impossible to have your sleep, nutrition, and exercise in balance during residency, but what you can do is just one thing. Focus on one thing a day for your emotional well-being and your physical well-being. Micro goals and micro moments can have a profound impact."

Snapp said they train with the 110 residents at both St. Mary's and Piedmont Athens Regional to help them integrate micro goals into their day—that could be getting more sleep or simply drinking more water during the day.

"The concept of stress and burnout is so profound and the mental health issues are so significant, but what is encouraging are these micro changes. It sounds so simple, but I cannot underscore how transformative they are," said Snapp.

For Johnson, she likes to write out her day in a planner to see where she can squeeze in something for herself.

"For me, I thrive on structure. Having things written down eliminates some of the guess work out of my day and allows me to efficiently complete tasks. Having structure allows me to know exactly when I can add things to my schedule that I look forward

to, such as a daily workout, time to make a healthy meal, or hang out with my friends. Having things to look forward to and taking the time to focus on my mental and physical health makes medical school sustainable," said Johnson.

Snapp and Bassett said as a physician takes care of their own mental and physical well-being, they are better able to help their patients.

"Physicians really have to pay attention to their own health, so they are able to better care for their patients," said Bassett. "Well-being even ties into medical error and patient satisfaction with their physician. You have to fill your own cup before you fill others."

Johnson echoed those thoughts and said medical school was the perfect time to get in touch with your mental health before fully entering the career.

"Now is the time to get to know ourselves and our needs better and develop healthy coping mechanisms that we can sustain throughout our careers. For me, my goal is to be at my best so I can show up for my patients in the future," said Johnson.

The office is currently launching well-being teams, adding upon peer coaching, adding more wellness events, and bringing in faculty champions

"One of the things I love about our office is being able to focus on well-being and promote these strategies in the curriculum," said Snapp. "It's so great that we have a dean who really advocates for health and well-being. She's the reason we have this office, and she's really dedicated resources for us. That support has been tremendously helpful. It's fun to be part of an organization with so much support for what we are doing. It's exciting to do that kind of work."

Johnson said she is grateful for the work of the Office of Personalized Health and Well-being and for the Medical Partnership's commitment to focus on the mental health of its students.

"I have found that stress is not something I have to approach alone," said Johnson, "and it is important to understand that you matter too!"

Alumni Profile:

Dr. Ashley Austin ('14)

By Jasmine Lake, Kyra Urquhart-Foster & Tai Sherman

It was 2010, and the inaugural class of the Augusta University/University of Georgia Medical Partnership was taking their first steps into bright futures as physicians. Among those students stood Dr. Ashley Austin, Class of 2014 graduate and a current primary care sports medicine physician. Austin knew early in her life that she wanted to be a doctor. "I got a Fisher Price doctor bag when I was three, and I went around doctoring everybody up," recalls Austin. When she was young, Austin also spent a lot of time at the hospital with family members who were ill. Following and watching the medical team that cared for her grandmother led to a pivotal realization for Austin: "medicine is the ultimate team sport".

Austin played basketball at the University of Evansville, and she said that only further prepared her for her journey in medicine. "While the multitude of responsibilities was tough, it was accomplishable because I planned accordingly. I would stay awake on the bus rides back from away games studying for courses while my teammates rested. I would go into the chemistry lab late at night so I could make it to practice in the morning," said Austin. The dedication that she showed during her undergraduate career prepared her for the big adjustment of starting medical school.

In her preclinical years of medical school and during her rotations, Austin had her heart set on orthopedic surgery. She felt it was natural to go into orthopedic surgery after her long history of being an athlete. When the time to submit residency applications came around, she did apply for orthopedic surgery, however, immediately after she rotated in primary care sports medicine, she fell in love. She enjoyed specific aspects such as continuity of care, engagement with patients, and the freedom to provide a wider scope of care that orthopedic surgery did not allow her to do. The fateful match day arrived, and Austin was grateful to receive news that many other fourth-year medical students would dread- she did not match into orthopedic surgery. She was elated because she knew orthopedic surgery wasn't right for her, and now she had the opportunity to enter a field that resonated with her as a person. "It really was a blessing," said Austin. "I thought about how Dr. Suzanne Lester told me that she always saw me as a primary care physician. I

actually still think about that often. She saw that about me before I ever saw that in myself."

After participating in the "scramble" where residency applicants can find open residency positions, Austin moved forward to complete a general surgery preliminary year in 2015. She then completed her family medicine residency at the University of Virginia and her primary care sports medicine fellowship at the University of Washington. From her experience, Austin advises current medical students not to become obsessed with one specialty right away. "It's okay not to know everything. Don't be afraid of admitting that you don't know something, but be proactive and ask for help during those times," said Austin.

Austin also shared advice for young physicians who are from populations that are underrepresented in medicine: "When you are in medical training, you have to go to where the best medical training is, which is usually in college towns. However, these do not often have diverse populations, and it is difficult to retain people of color. Not only that, but there may be institutions that want to show that they have diversity without making sacrifices to retain diverse faculty. Minority physicians are often overextended and overworked as the face of diversity without being granted actual leadership roles. It is important to have lots of diversity in leadership positions. It's important to keep advocating for that. Increased diversity in leadership positions will create an institutional culture where all kinds of different physicians can thrive, and that will lead to better health outcomes for patients."

Today, Austin works at the Hospital for Special Surgery in New York City. "I love the work-life balance here," said Austin. She recently accomplished her greatest feat of climbing Mount Aconcagua- the highest peak in South America. Austin enjoys extreme endurance activities such as high-altitude mountaineering. "I find Zen at 18,000 feet," Austin said. Austin finds that she is never too disconnected from her past in Athens. Even while climbing one of the tallest mountains in the world, she radioed in on the day of the NCAA National Championship to celebrate UGA's win.



Medical Partnership alumni overwhelming choose to go into PRIMARY CARE

By Tai Sherman

The core of the mission of Augusta University/University of Georgia Medical Partnership is to assist in alleviating the statewide physician shortage that threatens the health of Georgians. The problem is not unique to Georgia, and according to the Association of American Medical Colleges, the United States is expected to face a shortage of primary care physicians (PCPs) of between 21,400 and 55,200 by 2033.

In Georgia, primary care includes the following specialties: family medicine, internal medicine, pediatrics, internal medicine pediatrics, psychiatry, general surgery, obstetrics & gynecology, and emergency medicine. Primary care physicians are a patient's first point of contact for medical issues and continued care. According to a 2021 report by the National Academy of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, an increased supply of PCPs is associated with better population health and more equitable outcomes. The best standard of care includes having a relationship with a PCP who knows you and can coordinate your medical care such as mammograms and colonoscopies among specialists, labs, and health insurance. For people with access to health care, establishing a relationship with a PCP is increasingly difficult, and for those uninsured or underinsured, it is nearly impossible.

The shortage of primary care physicians can be linked to several factors including lower pay than other specialties and a higher burnout rate. A study published in the *Annals of Family Medicine* showed primary care physicians spend nearly two hours on electronic medical record tasks per hour of direct patient care. Demand for non-face-to-face care, such as communication through a patient portal and administrative tasks, is increasing and contributing to burnout.

Health insurance companies reimburse PCPs work at a lower rate than other specialists, which translates to lower salaries, and with the average medical school debt topping out at over \$250,000, medical school graduates are hesitant to enter the field.

The Medical Partnership is a community-based medical school model, which means that students don't learn in one large academic teaching hospital, but rather in hundreds of community-based clinical settings throughout Northeast Georgia and beyond with many of the locations providing primary care. Giving medical students early exposure to

primary care increases the likelihood that they will choose to specialize in primary care.

Family Medicine for America's Health conducted research that shows the presence of high-quality family medicine preceptors who were openly enthusiastic about the specialty and who practiced full-scope family medicine is the top reason students chose to specialize in primary care. Providing that kind of exposure gives students an idea of the breadth of the specialty and offers them a window into what the typical family physician could expect to encounter in practice.

Through the Medical Partnership's award-winning community and population health curriculum, the Athens Free Clinic, and an in-depth roster of primary care faculty, the students at the Medical Partnership are educated in a culture that celebrates and encourages primary care. As a result, an astounding 70% of Medical Partnership graduates initially choose a primary care specialty compared to 31% of U.S. physicians. After matching in primary care, physicians can either remain in the field or pursue a more defined specialty such as cardiology, palliative care, sports medicine, or other fellowships.

Dr. Bryson Greenwood is the campus director of year 1/2 curriculum and assistant professor of family and community medicine. He has an integral part in ensuring that Medical Partnership students are exposed to the field of primary care early.

"We work really hard to prepare our students for any medical specialty and setting with particular attention given to primary care and the needs of underserved populations. Because of the way we teach medicine in small groups and team settings, along with our community-based culture, we naturally attract students who like the idea of providing primary care," said Greenwood.

Now with 10 years of data, it is clear that the Medical Partnership is fulfilling its mission to help alleviate the physician shortage in Georgia, especially primary care doctors.

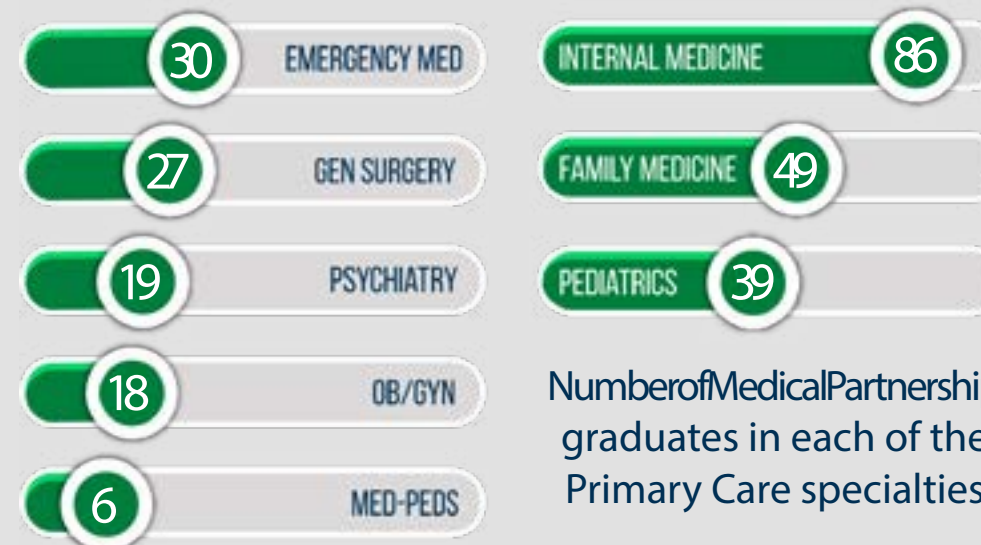
"I am so proud of the work we are doing here," said Dean Michelle Nuss. "It's a joy and privilege to watch our alumni making a difference in the communities they serve."



Through the Medical Partnership's award-winning community and population health curriculum, the Athens Free Clinic, and an in-depth roster of primary care faculty, the students at the Medical Partnership are educated in a culture that celebrates and encourages primary care.



an astounding 70% of Medical Partnership graduates initially choose a primary care specialty compared to 31% of U.S. physicians. of our 389 alumni, 274 pursue primary care over other specialties.



Number of Medical Partnership graduates in each of the Primary Care specialties

Clarke Middle Health Center: Providing health services to Athens families

By Lindsey Derrick

On Thursday, November 10, the Clarke Middle Health Center celebrated its grand opening with the Athens-Clarke County community.

The event began with opening remarks from Clarke County School District (CCSD) superintendent, Dr. Robbie Hooker.

“Today we are celebrating our expansion of our collaboration with the Augusta University/University of Georgia Medical Partnership to increase access to health services for our students, staff, and families,” said Hooker.

“This is such a wonderful day for our community,” said Dr. Michelle Nuss, dean of the Medical Partnership. “This center is already making a tremendous impact in the community we serve, and I want to thank everyone involved for all you do. It takes a village, so to everyone from the state, the community, the school system, thank you.”

Nuss was joined by fellow deans from the partnering colleges from UGA— Dean Bo Rutledge from the School of Law, Dean Denise Spangler from the Mary Frances Early College of Education, and Dean Anisa Zvonkovic from the College of Family and Consumer Sciences.

A ribbon was ceremoniously cut in front of the health center building before guests could tour the facility.



Dr. Suzanne Lester speaks to guests at the ribbon cutting for the Clarke Middle Health Center on November 10, 2022.

GETTING THE IDEA OFF THE GROUND

The Clarke Middle Health Center is a collaboration between CCSD and the Medical Partnership’s Athens Free Clinic.

The Athens Free Clinic already had an established relationship with CCSD—Medical Partnership faculty and students administered over 1,650 COVID-19 vaccines to CCSD students, staff, guardians, and employees in 2021.

Dr. Suzanne Lester, the director of the Athens Free Clinic, and Amy Roark, CCSD’s director of nursing, wanted to build on the relationship and applied for a UGA Presidential Interdisciplinary Seed Grant to fund a School Based Health Center (SBHC).

Lester teamed up with Roark and additional employees from around both UGA and Athens-Clarke County to work on the grant to support the clinic—Drs. Lia Bruner, Tresa Chappell, Jean Chin, Carrie Kelly, and Theresa Rohr-Kirchgraber from the Medical Partnership, Jason Cade from the UGA School of Law, Dr. Edward Delgado-Romero from UGA’s Mary Frances Early College of Education, Megan Ford from the ASPIRE Clinic at the UGA College of Family and Consumer Sciences, and Dr. Stephen Goggans with the Department of Public Health all joined the effort.

In November of 2021, the team received news they were awarded the grant worth over \$94,000. The grant will cover a nine-month pilot period for the center.



Above: Representatives from the Medical Partnership, the University of Georgia, and Clarke County School District prepare to cut the ribbon at the Clarke Middle Health Center.

Left: Kate Meixner, assistant professor of family & community medicine at the Partnership, puts together an nebulizer for a patient before an appointment at the Clarke Middle Health Center.



Below: The center sits between Clarke Middle School and Alps Road Elementary. The center will move to a permanent location when construction on Clarke Middle School is complete.

THE CENTER

The center opened its nine-month pilot phase on September 7. The center is open to serve all of CCSD, and there is no cost to receive clinician services. They are open to see patients five days during the school week for a total of 26 hours.

The current location of the center (located directly outside Alps Road Elementary School) is only temporary—the plan is for the center to be permanently housed in the new addition of Clarke Middle School when construction is complete in 2024.

The overall goal of the health center mirrors the Athens Free Clinic’s mission— address social determinants of health, reduce barriers to care, and manage early preventable and treatable conditions that impact the underserved population.



“Our campus has strived to provide access to health care to Athens-Clarke County since we opened our doors in 2009, and the Clarke Middle Health Center allows our resources to reach even more citizens,” said Nuss.

The services provided include preventive health care and care of acute and chronic health conditions, behavioral health counseling, and referrals to legal, social work, and other support services. The center does not provide vision or dental care but will offer referrals.

Medical services are provided by Medical Partnership/Athens Free Clinic physician faculty, registered nurses, and medical students, with support from CCSD nurses and CCSD student support team and school liaison, as well as a UGA graduate assistant and undergrad volunteer clerical staff.

The ASPIRE Clinic from the UGA College of Family and Consumer Sciences provides mental health assessments and shorter-term individual and family counseling services by a team of graduate students, marriage and family therapy students, social work students, and professional counseling students.

Staff from La Clínica in LaK'ech, a bilingual clinic through UGA's Mary Frances Early College of Education, provides counseling and assessment to the Latinx population in both English and Spanish, and staff from the Community Health Law Partnership Clinic through the UGA School of Law also review requests for legal assistance and may refer internally to other clinics or to community resources.

Lester and Roark recognize one large advantage of the health center will be on-site care. Students won't have to miss school or worry about transportation barriers to get to a doctor's office.

“Having these services available on our school campus increases the amount of time that students spend in class learning and reduces the amount of time that parents and staff have to miss work,” said Roark. “CCSD recognizes that increasing access to quality health services positively impacts a child's ability to stay healthy and succeed in school. We are grateful for our community partners who assist us on our path to increasing student success.”

“There is plenty of data to show that SBHCs lead to improved health and academic outcomes,” said Lester. “Keeping children in school so that they can continue to learn instead of losing days to preventable and acute illnesses is the goal.”

SERVING ATHENS-CLARKE COUNTY

Since the September 7 soft opening, the clinic has held over 300 primary care visits valued at \$66,000. The center treats patients for a range of checkups and ailments— sports physicals, hypertension, asthma, flu, COVID-19, diabetes, common colds, and minor injuries.

“It is an honor and a privilege to have a location where our students are getting to experience giving care to real people and to be able to serve the community at the same time,” said Jeni Fitzpatrick, a registered nurse at the center and the Medical Partnership. “It feels really good.”

Lester said she is amazed at the passion she has seen from the Medical Partnership students when they work at the clinic.

“They are on fire when they come here,” said Lester. “We have such a great time when we are here. This is our happy place.”

Lester said she has two goals with the center—to serve the uninsured and underinsured citizens of Athens-Clarke County and to also spark the love for community-based health in the students.

“We have a unique opportunity as a medical school to try to address social and structural determinates of health and health equity,” said Lester. “I believe the short-term effect is having more health equity in Athens-Clarke County. The long-term effect is by allowing our medical students, our counseling students, and our law students to interact in this setting with patients and families, means when they finish their training, they are more likely to go into primary care and community-based service, and they will also go on to address social and structural determinates of health and health equity in their own careers.”

Hooker said he was honored that the center is located at one of his CCSD schools and looks forward to seeing the benefits play out within the community.

“This is going to help our families and the attendance of our students, and this is also going to make us a healthier community, and there's nothing better than that,” he said.



For more information on the AU/UGA Medical Partnership's Athens Free Clinic and to see what we're up to, please like and follow our Facebook page by scanning the code ☒



Honoring those who gave their bodies to science

By Lindsey Derrick

A realtor. A professor. A financial advisor.

These are just a few of the professions held during the lives of the body donors at the Augusta University/University of Georgia Medical Partnership.

After their lives ended, they all took on a new job—teacher.

“They all served as our teachers, and we would not be able to do our jobs without our donors,” said Dr. Ariel VanLeuven, assistant professor of cellular biology and anatomy.

To honor and remember those who gave their bodies to science, students, faculty, and staff at the Medical Partnership gathered in Russell Hall on Friday, May 12 for the annual Body Donor Memorial Ceremony.

Students were encouraged to light candles and place flowers in honor of their body donors and write thank you notes to the families.

“This memorial is absolutely about our donors, but our anatomy team would like to express our condolences to the families of our donors,” said VanLeuven. “We often overlook the fact that our donors’ families have not been able to fully grieve the loss of their loved ones. Many have not held funerals or memorials. Let’s not forget that the most gracious of gifts to us also represents great sadness and pain to others.”

All attendees for the memorial also observed a moment of silence in honor of the donors.

“Through their donation, they have given a gift that keeps on giving. Their legacy lives on through the knowledge and skills we acquired,” said John Ostrowski, M1 class president for the Class of 2026.

“This selfless and truly unmatched gift these people have given us has allowed us the opportunity to learn,” said VanLeuven. “We hope you learned a lot in anatomy lab, and hopefully you’ll remember that you wouldn’t have had this vital opportunity without our donors.”

Now that their services to science have been completed, the bodies will be cremated and returned to their families. If for any reason a body does not go back to a family, it is interred at the Medical College of Georgia’s main campus in Augusta.

“I’m very glad that we are taking the time to honor their bodies and their lives with the respect and gratitude they deserve,” said VanLeuven. “I hope our donors and their families know how grateful we are for the privilege we have had working with them.”

The life-changing impact of mentorship

By Tai Sherman



Fourth-year medical student Artie McCarty helped found the Pathway to Medicine program—a student-led initiative of the Augusta University/University of Georgia Medical Partnership that offers mentorships and teaches medical material in a fun, hands-on way to students in local schools and non-profits in the Athens-Clarke County area. Through this program, McCarty volunteered with U-Lead Athens, a volunteer, non-profit organization dedicated to enabling college access to higher education for immigrant students and students from immigrant families.

Betina Kaplan and JoBeth Allen, U-Lead’s co-founders and co-directors, were seeking a mentor in the health sciences field for high school senior, Juan Rosillo, because they knew that Rosillo wanted to pursue a career in the healthcare field as a dentist. Rosillo migrated to the United States as a child from Venezuela seeking political asylum.

“As a child, I experienced a lack of food and medicine, as well as violent protest. The streets of my city were a very unstable place. Seeking political asylum meant that I was asking for refuge from the unforgettable, hurtful, and heartbreaking things that my family and I have experienced,” said Rosillo.

McCarty began mentoring Rosillo, and the pair spent many hours together over Zoom and in person talking about the college experience, looking for scholarships, and writing and refining personal statements.

Rosillo was an exceptional high school student and maintained his good grades despite working two jobs. His involvement spanned from extracurricular activities at school to engagement throughout his community. On top of this, he was selected for

the Georgia Governor’s Honor Program in Spanish.

“The primary goal that Juan and I had for our mentorship was to apply for scholarships that would allow Juan to enter college without worry about finances. This meant we were working towards a full ride. Juan has astounding maturity for his age and took immense initiative in applying for scholarships,” said McCarty. “Medical school is about more than just education—many of us use our position to promote positive change. One thing that became quickly apparent to my classmates and I as we entered this field was the lack of representation from different populations in medicine. When we founded the Pathway to Medicine program, our intention was to address this problem through mentorship in our local community,” said McCarty.

After several months of hard work and countless applications, Rosillo received the Dream Scholarship—a scholarship that will cover up to \$80,000 for four years of full tuition, fees, on-campus housing, and meal plans. He will use this scholarship at Eastern Connecticut State University where he plans to graduate pre-med before pursuing dental school back in Georgia.

“Upon arriving in the U.S., I had no idea how to speak, read, or write English, which left me struggling to keep up with other students. I felt stressed, frustrated, and overwhelmed. I’ve worked so hard to achieve my goals, but not without obstacles. I was forced to leave everything behind, learn a new language, and become part of a new culture, but I have so much hope for my future. Thankfully, I have a bright future to look forward to thanks to the mentorship I received from Artie and the Dream Scholarship.”

PROFESSIONALISM in Medicine

By Lindsey Derrick



“Patients’ families want to be respected, they want to get the right care, but they want the care delivered in a way that understands their uniqueness. They need to feel they are respected by the system in general.”

Dr. Gerald Hickson visited the Augusta University/University of Georgia Medical Partnership in February to kickoff a new lectureship series at the campus.

Hickson is the founding director of the Center for Patient and Professional Advocacy (CPPA) at Vanderbilt University Medical Center and also serves as the Joseph C. Ross Chair of Medical Education and Administration and a professor of pediatrics. Hickson received a BS from the University of Georgia and MD from Tulane University School of Medicine.

During his visit to Athens, Hickson led the workshop “Making Medicine Kinder, Safer, and More Reliable” for second-year medical students at the Medical Partnership. The lecture coincided with the ethics module for the M2s.

Hickson also spoke with the Medical Partnership’s Internal Medicine Residency Program, faculty, and the Senior Leadership Team.

The workshop is the first event in the Medical Partnership’s newly established Lectureship in Professionalism in Medicine series. The new workshop series is possible thanks to a donation to the Medical Partnership from Hickson and his wife, Becky.

“Professionalism is important in the pursuit of safety and making cultures of respect. Patients’ families want to be respected, they want to get the right care, but they want the care delivered in a way that understands their uniqueness,” said Hickson.

Hickson said lack of professionalism in medicine can lead to medical error.

“When individuals are not modeling professionalism, teams do not perform as well as they can. Slips and lapses in care delivery occur, and it can increase the probability that those we serve suffer avoidable medical and surgical outcomes,” said Hickson. “When humans combine professionalism in action, patients are in a much better place. Care delivery is much better, and we avoid things that often cause harm to others.”

“Dr. Hickson is an internationally recognized leader in the field of professionalism in medicine, and we were excited to host him as the first speaker in our new series,” said Campus Dean Michelle Nuss.

The Lectureship in Professionalism in Medicine series will feature guest speakers from across the country to visit the Athens campus to speak on professionalism within the field of medicine.

AU/UGA Medical Partnership 2023 SCHOLARSHIP AWARDEES

BENSON WHITE COAT SCHOLARSHIP

The Benson White Coat Scholarship is awarded to a student (or students) who embodies the vision and mission of the AU/UGA Medical Partnership by demonstrating leadership in research and scholarship.

Zac Adams & Annelise Bonvillian

KIRBY MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

The Kirby Memorial Scholarship is a recurring scholarship awarded to a student (or students) who demonstrates exceptional citizenship and professionalism.

Megan Curry & Alex Parsons

SIMPSON WHITE COAT SCHOLARSHIP

The Simpson White Coat Scholarship is a recurring scholarship awarded to a student (or students) who demonstrates campus engagement and excellent scholarship.

Attila Dos Santos & Fallon Hassett

MCG/UGA WHITE COAT SCHOLARSHIP

The MCG/UGA White Coat Scholarship is awarded to a student (or students) with excellent academic qualifications who has demonstrated professionalism and good citizenship.

Pascal Acree & Ana Bankey

JL SMITH PROFESSIONALISM FUND AWARD

The JL Smith Professionalism Fund Award is awarded to a first-year student doing summer research in pediatrics, and/or a fourth-year student pursuing a career in pediatrics.

Emmy Grinstead & Harris Jamal

WAYNE MIDDENDORF SCHOLARSHIP

The Wayne Middendorf Scholarship is awarded to a student who has demonstrated exceptional community engagement, and academic excellence.

Scarlett Kim

BARBARA L. SCHUSTER SCHOLARSHIP

The Barbara L. Schuster Scholarship is awarded to a student who has demonstrated evidence of future leadership.

Artie McCarty

HOWARD & CARYL COHEN SCHOLARSHIP

The Howard & Caryl Scholarship is merit based and awarded to an incoming or current AU/UGA Medical Partnership student.

Sebastian Kahf

FRANCES WOOD WILSON SCHOLARSHIP

The Frances Wood Wilson Scholarship is awarded to students with a demonstrated commitment to the values of the AU/UGA Medical Partnership.

Tajah Damm, Luke del Balzo,
Tucker Hickox & Talia Sisroe



The Impact of Giving

By Alex Parsons

I am a “non-traditional” medical student having spent time working for Progressive Health Aviation services contracted by Delta Air Lines at their airport-based health clinic. I led the injury prevention program and consulted on areas to improve employee health and wellbeing as an exercise physiologist for five years. That led me to return to school where I completed my master’s degree at Case Western. I then decided to peruse my medical degree.

I am married and have two very busy daughters, ages 20 months and three years. My wife works for corporate Delta. I wanted to return to school to become a physician to advance my medical knowledge in general, and I’d like to have more answers for my wife when our kids get sick!

I have genuinely enjoyed medical school, but it is a grind! From the onset of classes to the eventual day we complete this phase of our medical education, we are constantly learning, practicing, researching, leading, volunteering, and doing anything else we can fit into each second of each day. It is no wonder why it is so easy to get caught up in crossing off items on our daily to-do list, completing module exams, advancing to rounding

and presenting through clinical years, and preparing that all-important residency application.

However easy it may seem to get lost in completing all the steps for what’s next, something that never gets old is the recognition of “a job well done” from a completely unexpected place. Being awarded the Kirby Memorial Scholarship has been that for me. I love the grind, but when an unexpected email came through sharing this exciting news, it was one of those unique situations where you feel good about what you’ve accomplished—like those times when a patient thanks you for caring for their wellbeing when in reality, we were doing what is expected of future physicians.

We can’t possibly predict how we will help along the way, but still, we learn, help, and care for those around us. To the Kirby family, I want to say thank you for supporting continued learning and for role modeling what’s next.

Alex Parsons is a rising fourth-year medical student with plans to pursue a career in orthopedics.

Mini-MedCamp

The Augusta University/University of Georgia Medical Partnership hosted its inaugural Mini-Med Summer Camp in the summer of 2022. Mini-Med Camp is an exciting, week-long camp designed to introduce campers to the field of medicine through team-based learning, hands-on projects, games, and art to learn about the human body.

The camp is a collaboration between the Medical Partnership and UGA’s Summer Academy program. The camp is developed and led by rising second-year medical students at the Medical Partnership who have worked with administration, faculty, and staff to create an engaging experience. Campers also get to talk to local doctors who are practicing medicine in specialty fields. For older campers, the paths to becoming a physician and the college process are also discussed.

“Our goal in creating this camp is to offer a welcoming and inclusive environment that allows students to feel like they belong in the medical field. We are hoping to spark a love of learning and inspire our campers to consider a future career as a physician,” said Tai Sherman, director of external affairs at the Medical Partnership.

Camp is held for six weeks over the summer and two camps are offered—Mini-Med 1 for ages 11-13 and Mini-Med 2 for ages 14-17.

“By the end of this summer we will have engaged 500 young people and hopefully inspired some of them to become part of the next generation of physicians,” said Sherman.

Parent feedback was equally positive with the parent of a camper sharing this: “My husband is a physician at Emory University Hospital, and many of our friends and our daughter’s friends’ parents are doctors. Yet, she has never said she was inspired to go to medical school. She really has never desired to go until she attended this camp and saw that the field of medicine is so fascinating, rich with potential for improving people’s lives, and so challenging.”

Rising second-year medical student, aspiring pediatrician, and 2023 camp director Justin Rowe said, “There are many young people and students out there who rarely get an encouraging word or may believe they could never have a chance of becoming a doctor. In a lot of ways, I was one of those students. I often struggled in school, particularly with math, and I could be very hard on myself. It took a village to help me build the confidence necessary to start seriously pursuing medicine, my hope is that Mini-Med Camp will help young students take the first steps in their own journey. I want them to experience a culture of overwhelming support and encouragement. I want them to feel empowered to try new things, be interested by some aspect of the medical field, and to see that medicine can be fun!”



AU/UGA Medical Partnership, St. Mary's fill all positions in Internal Medicine Residency Program

By Lindsey Derrick

The Augusta University/University of Georgia Medical Partnership Internal Medicine Residency Program (IMRP) at St. Mary's announced another successful Match Day in March—the program filled all residency positions to welcome its eighth class of internal medicine residents in Athens.

"We are honored once again to have received so many truly exceptional applicants to our program," said Dr. Lela Ward, program director for the IMRP. "The supportive medical community, dedicated volunteer faculty, exceptional staff, and commitment of St. Mary's Health Care System to quality care truly make this an excellent program to learn and to train physicians in Northeast Georgia."

The IMRP, which received full accreditation from the Accreditation Council of Graduate Medical Education in October 2016, is a joint effort by the AU/UGA Medical Partnership and St. Mary's. Residents are medical school graduates who are entering the final stage of their medical education: a three-year, hands-on program with progressive levels of responsibility that ends in certification by the American Board of Internal Medicine.

"While we have seen a dramatic decrease in the number of COVID-19 hospitalizations and deaths, the Class of 2026 will be facing new and unprecedented challenges in the healthcare world," said Dr. Jason Smith, St. Mary's former chief medical officer. "Continued pandemic-related health challenges, along with the need to continue to provide ever-higher levels of quality and satisfaction for patients with more and more chronic illnesses, will be a significant challenge for these new physicians. I have no doubt that this outstanding class of physicians is up to the task."

The IMRP Class of 2026 and the schools at which they completed their medical education are:

3 Jon Henry Allen, DO – Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine

3 Andrew Clermont, MD – Medical College of Georgia at Augusta University

3 Thomas Diamond, MD – St. George's University

3 Carla Erb, DO – Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine

3 Marina Mina, MD – Ross University School of Medicine

3 Jalees Naseer, MD – Ross University School of Medicine

3 Hevinkumar Patel, DO – Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine – Auburn Campus

3 Crystal Rivera Perez, MD – Universidad Central del Caribe School of Medicine

3 Christopher Schrock, DO – Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine

3 Nadia Tamia, MD – Ross University School of Medicine

3 Maryam Tarar, DO – West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine

In addition, the program matched a preliminary year intern, Nolan Mattingly, MD. He earned his medical degree from the University of Iowa Roy J and Lucille A Carver College of Medicine.

The new residents will begin practicing at St. Mary's Health Care System on July 1.

"This is another exciting year in the history of the Internal Medicine Residency Program," said David Spivery, St. Mary's former interim president and CEO. "We are confident this next class will continue the tradition of compassion and excellence demonstrated by their predecessors. St. Mary's is proud to be an integral part of the IMRP and its success in bringing more medical doctors to Georgia and to the Athens region."

"I am so excited to have this group of residents join us. Their experiences, diversity, and talent will continue to strengthen the Internal Medicine Residency Program," said Medical Partnership campus dean, Dr. Michelle Nuss. "I look forward to seeing what these young physicians will do in our community over the next three years."



Community Internal Medicine of Athens

By Lindsey Derrick

The Augusta University/University of Georgia Medical Partnership Internal Medicine Residency Program in partnership with St. Mary's Health Care System first started training resident physicians in 2015.

The program has now graduated six classes of residents and is accredited to train up to 37 residents.

The residents primarily serve St. Mary's Hospital in Athens as well as sites at St. Mary's Good Samaritan Hospital in Greensboro, Georgia, and the Community Internal Medicine of Athens (CIMA).

Founded in August of 2015, CIMA is a clinic dedicated to providing quality patient care to Athens and surrounding areas, and they specialize in the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of adults, including the management of certain chronic conditions such as high blood pressure and diabetes.

The clinic also aids St. Mary's Hospital in initiatives to provide for early follow up care for discharged patients.

"We are uniquely equipped to care for patients through on-site social work, longer appointment times, excellent appointment availability, and our physicians' focus on social determinants of health," said CIMA's medical director, Dr. Erin Baldwin. "To me, the most rewarding part of our work is providing a safety net clinic for our community."

Former chief resident Dr. Robert Seminarsaid CIMA is a rewarding place to practice medicine.

"CIMA provides a great learning environment for residents and delivers exceptional quality of care to every patient," said Seminars. "There is a great team atmosphere amongst the medical assistants, administrators, residents, and faculty making it both an enjoyable and fulfilling place to work."

One of CIMA's goals is to provide a stable environment where patients can receive care—something that is missing from many underinsured citizens' lives.

"CIMA has been a conduit for both continuity of care and establishing care for many Athens residents," said Seminars. "It is very rewarding to form a connection with each patient and have an opportunity to become their healthcare advocate."

"I think all aspects of patient care is rewarding, but I find the experience at CIMA to be very special. Our residents and patients develop a strong relationship to not only improve health and lifestyle but also bolster confidence," said residency program director, Dr. Lela Ward. "It is very special to see these partnerships develop and be successful."

In the heart of an underinsured community, CIMA has been a haven for so many Athenians.

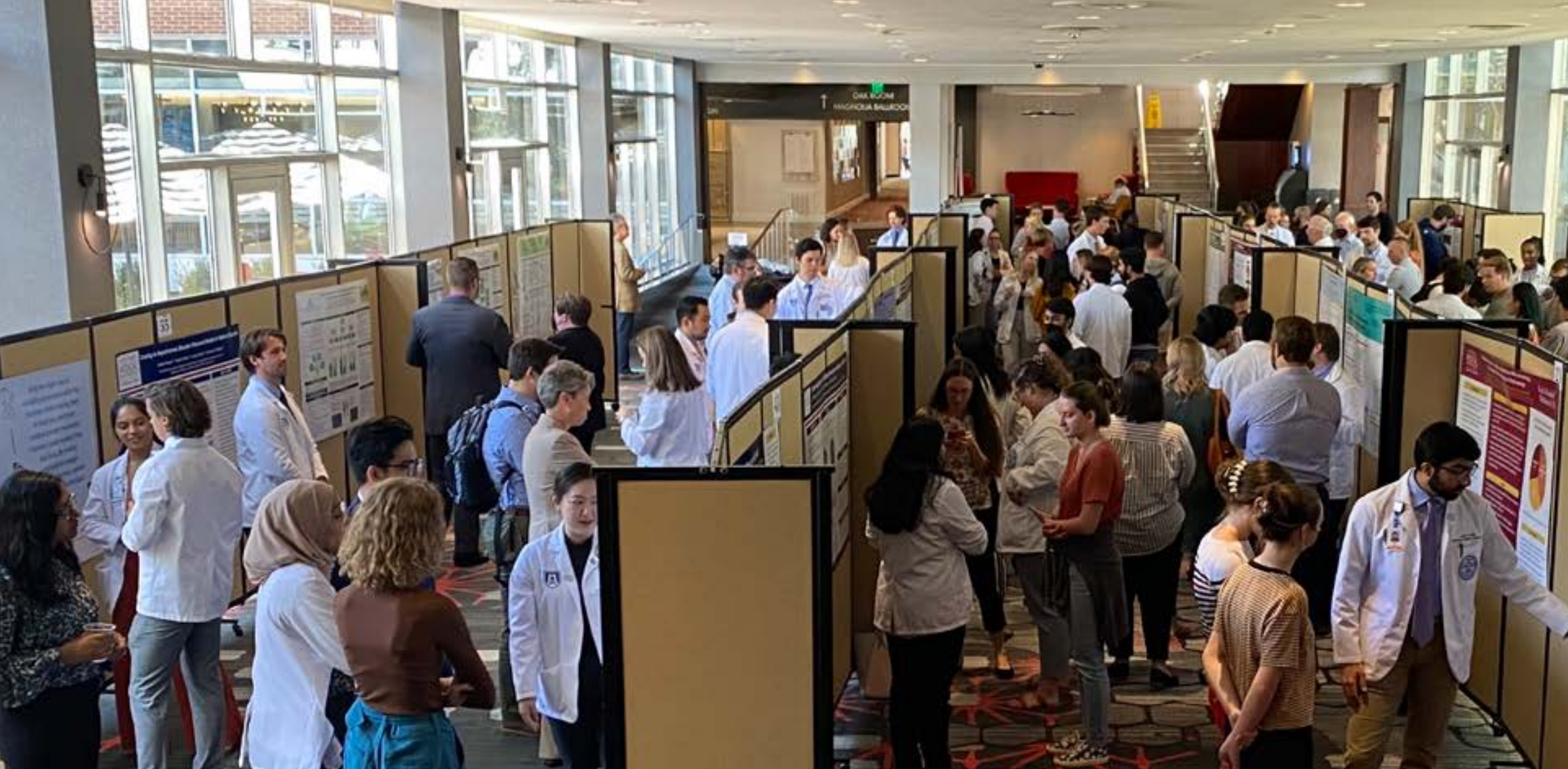
"Athens-Clarke County and surrounding communities are medically underserved," said Ward. "CIMA provides primary care for hundreds of patients that would normally not be able to see a primary care provider."

"Our residents are given the autonomy and responsibility to provide primary care for their panel of patients, and they rise to this challenge," said Baldwin. "At CIMA, our residents experience one of the greatest aspects of ambulatory medicine—the opportunity to build relationships with patients and earn their trust over time."

CIMA has undoubtedly helped the Athens-Clarke County community, but CIMA has given back to the Internal Medicine Residency Program as well.

"Not only does CIMA serve the community, but our community also serves CIMA," said Ward. "Each patient that is seen at CIMA provides a valuable learning opportunity for our residents. We would not be able to provide the diverse and well-rounded education that we pride ourselves on without our patients and community."

CIMA is currently accepting new patients! If you're interested in becoming a patient at CIMA or are interested in learning more, visit: <https://www.stmaryshealthcaresystem.org/locations/community-internal-medicine-of-athens>



12th annual Student Research Symposium

By Lindsey Derrick

On Monday, September 26, students, faculty, staff, and guests gathered at the University of Georgia Center for Continuing Education for the Class of 2025 to present their research findings for the Medical Partnership's 12th annual Research Symposium.

The Medical Scholars Program is an opportunity for students to expand their scholarly experiences and learn how medical knowledge is derived. They also learn how to frame a testable hypothesis, write a research proposal, carry out a project, evaluate scientific and medical data, and write up their results. It provides them with an opportunity to communicate their findings through presentations at local, regional, and sometimes national scientific meetings.

Their findings are then presented at the annual Research Symposium in the fall. The majority of participants are second-year medical students who complete research in the summer between first and second year.

This year's MSP saw the largest number of students conducting research—53 members of the class (88%) took part in the program.

"As the director of the Medical Scholars Program, I think it's terrific that so many students chose to pursue a research project this summer," said Dr. Leslie Lee. "This is the second year in a row that we have had over 80% of the class participate in the program, and I believe most, if not all, have found it to be a valuable learning experience. I'm always impressed by how much the students accomplish and learn in just 10 weeks, so I'm thrilled that once again we had so many students who took advantage of this opportunity."

The event had three portions—poster presentations, elevator pitches, and oral presentations. This was the first year that awards were presented to participants—awards were given for the top submissions in both the poster presentation and elevator pitch categories.

"Giving awards allows us more opportunities to recognize their work in ways we haven't before," said Lee. "And it makes the day more fun and more interactive."

The Class of 2025 traveled across the country partaking in many different specialties for the research:

LOCATIONS:

18 institutions across 11 states including the Medical Partnership, UGA and MCG, as well as Harvard, Emory, Vanderbilt, BU, NYU, UAB, Yale, UT Austin, Baylor, Mount Sinai, University of Southern California, Rush University, MUSC, University of Utah, and Duke.

SPECIALTIES REPRESENTED:

Clinical specialties represented included surgery, radiology, pediatrics, dermatology, OB/GYN, hematology/oncology, internal medicine, psychiatry, neurology, ophthalmology.

Other biomedical disciplines included biomedical engineering, biochemistry, kinesiology, and public health.

AWARD WINNERS

Posters:

1. Grace Snuggs, Shivani Patel
2. Harris Jamal
3. Andrew Cheng, Farris Sabir

Elevator Pitch:

- Will Evans
- Christie Taylor
- Erik Rosas

For a full list of presentations and abstracts, please visit our website at <https://medicalpartnership.usg.edu/research/>.



GET PAID TO PLAY A PATIENT

The AU/UGA Medical Partnership is currently accepting applications for Standardized Patients (SPs).

Scan the code below to apply ↓



What is a Standardized Patient?

Standardized Patients (SPs) are individuals from the community who portray patients for purposes of teaching medical students within an educational program. SPs allow students to develop excellent bedside manner and data-gathering skills, and other clinical skills such as physical examination.

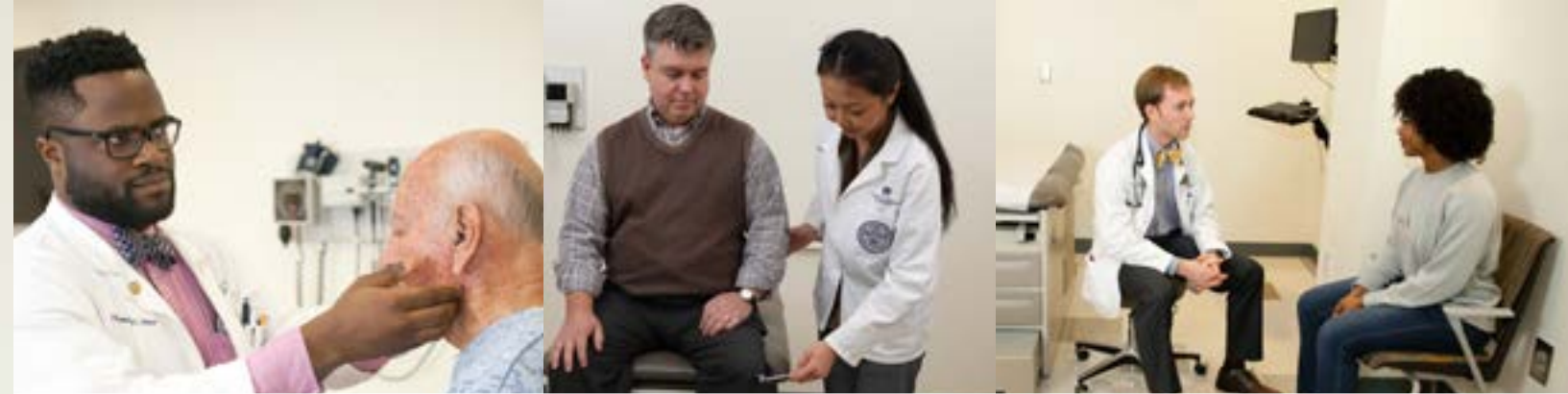
Unlike a real patient, SPs have the opportunity to provide the medical student with valuable feedback to help improve their ability to interact with patients. Training with SPs is proven beneficial in helping medical students learn to become excellent physicians.

What does it pay?

This position requires several hours of your time every couple of weeks. If hired, SPs earn \$16 an hour.

What types of people do you need?

We are looking for **men and women of all ages, physical types, ethnic groups, and various backgrounds** to represent the various types of patients they will be portraying. We need individuals who are strong communicators, who can learn quickly, accept direction, and adapt easily to a variety of different situations.



What does a Standardized Patient do?

In some instances, an SP will have the opportunity to provide their own medical history as if they were at a real appointment with a personal physician.

In other situations, SPs study a case scenario and are scripted to give specific responses and behaviors necessary for realistic portrayals. A trained SP will simulate a real patient, presenting not just the patient history, but also the body language, emotions, and personality of the character they are depicting.

Additionally, SPs will serve as patients for the basic head-to-toe physical examination elements. There are no invasive examinations. Other roles may involve serving as a patient for ultrasound examination of the heart, abdomen, knee, and eye. Some SPs may portray other healthcare professionals or family members in a simulated environment. SPs may also be assigned as hall monitors or other duties as needed to assist in the flow of SP sessions.

Some encounters require a training session prior to the event. These training sessions include discussing the case, and possibly a video review of previous SP-student encounters or role playing. In addition, SPs are provided instruction on how to assess and offer feedback on medical students' abilities to interact with patients. In testing or graded situations, SPs complete student evaluations based on the specific set of skills being assessed. SPs will also be trained in basic anatomy, as well as basic history-taking and physical exam skills.

General Requirements of Standardized Patients

- ↳ An interest in training physicians of the future.
- ↳ Willing to provide feedback to students that are learning history and physical exam skills.
- ↳ Participate in live in-person encounters with students.
- ↳ Attend in-person training workshops.
- ↳ Live within driving distance to the UGA Health Sciences Campus.
- ↳ Understand encounters will be videotaped for medical student education purposes only.
- ↳ SPs are required to be reliable, flexible, follow direction(s) and recall information. Additionally, they must maintain confidentiality of cases and student information.
- ↳ Opportunities to participate in shorter, non-scripted simulation and ultrasound sessions.

Interested? Scan the QR code on the prior page to complete the pre-application form and email to Tina E. Powers (SP Program Coordinator) at tepowers@uga.edu or call 706-713-2642 with questions.

Equal Opportunity / Affirmative Action Institutions



- Clockwise from top left:
1. Amelia Tomei works with a student at the Athens Community Career Academy as part of the Pathway to Medicine Program.
 2. M2 students meet with their M1 buddies for the 2022-23 year.
 3. The Personalized Health and Lifestyle Medicine interest group made a meal for the residents at Bigger Vision Community Shelter. The meal consisted of chicken noodle soup, turkey noodle soup, crackers, and fresh fruit.
 4. The Class of 2025 celebrated their Wellness Kickoff Event at Rush Athens.
 5. Amoolya Vayalapalli poses in front of her poster at the 2022 Research Symposium.
 6. M1s celebrating Halloween with their SGL teams.



7. Dean Michelle Nuss gave remarks at the 26th annual Conference on the Americas reception on February 17. The Medical Partnership co-hosted the event with the Latin American and Caribbean Studies Institute and the Provost's Office.
8. Jordan Beil shows off her new stethoscope during M1 orientation. Every incoming M1 receives a stethoscope and personal notes courtesy of the Medical College of Georgia Alumni Association.
9. Ana Bankey, Tony Thawanyarat, Shant Ohanian, Kyli Schmitt, and Chandler Johnson were recognized in August in March for being the Class of 2024's Gold Humanism Honor Society inductees. Artie McCarty and Tahmina Mohiuddin were also inducted and are not pictured.
10. Pomi Yun shows her letter during Match Day 2023. Yun matched at Johns Hopkins in child neurology.
11. Laura Pride, Chris Cuneo, and Pomi Yun show off their lockboxes containing their letters for Match Day 2023.



Augusta University/University of Georgia Medical Partnership faculty and staff gathered in George Hall Tuesday, February 28 to celebrate extraordinary employees for AY2022 (2021-22). Awards presented during the ceremony were: Medical Student Advisor of the Year, Excellence in Faculty Leadership, Excellence in Scholarship, Peer-Nominated Teaching Award, Faculty Mentor of the Year, Excellence in Teaching, and the Outstanding Staff Award.

AY2021/22 Teaching Awards

Student Advisor of the Year: Exemplary academic support for students, specialty navigation and/or residency planning with students, exemplary mentorship of students – **Dr. Ellen House**

Excellence in Faculty Leadership Award: Established a collaborative environment for the team, used effective team management strategies, used effective project/initiative implementation strategies – **Dr. Aimee Martin**

Excellence in Scholarship Award: Eligible faculty members must have shared his/her scholarship with national/international forums. Eligible types of scholarship include peer-reviewed publications, peer reviewed teaching repository, invited publications, books/book chapters, editorials, oral abstracts, and poster abstracts. – **Dr. Kimberlee Giffen**

Faculty Mentor of the Year: Eligible faculty members must have served as a mentor in the Campus Mentoring Program. Criteria: how your mentor helped mentee make progress for promotion and/or advancement, how your mentor helped mentee improve his/her research/scholarship skills, how your mentor helped mentee improve his/her teaching skills. – **Dr. Matthew Boegehold**

Peer-Nominated Teaching Awards: Open to faculty who teach in Years 1-2. Criteria: effective engagement of teaching methods, effective communication while teaching, effective resource selection, effectiveness of session organization

Small Group Teaching – **Dr. Amy Medlock**

Large Group Teaching – **Dr. Ariel VanLeuven**

Clinical Skills/Community Health Teaching/Simulation – **Dr. Molly Bond**

Outstanding Staff Award

Recognizes a staff member whose outstanding performance contributes to the overall success of the Medical Partnership. Awardees should: model excellence and outstanding job performance, and consistently go above and beyond their job expectations in supporting the Medical Partnership

Suzanne Hall – Executive Assistant to the Dean,
Faculty Development & Continuing Education Coordinator
Lynn Ramsey – Assistant Director of Academic Success Programs

2023 Years of Service

5 Years:	Lindsey Derrick	Vicki McKinney
Casey Bassett	Tristan Hancock	Hnubci Moua
Flint Buchanan	Ellen House	Robert Satonik

Educators of the Year 2021-2022

Selected annually every spring by each class of students at the Medical Partnership (Spring '22): Each class is polled to select the Educator of the Year and the results are compiled to select the winner.

Class of 2025 **Dr. Theresa Rohr-Kirchgraber**

Class of 2024 **Dr. Thomas Howdieshell**

Class of 2023 **Dr. Julie Martin**

Class of 2022 **Dr. Scott Richardson**

AY 2021/22 Medical College of Georgia's Exemplary Teaching Awards

Forty-three Medical Partnership faculty members were honored with AY2021/22 Medical College of Georgia's Excellence in Teaching Awards for their work with students.

Years 1 and 2 faculty members had to teach a minimum of six sessions and scored in the top 25% of teaching evaluation scores by students.

Years 3 and 4 are community faculty members in Northeast Georgia who scored in the top 15% of their evaluations.

Years 1 & 2

Dr. Casey Bassett
Dr. Matthew Boegehold
Dr. Lia Bruner
Dr. Thom Gaddy
Dr. DeLoris Hesse
Dr. Thomas Howdieshell
Dr. Carrie Kelly
Dr. Bob Mackin
Dr. Aimee Martin
Dr. Amy Medlock
Dr. Laurel Murrow
Dr. Donald Scott
Dr. Andrew Sobering
Dr. Brett Szymik
Dr. Ariel VanLeuven
Dr. Les Watters

Years 3 & 4

Dr. Mariam Antonios
Dr. Robert Byrne
Dr. Samuel Church
Dr. Ruth Cline
Dr. Daphne Esho
Dr. Nick Fox
Dr. Kelly Grow
Dr. Ratika Gunturi
Dr. Louis Hempel
Dr. Rachel Hunt
Dr. Miguel Jurado
Dr. Catherine Lockhary
Dr. Julie Martin
Dr. Dan McAvoy
Dr. Kathryn McCusker
Dr. Sergio Mejias
Dr. Eva Katherine Moore
Dr. Roberto Norniella
Dr. Amimi Osayande
Dr. Kamal Patel
Dr. Jordan Rush
Dr. Joshua Sepesi
Dr. Bradley Shepherd
Dr. Margaret Sherman
Dr. Thomas Sholes
Dr. Jon Udwardia
Dr. Nedsely Vila



Wesley Abney
Administrative Associate
Office of Basic Sciences



Stephen Berry, MD
Assistant Professor of
Medicine
Office of Curriculum



Sara Kearns
Foundations of Clinical
Medicine Coordinator:
Procedural Learning
Experience
Office of Curriculum



Luke Anderson
Campus Director of Finance
& Administration
Business Office



Megan Brogan Cook, MD
Assistant Professor of
Medicine
Office of Curriculum



Alan Morgan, MD
Site Clerkship Director for
Neurology
Office of Curriculum



Erin Baldwin, MD
Assistant Program Director
for Internal Medicine
Residency Program
Office of Graduate
Medical Education



Alizaeeon Buchannan
Mallory
Curriculum Operations
& Data Management
Coordinator
Office of Curriculum



Joshua Ruiz Vega, MD
Associate Program Director
for Internal Medicine
Residency Program
Office of Graduate
Medical Education



Karl Barnett, MD
Assistant Professor of
Emergency Medicine
Office of Curriculum



Lara Hart, MD
Site Clerkship Director for
Obstetrics & Gynecology
Office of Curriculum



Amir Shirazi, MD
Assistant Professor of
Medicine
Office of Graduate
Medical Education

Faculty, Staff, Students Residents & Alumni: We want to feature YOU!

Accepted to a conference?
Published in a journal?
Honored with an award?

Let us know so we can share the
good news with our Medical
Partnership family and friends!

Contact the Office of
Communications at
MPmedia@uga.edu.

Please include all pertinent
information related to the award,
publication, or conference, such as
the journal name or professional
association, publication citation,
and a brief description of the
award or article.



Amy Medlock, PhD, (pictured above - front row, second from left) associate professor of biochemistry, organized the international symposium 'Unraveling the Mysteries of Heme Metabolism' in Cape Town, South Africa from April 17-21, 2023. The symposium allowed participants to interact and brainstorm on new discoveries, ideas, and directions in basic, clinical, and applied research on hemobiology and porphyria. The symposium was attended by more than 70 researchers, graduate students, physicians, patients, and patient advocates from more than seven different countries.

Molly Bond, MD, campus director of the standardized patient program, and **Laurel Murrow, MD**, associate professor of medicine, were named recipients of the AMA WPS Inspiration Award as a Physician Who Inspires. The AMA Women Physicians Section (WPS) Inspiration Award honors and acknowledges physicians who have offered their time, wisdom and support throughout the professional careers of fellow physicians, residents, and students.

Lia Bruner, MD, associate professor of family & community medicine, **Brett Szymik, PhD**, associate professor of anatomy, **Ellen House, MD**, associate professor of psychiatry, **Tresa Chappell, MD**, assistant professor of pediatrics, **Dina Teshager, MD**, 2023 alumni, and **Amy Baldwin, PhD**, professor of biochemistry and molecular biology, published: Bruner LP, Szymik B, House E, Chappell MT, Teshager D, Baldwin A. Curating a Case Catalog: Development and Implementation of a Process for Revising Small Group Teaching Cases for Pre-clerkship Medical Education. *Med.Sci.Educ.* (2022).

Thom Gaddy, PhD, associate professor of cell biology, received the 2022 Distinguished Faculty Award for Basic Science Teaching from the Medical College of Georgia. Gaddy was recognized at Medical College of Georgia Faculty Senate Awards Ceremony on Thursday, May 26, 2022 at the Natalie and Lansing B. Lee, Jr. Auditorium.

Suzanne Lester, MD, associate professor of family medicine, was a recipient of the 2022 AMWA INSPIRE Award, which recognizes accomplished women physicians who exemplify the highest values in vision, integrity, service, and collaboration in medicine.

Amy Medlock, PhD, associate professor of biochemistry, published: Dailey HA, Medlock AE. A primer on heme biosynthesis. *Biol Chem* 2022 Aug 29; 403(11-12):985-1003. doi: 10.1515/hsz-2022-0205. Medlock AE, Dailey HA. New avenues of heme synthesis regulation. *Int J Mol Sci* 2022 Jul 5; 23(13):7467. doi: 10.3390/ijms23137467.

Kimberly Rathbun, MD, PhD, associate professor of emergency medicine, published: Rathbun KM, Harryman CF, Re AT. Prolonging the

shelf life of homemade gelatin ultrasound phantoms. *JMUltrasound*. 2022; 30:130-4. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/35832372/>

Rathbun KM, Harryman CF, Moore C. A realistic and inexpensive ultrasound phantom to demonstrate aortic pathology. *Australas J Ultrasound Med*. 2022. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/ajum.12309?af=R>

Ariel VanLeuven, PhD, assistant professor of cellular biology and anatomy, **Brett Szymik, PhD**, associate professor of anatomy, **DeLoris Wenzel Hesse, PhD**, associate professor of anatomy and embryology, and **Lynn Ramsey, MEd**, assistant director of academic success programs, published:

VanLeuven AJ, Szymik BG, Ramsey LM, Hesse DW. 2022. A multi-year evaluation of medical student performance on and perceptions of collaborative gross anatomy laboratory examinations. *Anat Sci Educ*, 00: 1-10. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ase.2223>

Theresa Rohr-Kirchgraber, MD, professor of medicine, served as the 2022-23 president of the American Medical Women's Association.

Ken Rosenthal, PhD, professor of immunology, published:

Rosenthal KS, Baker JB. The immune system through the ages. *AIMS Allergy and Immunology*, 6(3): 170-187. DOI: 10.3934/Allergy.2022013

Elizabeth Roth, an M3 at the Medical Partnership, **Ariel VanLeuven, PhD**, assistant professor of cellular biology and anatomy, **John Norris, MD**, clinical assistant professor of pediatrics, and **Andrew Sobering, PhD**, professor of biochemistry & molecular biology, published:

Vanasse AM, Weiler T, Roth EA, Upadhy S, Toriello HV, VanLeuven AJ, Norris JR, Carey JC, Sobering AK. 2023. Teaching perspectives on the communication of difficult news of genetic conditions to medical students. *American Journal of Medical Genetics Part A*, 191A:299-305. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ajmg.a.63003>

Cathy Snapp, PhD, campus director of behavioral health, **Casey Bassett, PhD**, associate professor of histopathology, and **Amy Baldwin, PhD**, professor of biochemistry and molecular biology, published:

Snapp C, Bassett C, Baldwin A, Hill JR, DeBusk R. Peer-Assisted Learning in Undergraduate Medical Education for Resilience and Well-being. *Med.Sci.Educ.* (2022). DOI: 10.1007/s40670-022-01702-x

Andrew Sobering, PhD, professor of biochemistry & molecular biology, published:

Sobering AK, Bryant LM, Dong L, McGaughan J, Maystadt I, Moortgat S, et al. Variants in PHF8 cause a spectrum of X-linked neurodevelopmental disorders and facial dysmorphism. *Human Genetics and Genomics Advances*, July 2022; 3(3):100102. doi: 10.1016/j.xhgg.2022.100102

Massingham, L, Nuñez S, Bernstein J, Gardner DP, Parikh AS, Strovel ET, Quintero-Rivera F. On behalf of the Association of Professors of Human and Medical Genetics Course Directors Special Interest Group Medical Education Core Curriculum Workgroup: Anderson H, Ashfaq M, Bernstein J, Burke L, Cross C, Dhar S, Garber K, Gardner D, Gold JA, Hudder A, Hyland K, Larsen N, Massingham L, Nuñez S, Parikh A, Penney L, Philp A, Popejoy AB, Quintero-Rivera F, Sobering AK, Starr L, Strovel E, Toriello HV, Weiler T, Yatsenko S. 2022 Association of Professors of Human and Medical Genetics (APHMG) consensus-based update of the core competencies for undergraduate medical education in genetics and genomics. *Genetics in Medicine*, 2022, 24, 2167-2179.

Maj M, Taylor CL, Landau K, Toriello HV, LI D, Bhoj EJ, Hakonarson H, Nelson B, Gluschnitz S, Walker RH, Sobering AK. A novel SYNJ1 homozygous variant causing developmental and epileptic encephalopathy in an Afro-Caribbean individual. *Molecular Genetics & Genomic Medicine*. 00, e2064. DOI: 10.1002/mgg3.2064.

Vinh Dong, MD, and Kevin Moriles, MD, PGY-3 residents at St. Mary's, published:

Varney JA, Dong VS, Tsao T, Sabir MS, Rivera AT, Ghula S, Moriles KE, Cherukuri ML, Fazal R, Azevedo CB, Mohamed RM, Jackson GR, Fleming SE, Rochez DE, Abbas KS, Shah JH, Minh LHN, Osman F, Rafla SM, Huy NT. COVID-19 and arrhythmia: An overview. *J Cardiol*. 2022 Apr; 79(4):468-475. doi:10.1016/j.jcc.2021.11.019. Epub 2021 Dec 1. PMID:35074257; PMCID:PMC8632592.

Dong V, Makram O, Dinh Q, et al. A Systematic Review of Myocarditis Following COVID-19 Vaccination. *J Am Coll Cardiol*. 2022 Mar; 79(9_Supplement)2057. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0735-1097\(22\)03048-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0735-1097(22)03048-0).

Matthew Adams, MD, 2023 alumni, won best poster at the Georgia Academy of Family Physicians Medical Student Category. His co-author was **Amy Bailey, MD**, family medicine clerkship director.

Christopher Jackson, MD, 2015 alumni, is the SGIM 2023 recipient of the Frederick L. Brancati Mentorship and Leadership Award. This award is in recognition of junior faculty who inspire their trainees to pursue academic GIM, and support for a trainee who aspires to become a leader in the transformation of health care through innovations in research, education, and practice.

Isabella Mellits Lopez, M3 student, published: Lopez, I. M. M., Dozier, B., Rohr-Kirchgraber, T. (2022). Female Physician Infertility in the U.S. *Health Management*, 22(5).

Laura Pride, MD, 2023 alumni, won the W. Daniel Jordan, MD Medical Student Award for best abstract presentation at the Georgia Vascular Society 10th Annual Scientific Sessions. The conference was September 9-11 at the Ritz-Carlton in Lake Oconee.

Samantha Schoenl, MD, and Syed Hyder, MD, 2023 alumni, presented two posters at the American Heart Association Hypertension Scientific Sessions in San Diego on September 7th, 2022. They presented: Schoenl, S. A., Hyder, S. A., & Kesiena, O. (2022). Abstract P022: The geographic variations in hypertension medication adherence. *Hypertension*, 79(Suppl_1). https://doi.org/10.1161/hyp.79.suppl_1.p022

Hyder, S., Schoenl, S. A., & Kesiena, O. (2022). Abstract P214: Disparities in hypertension medication adherence across sexual orientations. *Hypertension*, 79(Suppl_1). https://doi.org/10.1161/hyp.79.suppl_1.p214

Kara and Sarah Ye, M4 students, presented their poster Conjunctival Intraepithelial Neoplasia Found on Routine Eye Exam in an Elderly Male with History of Basal Cell Carcinoma at both the American College of Physicians 2022 Georgia Chapter Annual Scientific Meeting on October 14, 2022 and the Medical Association of Georgia 2022 House of Delegates on October 22, 2022.

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