BEATING BACK
PHYSICIAN BURNOUT

MD STUDENTS AND OLDER ADULTS: CONNECTING DESPITE COVID-19 | 14

4D FELLOWSHIP FOSTERS DIVERSITY IN PHARMA | 16
Physician Refresher/Re-entry Course

The Drexel Physician Refresher/Re-entry Course helps inactive physicians return to clinical practice after time away and provides practicing physicians with a refresher that prepares them to shift the focus of their work.

“I enjoyed the supportive and compassionate atmosphere and having the opportunity to share my challenges and worries, while getting encouraging and actionable advice. It was a valuable experience that I’d highly recommend to any physician.”

“Time away from practice can be isolating for a physician. This program provided an invaluable way to regain knowledge, confidence and skills, as well as to establish professional connections.”

“I was told many times that it was impossible for me to go back into clinical practice. It was depressing and disheartening. Thank you for believing in people like me. You made the impossible possible, and I couldn’t have done it without you.”

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FEATURED

WMCP AND THE 1918 FLU
Florence Weaver, MD, WMCP 1911, at Woman’s Medical College of Pennsylvania Hospital. Faculty, staff and students from WMCP were on the front lines of the fight against the 1918 flu.

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**Welcoming the Class of 2021 to the Alumni Association**

In May, the College of Medicine celebrated the graduation of 292 graduate students and 247 MD students. We are proud to welcome them to the Alumni Association and cannot wait to see what they accomplish next.

![Pie chart showing MD Student Matches by Specialty]

- **Internal Medicine**... 56
- **Emergency Medicine**... 27
- **Family Medicine**... 26
- **Pediatrics**... 21
- **Medicine-Preliminary**... 20
- **Anesthesiology**... 17
- **General Surgery**... 12
- **Psychiatry**... 11
- **Radiology-Diagnostic**... 11
- **Neurology**... 10
- **Obstetrics-Gynecology**... 9
- **Other**... 52

**MD Student Matches By State**

- Pennsylvania... 83
- New York... 44
- California... 19
- New Jersey... 17
- Maryland... 12
- Ohio... 11
- Massachusetts... 9
- Virginia... 9
- Florida... 8
- Texas... 7
- New Hampshire... 6
- Rhode Island... 6
- Other... 41

**272 Master's Degrees Conferred**

- 20 graduates from 6 biomedical science programs
- 126 graduates from 12 interdisciplinary/career-oriented programs
- 11 master's theses completed

**20 PhDs Conferred**

- 2 Biochemistry
- 2 Pharmacology & Physiology
- 5 Molecular & Cell Biology & Genetics
- 7 Neuroscience

**WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU**

Please send your ideas or letters concerning the magazine by email to akh33@drexel.edu, or by mail to DUCOM Alumni Magazine, 1505 Race Street, Mail Stop 484, Philadelphia, PA 19102. Please include your contact information. Letters to the editor may be edited for space.
Summertime greetings to all!

So much has been going on — seemingly everywhere — since the last issue of the Alumni Magazine was published! No matter where in the country (or in the world) you live and work, the COVID-19 pandemic and its ramifications have continued to test our mettle in many ways. And yet, we have kept going and have made progress in our professional and personal lives despite it all! I am pleased to share with you the ways your Alumni Association has adapted to the challenges of the times and to fill you in on important recent developments.

The Alumni Association Board of Directors has continued to meet regularly thanks to Zoom videoconferencing. The board’s four committees — Awards, Cultivation & Engagement, Finance, and Nominating — have been hard at work. We recently elected eight new directors to the board, which now counts 26 members. Our newest board members are graduates of Hahnemann University, Medical College of Pennsylvania, MCP Hahnemann University and Drexel University College of Medicine. They include a biochemist-pharmaceutical executive, an emergency physician, an interventional radiologist, a gastroenterologist, a psychiatrist and three surgical subspecialists. All of them bring their talents and perspectives to our board, and we are thrilled they have volunteered to serve the Alumni Association.

Throughout 2020 and 2021, the board continued to support medical students’ attendance at (now virtual) conferences, and earlier this year contributed to the launch of a newly established food bank at Queen Lane for College of Medicine students, the Student Cupboard. We are especially delighted to bring our newest alumni to the association and extend a welcome to the 234 master’s, 14 PhD, 240 MD, two dual MD/MS, and five MD/PhD graduates in the class of 2021, who received their diplomas this past spring, on May 18. You are officially members of the Alumni Association!

At Alumni Weekend in May, our association recognized the work and contributions of nine remarkable graduates of our medical and biomedical programs. You can read more about them and the 2021 Alumni Awards in the pages that follow. Alumni Weekend brought 50-year, 30-year and 25-year reunions and celebrations for the graduates of 1971, 1991 and 1996. We also toasted and applauded the milestone classes of 1970, 1990 and 1995, whose reunions last May were derailed by the pandemic. We are so proud of all of our alumni!

All of the members of the Alumni Association board value our alumni, and I invite you to become involved in the association in any way you can. We also really do want to hear from you! Write us at medical.alumni@drexel.edu to share your ideas and updates, and to let us know what matters to you as an alum. You can check us out on the web at drexel.edu/medicine/alumni, and on Facebook or LinkedIn. You can connect with other alumni on Dragon Network, the alumni/student professional mentoring platform. And, just as I mentioned in the last issue of the magazine, however you choose to get in touch, I hope to get to meet you — virtually or in person — sooner rather than later!

Claudia S. Plotel
Claudia S. Plotel, MD, MCP ’84
President, Alumni Association Board of Directors
Medicine has proffered different paths for Hahnemann University class of 1982 alumni Jeffrey D. Dieden, MD, and Steven D. Broman, MD. Over the years, though, what has brought them together time and again is a bond forged at Hahnemann that first week of classes back in 1978 — a connection now paying forward from the class of 1982 as they establish an endowed scholarship for third- and fourth-year students at Drexel University College of Medicine.

Choosing Medicine

Dieden will partly credit serendipity for bringing him to Hahnemann in 1978. Medicine wasn’t always the career path he had in mind, Dieden explains: “I grew up worshipping Jacques Cousteau and wanted to be a marine biologist.” Those dreams brought him to the University of California, San Diego, where he pursued a course of study that he hoped would pave an entrance into the Scripps Institution of Oceanography. As it happened, that course would also equip him for medical school. After volunteering at a local clinic one summer, his attention began to shift toward academic medicine, though that, too, would continue to evolve. “Once you get into the actual medical school and start being exposed to all the specialties, your thinking changes,” Dieden says. Through fellowships, his master’s degree and his time at Hahnemann, Dieden was drawn to interventional radiology. “It’s a nice blend of radiology and surgery. It was an awesome time, because that’s when interventional radiology was in its birth. There were no stents when I started, and angioplasty was new.”

For Broman, patient relationships were always a part of the picture. “I grew up in rural eastern Iowa, and my dad was a family doctor for 40-some years. I saw from day one what he did,” Broman recounts. “It was a small town. He had a little office in the garage where he’d see patients at night and on weekends. You’d walk downtown, and everyone would be talking to him about this and that, and people would point out all the kids he’s delivered. I knew from the beginning what it was like to be in a situation like that, to live in a community where you know people and they’re not only patients, but they become friends. And that’s kind of my role model.”

Three decades after his father walked the halls of Hahnemann, Broman would follow in those footsteps. “By the time I was applying to school, everyone he knew was dead and gone, so I was doing it on my own. But I did get in. I was persistent, because I didn’t get in right away after undergraduate school,” he remembers.

By the time he received his acceptance letter to Hahnemann, Broman had met and married his wife, Donnis, and earned a master’s in biology from the University of Colorado, Denver. Dieden, meanwhile, had earned a master’s in bioradiology at the University of California, Berkeley, and gotten married to his wife, Melinda. When they joined their cohort in 1978, those common experiences would form the bedrock of an incipient friendship.

Class of ’82

The two met during their first week at Hahnemann after class over beers and a ball game. The details are still clear for Broman, who has a sharp memory for sports. “1978, that was when the Yankees and the Red Sox had a one-game playoff to get into the World Series or something,” he recalls. “We watched that game over at Doc Watson’s.”

“Geezers like us were a little bit older than the average medical student,” Dieden explains. “24 and 22 — it seems inconsequential, but at that age it’s pretty different. Additionally, we were married. My wife and I got married at 23, which by today’s standards is pretty young, though not so much by our parents’ standards.”

Along that common ground, a circle soon formed with a few other couples in their cohort. Dieden and Broman have fond memories of weddings celebrated together, and holidays and meals shared in the family homes of classmates like Stan Silverman, MD, HU ’82.

“For Melinda and me, the Silvermans were kind of our parents away from home. They had us for Thanksgiving more than once. Stan’s folks were more than welcoming,” Dieden recalls. “It was only my second Jewish wedding when Stan and Susie got married. That was a cultural treat.”

“We had our first Seder with the Silvermans,” Broman remembers. By their final year, both Donnis Broman and Melinda Dieden were pregnant with their first children. The day Donnis had their firstborn, Erik, Dieden held the camera that would document the
moment in the Broman family photo album.

When they talk about how they began to gather funding for the Hahnemann University Class of 1982 Endowed Scholarship, calling old classmates to catch up after all those years, Dieden and Broman think about the bond the class of ‘82 had. For both of them, medicine has been a vocation, a calling to serve in a way unlike any other. But those years at Hahnemann also held beers over sports broadcasts and class-wide variety shows packed with niche comedy skits, juggling and pun-laden musical numbers they can still pull from memory.

“We had a real tight class,” Broman says. “And we had an awful lot of talent in our class.”

“We thought we were so clever with all the medical humor,” Dieden recalls. “I still find myself saying, ‘I’m a med student, I’m okay. I work all night and I work all day.’”

According to Broman and Dieden, the class of 1982 held the first annual hospital bed races through the streets of Philadelphia, pioneering a tradition that would last decades.

“Being the first class that participated, we used regular hospital beds, with the teeny tiny casters. It was hard to push those suckers. In later years, I think they juiced the beds and put bigger wheels on them,” Broman says.

“Those didn’t do well with potholes,” notes Dieden.

Keeping Up

Dieden returned to California and, after an internship at Mount Zion Hospital in San Francisco, residency at the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF) and a fellowship in interventional radiology at the University of California, Irvine, joined Kaiser Hospital in Oakland, where he would spend the rest of his medical career. In 1987, he moved to the town of Lafayette, where he and Melinda have raised three daughters, Elise, Laura and Marie.

Broman did an internship and residency at the University of Missouri and practiced family medicine in Rockford, Illinois, after serving two years there in the National Health Service Corps. He then moved to Fort Collins, Colorado, in 1990. In 1995, he became board certified in sports medicine — a golden match, if there ever was one. Today, Broman practices with Banner Health Center and occasionally travels as team physician with USA Wrestling. Steve and Donnis Broman have raised three kids of their own, Erik, Alia and Hans.

Even as their own careers evolved, Dieden and Broman kept in touch, their paths crossing in each other’s cities in California and Colorado, at the 1996 Atlanta Olympics and, of course, at class reunions. When Dieden had the idea to start a scholarship for medical students at Drexel, he knew who to call first — and Broman, former class president and current “governor” for the class of 1982 alumni reunions, knew who to call next.

Giving Back

The idea for the class of 1982 scholarship came to Dieden during the COVID-19 pandemic. As a member of the UCSF alumni association board, he had helped establish an endowed scholarship once before, and in 2020 he found himself looking for new opportunities to help.

“Last year was a weird year in a lot of ways, with the election coming up and all the news about that, and obviously the pandemic and all the social unrest and social justice issues. And after I did this first scholarship, I thought, ‘Where else can I go with this?’” Dieden says.

Economists’ predictions of a K-shaped recovery in the wake of the pandemic suggested that already rising economic inequality was expected to increase. Mindful of this, Dieden says, “A lot of comfortable retirees that are white and from privileged backgrounds have looked at their philanthropy and thought, ‘How can I change things a little bit? And that’s what we’ve done.’”

The scholarship is for medical students at Drexel who agree to go into primary care in underserved communities. A generous donation-matching commitment from the Schleyer family brought the $100,000 threshold for creating an endowed scholarship into reach, provided they could put together the funds from class of 1982 alumni.

“It was actually crowdfunded from our class,” Broman says. “People in our close circles really jumped on board to get us up to the $50,000 mark. Surprisingly, we’ve had some gifts from people that we only knew peripherally. The only common bond we had with them was the education at Hahnemann.”

The scholarship is now fully endowed, and they hope to be able announce the first recipient during Alumni Weekend in 2022.
Donations are ongoing, though, and Dieden and Broman are encouraging the class of 1982 to continue make the most of the Schleyer family’s promise to match donations up to $75,000 per year.

For Broman, setting up the scholarship has also been an opportunity to reconnect with old friends after all these years. “I like talking to people and I don’t mind making some cold calls. It was an opportunity for me to reconnect with people on the phone,” he says. “It’s been a kick in the pants, just talking to some of these folks.”

Looking Forward

Dieden is retired now, and Broman is slowly cutting back. Both have taken on new involvement in their communities. In the coming year, they both look forward to welcoming new grandkids into their families.

Dieden facilitates an author series at a local library, raises money for nonprofit grants with the Lafayette Community Foundation, and travels on invitation for lectures and consulting, most recently to China and rural western Kenya. Since January 2021, he has helped distribute COVID-19 vaccines with the county medical reserve corps. “Just interacting with people during that, the connection and optimism, has been really special,” he says. “I’ve had people break down in tears of joy while getting vaccinated.”

For Broman, a recent job change has allowed some space for new perspective. “It’s been a real nice change,” he says. “You get pretty narrow-focused when you’re working for 30, 40 years in one field, and you need to kind of look around.” Broman is looking forward to one more season of softball with his youngest son, mission trips with his church, travel with his family and involvement with the Rotary Club. Like his father, Broman still relishes the connection he has with his patients as a family medicine practitioner.

“Do basically cradle-to-grave care,” Broman says. “I’ve had four, five generations of families. I know these people inside and out. It’s a relationship that you just can’t put a price tag on.”

As they look back on all the changes in the medical field over the past 40 years, Broman and Dieden agree that medicine remains one of the most noble professions one can pursue; at the end of the day, they say, what matters is the impact you make on the lives of individuals, and what that gives you in return.

“I think that medicine is a calling. It’s a very special connection that you have with the people you serve, and there’s nothing else in the world like that,” Broman says. “I think if people appreciate the opportunity they have and the sanctity of that relationship they have with their patients, they’ll have a great time.”

Nine deserving alums were presented with Alumni Association Awards during Alumni Weekend 2021. To give you a chance to get to know them, we asked them three questions: Who at your alma mater inspired you and why? What’s one great lesson, personal or professional, you’ve learned? What keeps you going when you face challenges? We hope to feature more responses in a future issue of the magazine.

John S. Sundy, MD, PhD, HU ’91
OUTSTANDING BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES GRADUATE AWARD
Sundy is the chief medical officer of Pandion Therapeutics, a start-up that was acquired by Merck in 2021.

At Drexel I was inspired most by my scientific mentor, William Weidanz, PhD. He demanded scientific rigor, while always demonstrating compassion, generosity and humility. I have tried to emulate him throughout my career, and believe that all that I learned from him has been essential to what I have been able to accomplish as a physician and scientist.

My late sister, Robin Tingue, has motivated most of what enables me to face challenges. She battled cancer twice, first as a teenager and again as a young wife and mother. No challenge I have faced compares to those Robin took on during her short life. Great doctors and outstanding research were important during my sister’s life, and it is a reminder to me that it is a privilege for me to have the chance to care for patients and to develop new treatments for people living with serious diseases.

Elizabeth Malsin, MD ’11
EMERGING LEADER AWARD
Malsin is a clinical instructor at Northwestern University/Northwestern Memorial Hospital, where she is also completing additional training in interventional pulmonology.

When at Drexel, I was inspired by Howard Miller, MD — a brilliant internist, he truly demonstrates the wealth of knowledge of a master clinician, yet is a patient teacher to students and trainees of all levels. While rotating in his clinic in my final year of medical school, I saw that he was so careful and specific in his history and physical exam skills, leading to such specific diagnoses, it almost seemed like magic. One of the greatest lessons I continue to learn is the importance of teamwork in medicine — to care for patients in the ICU or during a complex procedure could never happen without everyone playing their precise role. I’m lucky to get to work with the same team members, including not only my physician colleagues but nurses, advanced practice providers, trainees, respiratory therapists, pharmacists and social workers, almost every day, and have seen the importance of sharing both workload and expertise. Knowing we have succeeded in the past is what keeps me going on the most challenging days.
Loretta Podolak Finnegan, MD, HU ’64
LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD
Finnegan is president of Finnegan Consulting LLC, which addresses education, research and treatment in issues relating to perinatal addiction.

Wilbur Wilson Oaks Jr., MD, was among a number of professors who inspired me at my alma mater. However, he receives the top position to me because he demonstrated a number of key qualities that make the ideal physician, which include humility, enthusiasm, optimism, perseverance and an emphasis on team-based leadership. One great lesson from a personal or professional standpoint that I have learned is that life is not always easy, but if you attain the knowledge you need, work hard, develop good interpersonal relationships, persevere, and go forward with enthusiasm, honesty and faith in yourself, you will succeed in most instances. When faced with challenges, I realize that I need to get into high gear and accomplish what is best for my patients, my family or a friend in need. Fortunately, I am blessed with the capabilities to rise to such occasions and to address the challenges and do what is necessary to solve the issues presented. When you love what you do, and it helps others to be healthy, you are fulfilled. With good health, we have happiness in this life.

Eliana Verghese Hempel, MD ’12
EMERGING LEADER AWARD
Hempel is an assistant professor of medicine in the Division of General Internal Medicine at Penn State College of Medicine.

I was most inspired by my fellow classmates. Drexel University College of Medicine recruits a diverse array of students from many walks of life. I appreciated learning from my peers, who brought their experiences as teachers, advocates, nurses, EMTs, etc. to the way they approached learning medicine and caring for patients. Relationships matter most. This guiding principle has kept me grounded through times of significant personal and professional challenge. Building and investing in relationships with patients, colleagues, learners, friends and family can make even the lowest times feel more manageable. Given the demands of our work, it is all too easy to focus on efficiency, close ourselves off from our emotional responses, and involute. It can feel overwhelming to end a long day of doctoring by processing the heaviness that often accompanies caring for those who are struggling with illness. It can be hard to reach outward. Yet, there is also something so innate about the need to feel heard, understood, and validated, that seeing that need met can be more restorative than any tub of ice cream or movie marathon. Moreover, the satisfaction of being able to provide that kind of support for someone else is uniquely rewarding. Thus, it’s the rewarding relationships with people in my life that best sustain me, and the great lesson I’ve learned is to work hard to keep all those people close.

J. Kenneth Brubaker, MD, HU ’70
BOOTS COOPER, MD, SERVICE AWARD
Brubaker retired as corporate medical director for Masonic Homes of PA and medical doctor for the Masonic Village Hospice Program in April of 2021 after close to 40 years in the role.

As a beginning third-year medical student, I was fortunate to have been assigned to the service of Wilbur Oaks Jr., MD. I quickly appreciated his passion and enthusiasm for sharing his medical knowledge. His familiarity with recent medical literature during rounding was impressive to me, as well as his kindness and sensitivity to his patients during teaching rounds. While I was not aware of this during my rotation on his service, he served as my educational role model, which eventually led me to the establishment of a geriatric fellowship program in my community in 2001. Throughout my career I was blessed to have numerous colleagues who challenged and complemented my enthusiasm and passion to improve health care in my community. I would like to share two quotes that significantly impacted my career decisions: Mahatma Gandhi is commonly quoted as having said, “Be the change you want to see in the world.” And Margaret Mead once said, “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.” I feel fortunate to have been born with DNA that has given me a glass that is usually “half full”! Over the years I have learned to see challenges as opportunities — opportunities to help others who are struggling with life-changing medical decisions and opportunities to learn something new that will make me a better clinician.

ADDITIONAL AWARD WINNERS

Daniel Rader, MD, MCP ’84
MCP Distinguished Graduate Award
Rader is the Seymour Gray Professor of Molecular Medicine, chair of genetics, and division chief of human genetics in the Departments of Medicine and Pediatrics at the Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania.

Africa Stewart, MD, MCPHU ’00, MBA
Outstanding Medical Graduate Award
Stewart is president and chair of the board of directors at Doctors Without Borders/Médecins Sans Frontières.

Megan Wright, PhD ’08
Graduate Citation Award - Early Career or Young Investigator
Wright is a full professor of neurobiology at Arcadia University. Her research focuses on nerve regeneration after injury or in association with neurological diseases.

Ana Pujols McKee, MD, HU ’79
HU Distinguished Graduate Award
McKee is the executive vice president, chief medical officer, and chief diversity, equity and inclusion officer of The Joint Commission.
We have these innate superpowers that can essentially control how we’re feeling in any given moment. We just need to learn how to use them.
certain specialties — critical care, rheumatology and infectious diseases — fared worse in 2020. But the pandemic also thrust the longstanding problem of physician burnout into the national spotlight.

“Prior to COVID, the meaning and connection that people got out of taking care of patients was routinely stripped away in favor of making more money, relative value units, regulatory environments, guidelines, metrics — all these things that weren’t why we all went into medicine,” says Carol Bernstein, MD, a psychiatrist who in 2003 was a fellow in the College of Medicine’s Executive Leadership in Academic Medicine program for women. “That created this burnout crisis before COVID hit. The upside to COVID, such as it is, is that it really put these issues front and center… It was burnout on steroids.”

As the world begins to emerge from the pandemic, health care leaders, policymakers and even doctors themselves are devoting funding and resources to initiatives to combat physician burnout and promote wellness. Major hospital systems are installing “wellness champions” to focus on employee well-being. Unused COVID-19 patient overflow tents are being reimagined as self-care retreats where doctors can recharge during shifts. And the Dr. Lorna Breen Health Care Provider Protection Act, introduced in the U.S. Senate last year and named for a New York City emergency medicine physician who died by suicide in April 2020, aims to improve mental health and prevent burnout among providers.

“I don’t know that you can be in medicine and dealing with people who are seriously ill and dying, and say that there’s never going to be burnout,” says Bernstein, vice chair of faculty development and well-being at Montefiore Medical Center in the Bronx. “But we need to have ways to counteract it, to get recharged again.”

Identifying Burnout

Burnout has three key dimensions: “overwhelming exhaustion, feelings of cynicism and detachment from the job, and a sense of ineffectiveness or lack of accomplishment,” according to a June 2016 article in World Psychiatry. For a physician, Bernstein says, burnout might look like sleeping through a shift, objectifying a patient as “that gallbladder,” or even feeling like their work has no meaning. Physicians who experience burnout are more likely to report a recent medical error.

Avir Mitra, MD ’15, experienced his first bout of burnout during his emergency medicine residency at Mount Sinai Beth Israel Hospital in New York City. His intern year was so overwhelming — even compared to the rigors of medical school — that his social life tanked and his hobbies, such as producing radio journalism, fell by the wayside. Plus, there was the imposter syndrome: “People are calling you ‘doctor,’” Mitra says, “but you don’t know what’s going on.”

Time and experience eased that early burnout for Mitra, who is now an assistant program director for the emergency medicine residency at Icahn School of Medicine. Yet the feelings resurfaced when he felt bogged down by the bureaucracy of medicine, when he’d spend late-night hours charting, not for his own benefit or his patients’ well-being, but to satisfy the coding department. “There’s so much red tape. There’s so much stuff you have to do that doesn’t serve anyone except for the powers that be,” Mitra says. “Those types of things over time lead to burnout.”

Then came COVID-19.

In the beginning, Mitra says, some physicians in emergency medicine were energized by the sense of purpose that came from fighting a pandemic on the front lines. “Our specialty was kind of elevated in status because of it,” he says. Also, the influx of sick patients required an all-hands-on-deck approach that eschewed burdensome administrative tasks.

Soon, though, as the COVID-19 crisis worsened, Mitra says hospital policies seemed to change almost daily, with doctors maskless one shift and donning full personal protective equipment the next. “COVID took burnout to another level,” he says. “The stakes were very high. The uncertainty was so high.”

Addressing an Outsized Risk

Physicians face nearly twice the risk of burnout compared to other professionals. Though doctors reported roughly the same rate of burnout before and during the COVID-19 pandemic (42% in Medscape’s most recent burnout report),
An important distinction: burnout is not the same as depression, Bernstein says, though the terms are often used interchangeably and the symptoms can look similar. Burnout is an individual response to a systemic issue, she says, while depression is a medical condition. And, unlike with depression, feelings of burnout should ease with rest and relaxation. The conditions can coexist, but it is depression in physicians — not burnout — that has been linked to suicide.

For some, burnout can start as early as medical school. That might be due to the qualities medical schools select for in students, says Donna Sudak, MD, MCP ’80, professor of psychiatry and vice chair for education at the College of Medicine. “We often choose relatively perfectionistic, hyper-responsive people to be physicians,” she says. Then, these highly motivated young people — who were perhaps accustomed to being at the top of their class — find out just how much they don’t know. “When you’re less secure in your abilities, it’s much harder to have a sense of meaning and purpose in your work,” Sudak says. “There’s more anxiety about what you’re doing.”

The demands only intensify and, as Mitra learned, residency schedules are unforgiving. In 2003, the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education limited resident duty hours to 80 hours a week — still twice the length of the average professional’s workweek. The load is often seen as a badge of honor, Sudak says. “People don’t think about the human toll of that over time,” she says.

The Role of Self-Care

When Robyn Tiger, MD, MCP ’91, trained as a radiologist, she learned an integrative approach to patient care by reviewing cases in a reading room filled with other providers. But, while in medical practice, the field changed with the digital age. “It became reading cases, dictating into a Dictaphone, in a dark room nine to ten hours a day — still twice the length of the average professional’s workweek. The load is often seen as a badge of honor, Sudak says. “People don’t think about the human toll of that over time,” she says.

Over time, Tiger developed severe physical and mental health issues — migraines, gastroesophageal reflux, numbness in her hands and feet, even suicidal thoughts — and feared she had a debilitating disease. She was exhausted and burned out, and visited a variety of specialists to no avail. The breaking point came when Tiger noticed she was making mistakes in her personal life: arriving at the wrong terminal for a flight or packing her children’s lunches in the wrong backpacks. “I was terrified. If I’m doing these things, am I messing up at work?” she says. “I didn’t have any lawsuits against me or anything like that. It was just my thought that I needed to do something… I started at that point to look outside of traditional medicine.”

Tiger found relief at a beginners’ yoga and meditation class. Her feelings of anxiety, imbalance and lack of control reversed. Eventually, as Tiger continued her yoga and meditation practice, all of her physical and mental health symptoms subsided. But despite seeing such remarkable changes in herself, Tiger was skeptical. “As a doctor, my left brain was saying, ‘What is the physiology behind all this?’” she says. Tiger dove into the medical literature, amassing a stack of research documenting the benefits of yoga and meditation in relieving chronic stress.

When her radiology practice downsized in 2012, Tiger left her part-time position to pursue her new passion. She became certified in yoga therapy and meditation, as well as life coaching, and started a wellness business. She taught free yoga classes for people recovering from cancer and military veterans, two of the patient populations she realized needed help to relieve their stress. All along, Tiger also helped her physician colleagues deal with burnout, but she decided to finally formalize those efforts after losing three doctor friends to suicide. “I felt it was my obligation to create programming for physicians to help them relieve their suffering,” she says.

In 2020, Tiger created StressFreeMD, a self-care education practice specifically designed for physicians. Along with private coaching, she offers online programming, including quick, evidence-based stress management lessons to accommodate doctors’ busy schedules. Physicians can earn continuing medical education credit, she says, by simply learning to care for themselves. “This is really important information that we never learned in medical school, that we never learned in internship or residency or fellowship or medical practice,” says Tiger, who lives with her family in Asheville, North Carolina. “We have these innate superpowers that can essentially control how we’re

If you or someone you know is struggling with thoughts of suicide or self-harm, please contact the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 800.273.TALK.
feeling in any given moment. We just need to learn how to use them.”

Sharron Manuel, MD ‘13, PhD, an assistant professor in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center El Paso, says self-care, in the form of exercise, helped her handle the toll of the COVID-19 pandemic. When she found herself snapping at her husband and daughters due to work stress, Manuel turned to weight training, on-demand workout videos and her new Peloton bike. “I just realized how important self-care was,” she says. “I’m trying to get some exercise in, if not daily, then at least three to four times a week.”

A Need for Systemic Change

Self-care is an important antidote for burnout, Sudak says, citing the value of sleep, healthy eating, rest, gratitude and exercise. But focusing too heavily on the individual can make people feel blamed for their own burnout, she adds. “It’s important to acknowledge that workplace issues have got to be fixed,” Sudak says. “The best evidence suggests that what works is changing systems.”

Health care leaders should look at the burnout crisis as a chance for quality improvement, Sudak says. “We can make sure physicians are assessed, and we do focus groups and we figure out what about their day-to-day work life is unacceptable to them,” she says. “Then have somebody who’s willing to brainstorm: How can we fix that?” Are there ways, for instance, to get colleagues working together more efficiently? To fix redundancies in the electronic medical record? To hire a virtual scribe to ease the burden on physicians? To hire someone to manage physicians’ email while they’re on vacation? To create systems for repeated tasks? To better support doctors when a patient dies? To root out bullying and microaggressions? To support underrepresented doctors? These questions are typically handled by an organization’s wellness champion.

Sudak, with Wei Du, MD, MS, professor and academic chair of psychiatry at Drexel, is spearheading an effort to install a wellness champion at every Drexel clinical site and affiliate hospital. As a variety of wellness initiatives are deployed throughout the Drexel system — there are mandates for wellness programming at the graduate level for both residents and faculty, for instance — these champions would share their information about burnout, screening, mitigation efforts and more to the larger community.

As General Psychiatry Residency program director at Tower Health-Brandywine Hospital, Sudak instituted Wellness Wednesdays, one didactic day each month featuring a community wellness activity, such as an evening book club. The Tower Health Wellness Committee also organizes educational, recreational and community-building events throughout the year. The committee recently released four webinars on topics including burnout and self-care, Sudak says, that are meant to spark discussions and action plans among small groups of colleagues.

This kind of community-building initiative is another way to mitigate burnout, Bernstein says. Encouraging conversations among colleagues can help, she says, even just using the first few minutes of a weekly meeting to ask coworkers how they’re doing. “A sense of a collective, shared experience, and building community, and a sense of value and meaning and purpose in what we do,” Bernstein says, “will counteract the effects of burnout.”

As for Mitra, the emergency medicine physician in New York, he’d like to see hospitals take cues from Google — whose campus he once visited — by offering employees comfortable seating, places to mingle and snacks. Mount Sinai Beth Israel is one of the institutions where a COVID-19 patient overflow tent has been transformed into an employee relaxation center. The tent has couches, a screen showing a roaring campfire, and even an electric piano, where Mitra once performed “Piano Man” accompanied by an internal medicine doctor on the ukulele. “The thought was so heartwarming,” he says. “Little things like that go a long way. Burnout has been going on for a long time, before I ever got into medicine,” he says.

“But COVID brought it to the forefront, and now there’s funding behind addressing it.”

All Hands on Deck

Influenza cases grew rapidly and hospital staff soon started to fall ill with the flu. Medical students stepped up to volunteer, despite not necessarily being trained in the areas where help was needed. As one report from 1919 indicates:

“It would have been impossible to carry the volume of work which presented had it not been for the splendid cooperation of our medical students, our newly entered probation class in nursing, our nurses’ aides, trained last year in our wards, and last, but by no means least, the splendid body of volunteers... No hospital was ever so fortunate in the response of women to its need!”

Unknown Author, “Bulletin of the Woman’s Medical College of Pennsylvania,” Vol. 69, December 1918:

“... young medical students became our most relied-upon night nurses; laboratory physicians became practitioners of medicine for the period of the emergency; probationer nurses, hardly twenty-four hours old in the profession, worked most dependably throughout the trying days...”

Accounts From Dean Tracy

Martha Tracy, MD 1904, dean of WMCP and member of the Alumnae Association of WMCP, at the 44th Annual Meeting of the Alumnae Association of WMCP in June 1919:

“In September, after one week of college work, the epidemic of influenza, like a specter of death, was upon us almost overnight, and three days after the disease was made reportable by the Board of Health our hospital was full to overflowing with victims of the pestilence, and our Senior, Junior and Sophomore students were released from class work and mobilized for hospital service.”

“Within a week our gymnasium became a hospital ward, where students and nurses who succumbed while serving on the battle front were cared for.”

“We record with thankfulness that we lost no one of our doctors or students in that battle, and with sorrow, that one faithful nurse laid down her life on the field of duty.”

“It is unnecessary to dwell on the nightmare of the five weeks which followed [the start of the pandemic]. You know how our doctors and students, with no thought of self, labored day and night in that death struggle, and members of our Board of Corporators stood with them, daily serving as nurses’ aides, dieticians or clerks, wherever the need was greatest.”

This piece drew heavily from articles written by:
- Alissa Falcone, editor and staff writer, DrexelNow and Drexel Quarterly
- Ari McManus, Legacy Center public history virtual intern, summer/fall 2020
- College of Arts & Sciences students María Paula Mijares (Communications) and Kejsi Ruka (Global Studies), and LeBow College of Business student Daniel Yi (Economics/Finance)

We are grateful for their contributions.
Making Do With Limited Supplies
Unknown Author, “Bulletin of the Woman’s Medical College of Pennsylvania,” Vol. 69, December 1918:

“It was truly like unto the rush of the wounded from the field of battle, and the house was filled to capacity almost at once. Within a few days it was necessary to open a ward in the College gymnasium, which was equipped with beds from our students’ dormitory, the ambulance gathering both the beds and the patients and bringing them into the hospital... Sheets, lent by the Red Cross, played the role of curtains and table covers; stools, dedicated to the sacred precincts of...laboratories, served as bedside tables; and... the nurses were merely camouflaged medical students.”

Heroic Work on the Front Line
Mary Buchanan, MD 1899, clinical professor of ophthalmology at WMCP, ophthalmology medical staff member at the Woman’s Hospital of Philadelphia and 1917 and 1918 president of the Alumnae Association of WMCP, at the 44th Annual Meeting of the Alumnae Association of WMCP in June 1919:

“The scarcity of doctors and the dearth of nurses threw an awful burden on those left in civil life. The acts of heroism of some of our women doctors will never be known, but the devotion to duty while those nearest and dearest to them were dying and dead, too far away for them to reach them, was worthy of an epic I am unable to write. Even as her poor tired heart seemed as if it could not stand the added strain of the death of two dear brothers the same day of the dread plague, one brave doctor said she would be willing to die if she were able to save the mother of eight children who had aborted and had pneumonia. Fortunately, her own life did not pay the penalty and the children were not orphans.”

Pregnant Patients: Addressing a Special Risk
Florence E. Kraker, MD 1905, acting obstetrician-in-chief at the WMCP Hospital, WMCP clinical professor of obstetrics and member of Alumnae Association of WMCP, date unknown:

“During the influenza epidemic, because of the extreme susceptibility of pregnant women, it was felt to be safer not to admit patients having the disease to the maternity. All cases of influenza complicating pregnancy were taken into the main hospital. In this way we maintained our maternity free from the infection, and so were able to offer a safe place in which our patients could have their babies.”

WMCP’s efforts worked in their favor even with the maternity department seeing an increase in cases at the start of the flu epidemic. Throughout the 1918-1919 period, 224 babies were delivered, which included eight pairs of twins. The maternity department did not lose one case to the flu or pneumonia.

2021 Alumni Weekend Event: Drexel’s Response to the 1918 Pandemic
During the College of Medicine’s 2021 Alumni Weekend, panelists discussed many aspects of WMCP’s response to the 1918 pandemic. The panelists included:

• Steven J. Peitzman, MD, FACP, Professor of Medicine, Drexel University College of Medicine
• Clare Sauer, Director & Chief Curator, Robert and Penny Fox Historic Costume Collection at Drexel University
• Matthew Lyons, University Archivist, Drexel University Libraries, Drexel University
• Jennifer Vess, The Brooke Dolan Archivist, Library and Archives, Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University
• Matt Herbison, Archivist, Legacy Center: Archives & Special Collections, Drexel University College of Medicine
• Margaret Graham, Director, Legacy Center: Archives & Special Collections, Drexel University College of Medicine

To view this presentation, visit bit.ly/drexel1918flu.
During a year defined by health risks, isolation and uncertainty, College of Medicine students engaged with older adults through two opportunities made available to them through Drexel’s Office of Community Engagement and its relationship with UUH Outreach, a program serving the needs of older adults in northwest Philadelphia. As the two programs had to change in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the human relationships at their core became more important than ever.

The former Unitarian Universalist House (UUH), a nursing home and personal care facility, was a fixture in Germantown for many decades. UUH’s merger with the former Lycoming House allowed for the creation of UUH Outreach in 1999. The program was designed to support older adults staying safely and independently in their own homes. It has since become an integral part of the aging-service system in the area.

According to UUH Outreach’s executive director, Sara Popkin, MSW, LSW, much of their work is conducted in the client’s home, and visits involve social work and nursing support. The program is client-directed in that they work with clients to determine and support their individual goals. “We don’t come in telling clients what we think they should know or what we know,” Popkin explains. “We start by listening, because they are the experts in their own aging. We have the opportunity to work with them, not in a reactive capacity, but in a proactive, preventive capacity.” Oftentimes, client goals relate to their own interests, challenges with home safety, or access to benefits and programs for which they’re eligible.

STUDENT ROLES

College of Medicine students have been an asset in this personalized, hands-on mission through two programs: Bridging the Gaps and the Mentor project. Elissa Goldberg, MSS, LSW, program director in the Office of Community Engagement, is cited by both students and UUH Outreach staff as essential to this process. Even in a year of unprecedented challenges and particular risk for older adults, College of Medicine students joined with UUH Outreach to improve people’s quality of life.

In Bridging the Gaps, two Drexel students work with UUH Outreach for seven weeks in the summer. Popkin speaks highly of these students, saying they’ve “not only filled in some gaps for us and our team’s capacity, but also have done things that added value and new approaches to the services we offer.”

For instance, during the summer of 2020, Bridging the Gaps students helped create a program and led eight weekly groups over phone and Zoom to support otherwise isolated older adults. According to Roberta Balsam, MA, UUH Outreach’s social services supervisor, “The summer students have been absolutely amazing. They’re really an extension of us and our program.”

Students can also participate in the Mentor project as part of Drexel’s Health Advocacy Practicum (HAP), a core part

All photos are of UUH Outreach student participants with their mentors prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.
of the MD program curriculum. This project “draws on the strengths of older adults,” Popkin says, and introduces their perspective and experience to the next generation of health care providers.

In this program, one or two medical students are matched with an older adult for the school year. They talk and get to know one another, and the students may assist the mentor with small tasks, such as getting to an appointment. The program culminates with the student creating a life-story project for the mentor.

Balsam says that during the Mentor project’s orientation, students often brainstorm on the word “aging.” She notes that they say things like forgetful, Alzheimer’s, dependency—“all kinds of negative stereotypes.” Balsam began saving those brainstorms. At the program’s end, they’d brainstorm again on “aging.” This time, she says, “We’d find talented, resourceful, humorous, busy. It’s a really great learning experience for the students to see where they started and how far they’ve come in terms of understanding individuals as they age.”

While mentors and mentees couldn’t meet in person this year due to the pandemic, the importance of that relationship remained unchanged.

BROADENING PERSPECTIVES

Kelsey Whitus, a first-year medical student from Virginia Beach, Virginia, said her main reason for selecting the Mentor project as her HAP site was wanting to “build a personal, one-on-one connection.” She also appreciated the idea of getting to know someone outside her own family or school environment, and how a different perspective could help her be a better physician.

With this year’s social restrictions, Whitus says her mentor became a vital source of information and knowledge about Philadelphia, particularly since she hadn’t met all her classmates yet. “We always talked about Philly—what she’s enjoyed most and how she’s made her life here,” Whitus relates. “She showed me the ropes and made me comfortable when I moved here. Just to have someone to talk to and talk about my transition to this city was nice.”

She also says that being restricted to phone or Zoom prompted a few new experiences. For instance, her mentor participates in a World Tour on Zoom twice a week. There are over 900 participants from across the world, with a designated tour guide who shares facts, history and activities in a particular country. If not for being forced online, she would not have gotten to enjoy this with her mentor.

When the COVID-19 vaccine began being offered, Whitus was quick to discuss the registration process with her mentor. “As much as she helped me get adjusted in Philadelphia starting in August, I tried to help her,” she says.

Natalie Correa, a first-year medical student from Linden, New Jersey, was interested in the Mentor project because of the “current state of the world.” She felt “there was something really necessary about connecting with older individuals, especially at a time when everybody’s been so socially isolated. I thought about my own grandma and how I haven’t seen her in so long. The idea of being able to give someone an extra level of companionship seemed like a really nice thing to do.”

“When I moved to Philly,” Correa explains, “I was alone and isolated in my apartment.” She thought the program would be about “making sure an older adult had a social connection,” yet she discovered it was “extremely beneficial” for herself as well. She says that talking with her mentor “didn’t feel like an assignment.”

A CHALLENGING YEAR

Despite the ultimate success of Bridging the Gaps and the Mentor project, the pandemic highlighted some very real challenges. Popkin says UUH Outreach had to “balance the need for services and the importance of maintaining connection,” while simultaneously protecting staff and clients from health risks. “We tried to maintain a steady, consistent presence in our clients’ lives,” Popkin says. Complicating this task, UUH Outreach was learning the new pandemic guidelines and protocols when they’re typically the expert resource for their clients.

Additionally, self-quarantining and shelter-in-place orders pushed people who hadn’t grown up with computers, tablets and smartphones to accelerate their learning curve with these devices. “Technology is a huge issue,” Balsam notes. Even those with tablets or computers encounter challenges. “In some cases, the WiFi is unreliable,” she says. “Then the quality of the Zoom goes in and out. The sound can go in and out. There are so many obstacles.”

Besides addressing these pandemic-specific concerns and difficulties, Popkin points out that older adults, like most individuals, still have their own personal goals and interests. “They’re still growing, learning and changing regardless of age,” she says. As an organization, UUH Outreach wants to continue to support these pursuits and goals. And College of Medicine students will remain part of that effort.

Balsam lists the many ways mentees have aided mentors over the years: helping someone pack, going to doctor visits, organizing a room, assisting with paperwork or simply taking a walk. The tasks may not be glamorous, “but they’re things people really need. They can make a huge difference in somebody’s quality of life,” she says.

Reflecting on the medical students’ involvement with UUH Outreach, Balsam says, “the opportunity to actually work with the population is a great educational tool. I just don’t think a textbook can really convey what an individual can teach a student.”

Students like Whitus and Correa would concur. Correa says that during her own adjustment to medical school and a new city, talking with her mentor became “something I actually looked forward to.” Since classes were conducted over Zoom, it was nice connecting with someone outside that world. “It felt like catching up with old friend,” she says. After a year of debilitating isolation, that type of human connection is invaluable.
THE JANSSEN/DREXEL 4D FELLOWSHIP: FROM IDEA TO IMPACT

After the resurgence of the Black Lives Matter movement in 2020, as was true for many people, Fei Shen, PhD pharmacology and physiology ’16, began thinking about what he could do to support antiracism efforts in his field of drug discovery and development. He considered how he could use his position at Janssen Research & Development, LLC (Janssen) to make change. Less than six months later, the Janssen/Drexel “4D” (Diversity in Drug Discovery and Development) Fellowship was born.

Shen, a principal scientist and oncology therapeutic program lead at Janssen, reached out to Olimpia Meucci, MD, PhD, professor and chair of Drexel’s Department of Pharmacology & Physiology, with the idea to create a fellowship that would pay tuition and a cost-of-living stipend for students underrepresented in biomedical sciences1 who want to earn a master’s degree in pharmacology and physiology or drug discovery and development at the College of Medicine. This unique collaboration would provide funding and additional mentorship to deserving underrepresented students, while they receive the same exceptional education and hands-on training as other students in these master’s programs.

THE NEED

Unlike many fields of biomedicine, a master’s can be a terminal degree for those entering the field of drug discovery. And unlike PhD students, those in master’s programs almost always pay out of pocket for their education, in addition to living expenses. Funding can be a critical barrier to entry for students with limited financial means.

Despite efforts in the industry to promote diversity, there is more work to be done. “There are a lot of efforts to recruit more diverse talent, and it’s helping for sure, but I think one of the root causes is that talented minority students want to get into this community, but they just can’t support their education financially,” Shen notes. “That’s why I think it’s really important for us to offer support to students who just graduated from undergrad.”

DOWNSTREAM EFFECTS

While it’s understood that diversity and inclusion benefit individual companies and the broader industry, the need in the field of drug discovery is especially poignant. People of color continue to be less likely than white people to participate in clinical trials. In a 2019 article in JAMA Oncology2, it was noted that Black and Hispanic participants were routinely underrepresented in oncology trials. Moreover, these trials often did not report race at all. In a 2020 JAMA Network Open3 article, Black, Native and Hispanic people were found to be underrepresented in vaccine trials between 2011 and 2020. Only 58.3% of these studies even reported race.

The medical industry has excluded and harmed people of color; this may be one of the reasons for their lack of representation in pharmaceutical research and clinical trials. But this exclusion and harm, and the resulting distrust these communities experience toward the health care system, are only part of the problem. Other factors include language barriers, difficulty with transportation, stringent exclusion criteria for trials and lack of access to specialists who might connect patients with trials.

Adequate representation in clinical trials is the only way to ensure that drugs are safe and effective for all populations. As the JAMA Oncology study authors note, “Representative racial/ethnic participation in research, especially in clinical trials that establish standards of care, is necessary to minimize disparities in outcomes.”

While diversifying the pharmaceutical industry will not fix all of these issues, it is a critical step. Having people from underrepresented backgrounds at every stage of the drug discovery process will help the industry be more inclusive in its recruitment of patients from those backgrounds.

WHAT IS THE FELLOWSHIP?

The fellowship will cover tuition, health insurance and support for living expenses for three students who have been accepted into Drexel’s Drug Discovery & Development or Pharmacology & Physiology master’s degree programs. The initial plan was to accept two fellows, but when applications were reviewed, three outstanding candidates were identified and accepted. For the 2021–2023 program, the fellowship will be geared toward those entering these master’s programs with an interest in oncology. “There is room for expansion in the future, though.” Shen says, “We are starting small, just so that we know how to do it right, so that we design the best experience for the fellows. Once we know how to do it, we can expand not only in numbers, but potentially to other therapeutic areas as well.”

In addition to removing the financial burdens of getting a master’s degree, the fellowship includes an option for students to do their thesis work partly or entirely under the mentorship of scientists at Janssen, if they choose a thesis track. All 4D
fellows will have access to mentorship and guidance from Janssen scientists and senior leadership members, in addition to the mentorship all students in these master’s programs receive from Drexel faculty. This sets the fellowship apart from others that cover expenses but don’t have a mentorship component.

“We’re trying to tailor this to ensure the fellow can be successful for future career development,” says Shen. “The student can choose to do their thesis research completely at Janssen. We will expose the fellows to every step of the drug discovery pipeline. It’s real-world training: Get the drug in your hand, see how it was developed from an idea all the way to a preclinical candidate, through phase 1, 2 and 3, to launch. The fellow can talk to people from different functional areas and gain that real-world experience.”

The goal is to set up a clear path to success for minority students who are interested in a pharmaceutical industry career. While job placement with Janssen post-graduation is not a guarantee for fellows, Shen notes that Janssen sees this fellowship as a win not just for improving diversity in their industry, but also as a direct benefit to the organization, as they will be training talented scientists who may choose to start their careers at Janssen after graduation.

MAKING IT HAPPEN
When Shen came to Meucci with the idea for the fellowship, Meucci was immediately supportive. “I welcomed the opportunity, as it offered not only a great means to address an urgent social and scientific problem, but also a vehicle to enhance translational research within the department and the college. This has been a main priority for me, and it perfectly aligns with Drexel’s culture of community impact and translation,” she notes.

Next, Shen needed buy-in from the leadership at Janssen. He says the most challenging part was figuring out who to talk to. Once he was in touch with the right people, they were entirely on board. He recalls, “Everyone from Janssen and Drexel was extremely supportive.”

“We are excited to join Drexel in this goal to grow the next generation of diverse talent,” says Margaret Yu, MD, vice president and Prostate Cancer Disease Area leader at Janssen.

“When Fei proposed the idea of the 4D Fellowship, I was impressed with his vision and happy to support the joint effort between Janssen and Drexel,” says Joe Erhardt, PhD, vice president, Oncology Discovery and Scientific Partnership at Janssen. “This fellowship will expose talented young minority graduate students to promising opportunities in industry, and their diverse perspectives will enrich our drug development programs.”

The process of creating an agreement between Drexel and Janssen took less than six months. This is unusually fast for collaborations of this nature. While all parties were enthusiastic about the idea, there was no existing model for this kind of 50/50 partnership between Drexel and Janssen.

“Fei and I were able to work closely and relentlessly to make sure we made progress in a timely manner,” says Meucci. “As the head of the department, I was relatively independent and able to run things at my own pace. Since Fei also had autonomy and Janssen leadership’s support, we could move quickly. This is a model that should be encouraged both in academia and industry.”

The fellowship advisory committee, co-chaired by Alessandro Fatatis, MD, PhD, professor of pharmacology and physiology — who was also Shen’s mentor at Drexel — and Brent Rupnow, oncology senior director at Janssen R&D, will work closely with selected fellows, providing both academic and industrial guidance, in addition to selecting the fellows.

“The committee has chosen three excellent fellows from the pool of applicants, two in the Pharmacology & Physiology program and one in Drug Discovery & Development,” Meucci notes. “Given the tight timeline, this outcome exceeds our initial expectations!”

WHAT’S NEXT?
In addition to expanding the number of fellows and branching into other therapeutic areas in future years, stakeholders from Drexel and Janssen are eager to begin cultivating a diverse talent pool in clinical oncology. There is an interest in creating a similar fellowship for underrepresented Drexel MD students considering careers in the pharmaceutical industry or as clinical PIs. This is yet another area of the drug discovery pipeline where increased diversity would benefit the industry and the patients it strives to serve.

MEET THE INAUGURAL 4D FELLOWS

MOHAMMED SANI ALHASSAN, PHARMD
MS IN PHARMACOLOGY & PHYSIOLOGY

CELINA GUZMAN
MS IN PHARMACOLOGY & PHYSIOLOGY

DESMOND LEWIS
MS IN DRUG DISCOVERY & DEVELOPMENT

References:
1. The fellowship is open to anyone who qualifies as underrepresented according to NIH guidelines. Learn more at diversity.nih.gov/about-us/population-underrepresented.
’60s

Lionel Mailloux, MD, HU ’62; Internal Medicine Residency, HU ’66, a retired nephrologist, was part of a team that created “Living With Dialysis,” an event for the Osler Society at Zucker School of Medicine at Hofstra/Northwell. The event included a virtual performance that featured interviews with patients on dialysis — including some who were treated by Mailloux before his retirement — and their family caregivers and health care providers, offering insight into the demands a chronic illness can place on patients and their loved ones.

Mary McDevitt, MD, WMC ’67, retired medical professional, was featured in an article in the Sonoma Valley Sun about her career and her work as an advocate for single-payer health care.

’70s

Edward Arenson Jr., MD, HU ’71, CWSP, a retired oncologist, published a new memoir, To Be of Use: My Five Decades as a Cancer Doctor Including the Story of the Conquest of Childhood Leukemia. The book documents his 50 years as a pediatric oncologist, including his experience in the field during a number of major developments in the treatment of cancer in children, in particular leukemia. He eventually went on to specialize in adult brain cancer until his retirement.

Marjorie Pollack, MD, MCP ’74, editor of the global infectious disease surveillance system ProMed, was featured in the PBS Frontline Documentary “China’s COVID Secrets.” Through her work she discovered early warnings of the COVID-19 outbreak and co-authored the ProMED post, alerting about 80,000 subscribers worldwide of the potential danger of this disease.

John S. Aumiller, MD, HU ’76, a cardiologist, joined the medical team at Cabinet Peaks Clinic Bull River in Sanders County, Montana. Aumiller is board certified by the American Board of Internal Medicine, a fellow of the American Board of Cardiology and a fellow of the Society of Cardiac Angiography and Intervention. He also holds certification from the Board of Nuclear Cardiology.

Mitchell Eisenberg, MD, MCP ’76, CEO of Advanced Recovery Systems, has partnered with Cooper University Health Care to open a new $27 million inpatient drug and alcohol treatment center in Cherry Hill, New Jersey. The Recovery Village Cherry Hill at Cooper will join Florida-based Advanced Recovery’s nationwide network of seven accredited rehab centers.

Kenneth Kosik, MD, MCP ’76, received the 2021 Potamkin Prize in recognition of his “diverse and pioneering contributions to Alzheimer’s research” from the Potamkin Philanthropies in partnership with the American Academy of Neurology and the American Brain Foundation. Kosik is the Harriman Professor of Neuroscience at the University of California, Santa Barbara.

Janet Haas, MD, HU ’77, board chair of the William Penn Foundation, gave a statement regarding the $8 million in emergency COVID-19 grants to Philadelphia arts and culture organizations. The William Penn Foundation and the Andrew W. Mellon foundation are each contributing $4 million to this cause.

Richard Cohen, PhD psychiatry, MCP ’78, is the president and chief executive of Public Health Management Corporation, which is partnering with the University of Pennsylvania Health System to run an emergency department at the former Mercy Hospital in West Philadelphia. The new facility, PHMC Public Health Campus on Cedar, will offer services including primary care, outpatient behavioral health and respite care for patients leaving a hospital but needing more recovery time before they can go home.

Stephen Klasko, MD, HU ’78, MBA, was quoted in a news release regarding the confirmation of Jefferson’s merger with Einstein Healthcare Network. The FTC has withdrawn their objection to the proposed merger. Jefferson Health will now be adding four hospitals to its network in a move that Klasko said will “preserve access to care” for citizens of Philadelphia. Klasko was featured in the Philadelphia Business Journal’s Power 100 for 2021. The Power 100 is a group of leaders carrying influence from a variety of industries across the region and highlights those who are helping to lead a path forward within their industries. He was among the panelists who participated in a virtual roundtable focused on leading life sciences organizations through unprecedented times. Klasko was featured in a Philadelphia Business Journal article discussing Jefferson’s $762 million Specialty Care Pavilion under construction at 11th and Chestnut Streets in Philadelphia.

Al Sacchetti Jr., MD, MCP ’79; Emergency Medicine Residency, HU ’82, director of the emergency department of Virtua Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital in Camden, New Jersey, was quoted in a Philadelphia Inquirer article regarding people who get or try to get a COVID-19 vaccine, even though they are not in a vaccine priority group.

’80s

Neil Stern, MD, MCP ’81, was featured on Becker’s ASC Review’s list of “10 ENTs to Know.” Stern practices at Mid-Atlantic Permanente Medical Group in Rockville, Maryland, and he was named a Top Doctor by Virginia Living Magazine in 2019 and 2020.
Richard Snyder, MD, MCP ’82, chief medical officer at Independence Blue Cross, was quoted in a Philadelphia Inquirer article discussing Independence Blue Cross’s decision to pay a single upfront fee to Caron Treatment Centers for patients needing addiction treatment, with no payment required for those readmitted within 90 days. IBC’s patients had a lower 90-day readmission rate than patients from other providers. Snyder was quoted in a Philadelphia Business Journal article where he discussed Independence’s newly formed partnership with the mental health provider Quartet Health. He was also quoted in a Philadelphia Business Journal article regarding the insurer’s plans to waive all cost-sharing fees for its commercial group and individual members receiving the COVID-19 vaccine.

Barbara J. Dalton, PhD microbiology and immunology, MCP ’83, is the vice president of venture capital for Pfizer Ventures. In addition, Dalton serves as a board member of several biopharmaceutical companies including Imara Inc., Artios Ltd., Cydan, Ixchelsis Ltd., AMRA Medical and Second Genome. She also serves on several other Pfizer Venture Investments portfolio companies as a board observer. Dalton began her pharmaceutical career as a research scientist in immunology at SmithKline Beecham Ltd. and joined its venture capital group, SR One Ltd., in the early 1990s. She was also a founding member and partner with EuclidSR Partners LP, a private venture capital firm, where SmithKline was a leading limited partner.

Allen Samuels, MD, MCP ’84, joined the medical staff of Penn Highlands Healthcare. Samuels is a rheumatologist with more than 30 years of experience treating autoimmune and inflammatory diseases.

James Aikins Jr., MD, MCP ’85, was named chief of gynecologic oncology at Rutgers Cancer Institute and Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital. Additionally, he continues to serve as a visiting professor in the OB/GYN Department at Cape Coast Teaching Hospital in Cape Coast, Ghana.

Mary I. O’Connor, MD, MCP ’85, became co-founder and chief medical officer at Voya Health Inc., an all-inclusive virtual health care provider, according to a LinkedIn update. Previously, O’Connor was a professor of orthopedics and rehabilitation at Yale University School of Medicine.

Ronald Poropatich, MD, HU ’85, joined the board of directors of Noveome Biotherapeutics Inc., a clinical-stage biopharmaceutical company. Poropatich is a pulmonary/critical care medicine physician-scientist who serves as the director of the University of Pittsburgh’s Center for Military Medicine Research, Health Sciences, and as professor of medicine in the Division of Pulmonary, Allergy and Critical Care Medicine at the University of Pittsburgh.

Philip Jason, MD, HU ’86, was interviewed in an article, “Behind the Mask: Philip Jason” for Observer-Reporter, a Washington, Pennsylvania, newspaper. Jason is the longtime chief of the Gastroenterology Department at Washington Health System’s Washington Hospital and is a partner with Southwest Gastroenterology Associates.

David Shulkin, MD, MCP ’86; HD ’19, president and CEO of Shulkin Solutions Inc., joined the advisory board at Ibex Medical Analytics. Shulkin was the ninth Secretary of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, having previously served as chief executive of numerous leading hospitals and health care systems, including Beth Israel in New York City and Morristown Medical Center in northern New Jersey.

Beth DuPree, MD, HU ’87, is conducting a clinical study that will evaluate the use of an optical coherence tomography imaging system, a tool from Perimeter Medical Imaging AI, during breast-conserving surgery. In a previous successful collaboration with Perimeter, DuPree generated compelling data from a 20-patient study completed in 2020. DuPree is a breast surgeon at Northern Arizona Healthcare and a nationally recognized breast cancer expert.

Christina Lubold, MD, MA applied human physiology, HU ’87, was profiled in an article in the Indiana Gazette about her career and the ever-changing political landscape of medical care. Lubold is a pediatrician at Indiana Pediatric Associates.

Christopher Bowden, MD, HU ’88, joined the board of directors of Cedilla Therapeutics, a venture-backed preclinical biotechnology company developing novel small molecules for cancer and other diseases. Bowden has been the chief medical officer of Agios since May 2014, where he leads clinical development activities that resulted in the approval of TIBSOVO for IDH1 mutation positive acute myeloid leukemia in the U.S. Prior to joining Agios, Bowden was vice president, product development oncology, franchise lead (Signaling Group) at Genentech Inc.

Christopher T. Olivia, MD, HU ’88, was mentioned in a Philadelphia Inquirer article discussing his new position as the chief executive officer at Rothman Orthopedic Institute.

Reginald Blaber, MD, HU ’89; Cardiology Fellowship, MCPHU ’98, executive vice president and chief clinical officer of Virtua Health, co-founded and serves as one of the board members of a newly created nonprofit organization, The Ark Institute, which aims to help the region and the country get through the current pandemic and ensure better preparedness for future public health crises. He was quoted in a December 2020 Philadelphia Business Journal article about the precautions and planning that health care systems are undertaking to handle the surge of COVID-19 cases.

Stephen Higgins, MD, HU ’89, neonatologist and medical director at Independence Blue Cross, offered his advice on how to effectively discuss the COVID-19 vaccine with people in your life on IBX Insights and the Philadelphia Voice. Higgins spent most of his career as a neonatologist at Crozer-Chester Medical Center, where he worked in neonatal intensive care. Before joining Independence Blue Cross in April of 2019, he was the associate dean for Drexel’s clinical campus at Crozer and was the chief academic officer and Pediatric Residency director at Crozer.
’90s

Alyssa Dweck, MD, HU ’90, a practicing gynecologist in New York, joined Bonafide, a company pioneering mainstream medical use of drug-free, naturally derived health solutions for menopause, as chief medical officer.

Y. Lily Higgins, MD, HU ’90, was appointed to the Delaware County Council’s Board of Health. Higgins is the market chief medical officer with Keystone First and AmeriHealth Caritas Pennsylvania. She is a fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics and a member of the Asian American Women’s Coalition, and serves on the board of Pennsylvania’s chapter of March of Dimes and the Pennsylvania Premie Society.

Paul Reinbold, MD, HU ’92, CMD, vice president and chief medical director at Acts Retirement-Life Communities, received the Berman Award for lifetime achievement in the practice of long-term care. The award is given annually by the Mid-Atlantic Medical Directors Association to exemplary physicians who have devoted their careers and made significant contributions to the long-term care continuum.

Ron Aryel, MD, HU ’93, a member of the City of Reno’s COVID-19 Task Force and Data Subcommittee, helped to develop a COVID risk meter, a predictive tool that forecasts where the pandemic is headed locally up to 10 days in advance, as well as predicting specific factors such as hospital and ICU capacity. This tool also helps gauge the effect of vaccine introduction and will provide resources to health authorities.

Matthew Davis, MD, MCP ’94, was promoted to chief scientific officer at the specialty pharmaceutical company Endo Pharmaceuticals, according to a LinkedIn update. Previously Davis was chief medical officer at the company. He has over 20 years of management experience in the pharmaceutical industry.

Kristin Brill, MD, HU ’95, joined the Comprehensive Breast Center at the Sidney Kimmel Cancer Center – Washington Township, New Jersey. Board certified by the American Board of Surgery, Brill’s special interests include young women with breast cancer and those at high risk. She has a special interest in breast conservation surgery, oncoplastic surgery and skin-sparing mastectomy. Brill is a member of the American Society of Clinical Oncology, the American Society of Breast Surgeons and the Society of Surgical Oncology.

Gregory Cosgrove, MD, HU ’95, joined Pliant Therapeutics Inc., a clinical stage biopharmaceutical company focused on developing treatment of fibrosis, as vice president of clinical development. Cosgrove most recently served as the chief medical officer of the Pulmonary Fibrosis Foundation, a nonprofit organization dedicated to assisting and treating patients with pulmonary fibrosis. Cosgrove also held the roles of associate professor within the pulmonology divisions of the University of Colorado-Denver and National Jewish Health Departments of Medicine.

Julie B. McCausland, MD, HU ’96, MS, is a 2021 recipient of the Parker J. Palmer Courage to Teach Award from the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education. McCausland is the program director of the dually sponsored Internal Medicine and Emergency Medicine Transitional Year Residency at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center and an associate professor in the Departments of Emergency Medicine and Medicine. The award is for program directors “who find innovative ways to teach residents and to provide quality health care while remaining connected to the initial impulse to care for others in this environment.”

’00s

David Damsker, MD, MCPHU ’00, the Bucks County health director, was quoted in a Philadelphia Inquirer article about the effectiveness of current COVID-19 vaccines against the B.1.1.7 variant of the virus.

Carrie Freed, DVM, MLAS, MCPHU ’00, was elected president of the American Society of Laboratory Animal Practitioners (ASLAP), according to a LinkedIn update. ASLAP works to advance laboratory animal veterinary care and welfare. Freed is also a clinical veterinarian of animal resources and a professor of clinical veterinary preventive medicine at The Ohio State University College of Veterinary Medicine, and she is a diplomate of the American College of Laboratory Animal Medicine.

Tony Reed, MD, MCPHU ’00, chief medical officer at Temple University Health System, was quoted in several articles in the Philadelphia Inquirer: a January 4 article about the city’s efforts to ensure that the COVID-19 vaccine is distributed equitably throughout the city, a February 23 article regarding Temple’s efforts to connect with seniors about vaccination through phone outreach following a low response rate through the patient portal, and one on April 8 discussing the slow rate of vaccination for seniors in Philadelphia. Reed was also quoted in a Philadelphia Business Journal article, discussing Temple Health’s plans for administering COVID-19 vaccinations to their staff.

Barbara Simon, MD, MCPHU ’00, an endocrinologist at Thomas Jefferson University Hospital, was quoted in a Philadelphia Inquirer article about the rise of Alzheimer’s and diabetes deaths in Pennsylvania and New Jersey, possibly due to factors like economic stress, lack of access to affordable medication and fear of seeking medical treatment from an already overburdened medical system.

Africa Stewart, MD, MCPHU ’00, president of Doctors Without Borders/Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) USA, was featured in a video on the organization’s YouTube channel, in which she addressed Doctors Without Borders’ response to COVID-19 in Puerto Rico. Her career with MSF began in Sudan in June 2011. She has completed five surgical field assignments with MSF and served as a guide for the
organization’s Forced From Home exhibition about the global refugee crisis. She was elected to the board of directors in 2017, Stewart continues to support women’s health care locally and abroad with an emphasis on education and prevention.

Rannette Schurtz, MD ’01, a private practice doctor in Downingtown, Pennsylvania, was quoted in a Philadelphia Inquirer article that sheds light on the fact that many private practice doctors and medical personnel outside of large hospital systems have been left out of the COVID-19 vaccine process.

Ronald Bernardin, MD ’02, was featured in Journey Medical Corporation’s “Journey with the Experts” video series, in which he discussed the topic of seborrheic dermatitis. Bernardin is a board-certified dermatologist at Macaione & Papa Dermatology Associates in Voorhees, New Jersey. He previously had an 11-year career as an active-duty physician in the United States Air Force, including as chief of dermatology at Elmendorf Air Force Base in Alaska.

Jeffrey Nau, PhD, MS medical science ’02, was interviewed for an article in Life Sciences Leader magazine, in which he discussed how his career led him to become the president and CEO of Oyster Point Pharma. The company recently announced that the FDA has accepted its new drug application for OC-01 (varenicline) nasal spray for the treatment of signs that the FDA has accepted its new drug application for dry eye disease.

Nicole Weinberg, MD ’02, was a guest speaker at the 8th Annual Women’s Heart Symposium at the Pacific Heart Institute. Board certified in echocardiography and nuclear cardiology, Weinberg is a cardiologist at Pacific Heart Institute in Santa Monica, California. She has published extensively in subjects ranging from imaging modalities to evaluation of cardiac disease, lectured on heart disease prevention and women’s heart disease, and serves as part of the Women’s Health Initiative at St. John’s Hospital. Through the Women’s Heart Center at the Pacific Heart Institute, she has been a codirector of the annual Women’s Heart Symposium, which focuses on current cardiovascular topics. She helped found the Have a Heart, Save a Heart charity.

Orit Markowitz, MD ’03, a dermatologist and founder of OptiSkin in New York, was quoted in a Bloomberg article regarding a new push for health care products catering to menopausal women.

Kurt Miceli, MD ’03, chief medical officer of Elwyn, a provider of support services to children and adults with autism, intellectual and developmental disabilities, and related behavioral health challenges, was quoted in a Philadelphia Inquirer article regarding Elwyn’s efforts to secure COVID-19 vaccines for their constituents.

Rebecca Edmonds, MD ’04, a surgical oncologist specializing in the treatment of diseases of the liver, pancreas, gallbladder, spleen, colon, thyroid and breast, has joined the Allegheny Health Network Cancer Institute. Edmonds most recently practiced at University of Pittsburgh Medical Center St. Margaret, where she was vice chairperson of surgery and chief of general surgery.

Andy Goberdhan, MD ’05, has joined Hematology-Oncology at Saint Francis Healthcare in Wilmington, Delaware. Goberdhan served as surgical house officer at Nazareth Hospital before pursuing additional training in internal medicine and oncology. In 2016, he received the Outstanding Internal Medicine Resident Award from Mercy Catholic Medical Center.

Stacey Gruber, MD ’05; Drexel/Hahnemann Neurology Residency ’09, joined the medical team at Prevea Health in Wisconsin. A board-certified neurologist, Gruber specializes in comprehensive medical history and neurological examination, multiple sclerosis and Botox injections for headache, cervical dystonia and hemifacial spasm.

Alexander Manteghi, DO, MS medical science ’07, joined Barton Health in South Lake Tahoe. A board-certified pediatric and adult otolaryngology specialist, Manteghi specializes in pediatric otolaryngology, sinus surgery and neck masses.

Jason Davis, MD ’08, general surgeon, joined the medical team at UNC Health Southeastern and will be practicing at Southeastern Surgical Center in Lumberton, North Carolina. Davis previously practiced with Cone Health Medical Group.

Sarah Wood, MD ’08, an attending physician in adolescent medicine at the Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia, was quoted in a Philadelphia Inquirer article regarding a shortage of STD tests due to the mass production of COVID-19 tests. Wood noted that untreated STDs can have long-term repercussions, such as impaired fertility.

Rene Ramirez Jr., MD ’09, and Veronica Ramirez, MD ’09; Drexel Pathway to Medical School ’05, were featured in an article in the Los Angeles Times about how the couple and their three-generation household persevered during the pandemic.

Dennis Salotti, MS clinical research organization and management ’09, joined Jazz Pharmaceuticals as the senior director and head of strategic outsourcing, according to a LinkedIn update. Previously he was chief operating officer of The Avoca Group, a life sciences consulting firm. Salotti is also currently an adjunct professor at Drexel University College of Medicine.

’10s

Jenipher Dalton, MS clinical research organization and management ’10, joined the analytical instrument development company Agilent Technologies as senior vice president of global quality and regulatory affairs, according to a LinkedIn update. Dalton was previously with Takeda Pharmaceuticals for more than 10 years, working in quality assurance, and research and development.

Barbara C. Khan, MS clinical research organization and management ‘10, joined the biopharmaceutical company AbbVie as executive director of neuroscience development, according to a LinkedIn update. Khan previously directed development at Allergan and Forest Laboratories.
Deepthi Saini, MD '10, was recognized as a Top Doctor by Phoenix Magazine. Saini is an ophthalmologist at Southwestern Eye Center in Scottsdale, Arizona.

Rosemarie Arena, MD '11; Drexel/Hahnemann Internal Medicine Residency '12; Drexel/Hahnemann Gastroenterology Fellowship, has joined the medical team at Mountainside Medical Group. Arena is board certified in internal medicine and specializes in gastroenterology.

Kaaren Campbell, MS clinical research organization and management '11, joined the medical device manufacturer Boston Scientific as director of clinical trials, interventional oncology, according to a LinkedIn update. Campbell specializes in clinical operations management and previously served as associate director of clinical development in immuno-oncology at AstraZeneca.

Talha Shaikh, MD '12, a board-certified radiation oncologist, was named chief radiation oncologist at New York Cancer & Blood Specialists. Shaikh has been honored with many awards, including the American Society of Clinical Oncology Conquer Cancer Foundation Merit Award, American Society for Radiation Oncology Annual Meeting Travel Award, and European Society for Medical Oncology European Lung Cancer Conference Travel Award.

Kate Beishline, PhD biochemistry '13, and Samuel Flashner, MS cancer biology '16, were two of the authors of “DSB Repair Pathway Choice Is Regulated by Recruitment of 53BP1 Through Cell Cycle-Dependent Regulation of Sp1” in Cell Reports, March 16, 2021.

Danielle Belardo, MD '14, received media attention for her recent criticism of comedian Joe Rogan for spreading misinformation about health and science on his podcast. She has since been selling T-shirts that say “Joe Rogan Is Goop for Men,” the proceeds of which will go to the Andrew McDonough B+ Foundation, which funds childhood cancer research. Belardo is a preventive cardiologist in Newport Beach, California, and serves as director of preventive cardiology at the Institute of Plant-Based Medicine.

Larissa Falcao, MS pharmacology and physiology '14, appeared in a National Geographic documentary called “Mission Impossible: The Race for a Vaccine,” about Pfizer’s COVID-19 vaccine development. Falcao has been a scientist at Pfizer since 2016.

Kriti Acharya, MS biochemistry '15, was one of the authors of “Identification of a Glycan Cluster in gp120 Essential for Irreversible HIV-1 Lytic Inactivation by a Lectin-based Recombinantly Engineered Protein Conjugate,” which appeared in the November 13, 2020, issue of the Journal of Biochemistry.

Sonali Biligiri, MD '15, an endocrinologist, joined the medical team at Beebe Medical Group in Delaware. She also earned her undergraduate degree, a bachelor’s in biological sciences, from Drexel’s College of Arts and Sciences, in 2012.

John P. Soliman, DMD, MD '15; Drexel/Hahnemann Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery Residency '17, was featured on Monmouth Health & Life Magazine’s list of Top Dentists 2021. Soliman is an oral surgeon at Coastal Oral Surgery in Toms River, New Jersey.

Samuel Flashner, MS cancer biology '16, see Kate Beishline, PhD biochemistry '13.

Mirzya Haider, MS medical science '16, joined the Center for Health Information and Analysis (CHIA) as a senior research analyst, according to a LinkedIn update. CHIA is an independent state agency established as Massachusetts’s primary hub for health care data and a primary source of health care analytics that support policy development.

Daniel A. Rodgers, MD '16, a family physician at the Portland Clinic, is running for a seat on the Portland School board, Zone 5.

Alexandra Hunt, MS interdisciplinary health sciences '17, a public health researcher at Adaptimmune, a company that specializes in cancer therapy, has launched a campaign for Pennsylvania’s third congressional district.

Elizabeth C. Koffler, MD '17, a family medicine physician, joined the medical team at Presbyterian Medical Group in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Bradley Nash, PhD pharmacology and physiology '17, a scientific writer at Drexel University College of Medicine, and colleagues in the Department of Pharmacology & Physiology, authored “Mechanisms of Neuronal Dysfunction in HIV-associated Neurocognitive Disorders,” published in Cellular and Molecular Life Sciences, February 13, 2021.

Kiley Keelin, MS clinical research organization and management '18, became director of regulatory affairs at Biogen, according to a LinkedIn update. Biogen is a biotechnology company that designs, develops and distributes treatments for neurological diseases. Keelin has previously worked for Spark Therapeutics and Aptevo Therapeutics.

Jennifer Marcy, MS molecular and cell biology and genetics '18, was one of the authors of “The Impact of Immuno-aging on SARS-CoV-2 Vaccine Development,” which appeared in the February 2021 issue of GeroScience.

Renée Jean-Toussaint, PhD pharmacology and physiology ‘19, and colleagues at Drexel and Rutgers New Jersey Medical School published “Therapeutic and Prophylactic Effects of Macrophage-Derived Small Extracellular Vesicles in the Attenuation of Inflammatory Pain” in the May 2021 issue of Brain, Behavior, and Immunity. The work was highlighted by the article recommendation service Faculty Opinions.

Chelsea Weldie, MS drug discovery and development ‘19, was one of the authors of “Hospital-Acquired Clostridoides difficile Infection Among Patients at an Urban Safety-Net Hospital in Philadelphia: Demographics, Neighborhood Deprivation, and the Transferability of National Statistics,” published in Infection Control & Hospital Epidemiology, December 7, 2020.

Sana Alturki, MS immunology ‘19, see Saswan Alturki, MS infectious disease ‘18.

’20s

Jean Marc Maurancy, MS molecular and cell biology and genetics ‘20, was one of the authors of “Rapid Optimization of the Metabolic Stability of a Human Immunodeficiency Virus Type-1 Capsid Inhibitor Using a Multistep Computational Workflow,” which appeared in the Journal of Medicinal Chemistry online March 22, 2021.

Former Residents and Fellows

(alphabetical)

Carmen Febo-San Miguel, MD; Family Medicine Residency, HU ‘76, executive director of the Latino arts and cultural organization Taller Puertorriqueño, was appointed to the Philadelphia Arts and Culture Task Force created by City Council. The task force is designed to pinpoint policy and budgetary recommendations to support the arts and culture in Philadelphia. In addition, she is one of a group of cultural organization leaders in Philadelphia who have joined together to share fundraising and programming strategies amid the pandemic. Febo-San Miguel, who is also a member of the Philadelphia Art Commission, was mentioned in a Philadelphia Inquirer article discussing the new mural at SEPTA’s Fifth Street Station.

Leandro J. Feo, MD; Drexel/Hahnemann Surgery Residency ‘12, was featured in a “Salute to Physicians” in the South Florida Hospital News and Healthcare Report. Feo is a board-certified colorectal and general surgeon on staff at Delray Medical Center.

Erica Harris, MD; Drexel/Hahnemann Emergency Medicine Residency ‘13, an emergency physician at Einstein Health, was quoted in a December 2020 Philadelphia Inquirer article about the importance of COVID-19 vaccination for health care workers in preventing staffing shortages in hospitals.

Lew Kaplan, MD; Surgery Residency, MCP ‘95, the director of surgery at Corporal Michael J. Crescenz VA Medical Center and professor of surgery at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania, was quoted in a Philadelphia Inquirer article regarding a shortage of hospital staff.

Glenn Lipton, MD; Drexel/Hahnemann Orthopaedic Surgery Residency ‘02, a sports medicine specialist with Premier Orthopaedics, is partnering with Sidney Jacob of the Philadelphia-based Hand to Shoulder Center to open an ambulatory surgery center in King of Prussia that focuses on serving the specific needs of orthopedic surgeons.

Lawrence Livornese, MD; Internal Medicine Residency, MCPHU ‘89; Infectious Diseases Fellowship, MCPHU ‘91, chair of medicine at Main Line Health, was quoted in a Philadelphia Inquirer article about how those with a history of allergic reactions should still get the COVID-19 vaccine.

Richard Menzies, MD; Internal Medicine Residency, MCP ‘81, director of the McGill International TB Centre in Canada, was quoted in a Washington Post article regarding new statistics about the high rate of asymptomatic COVID-19 spread.

Edwin M. Schottenstein, MD; Ophthalmology Residency, HU ‘82, was featured in the Border News Herald and IssueWire about his ophthalmology practice. He has been practicing in Manhattan since 1985. Schottenstein’s research led to the cure of cotton blight in California’s San Joaquin Valley. He is also a clinical assistant professor and attending ophthalmologist at the New York University Grossman School of Medicine. He has written numerous articles for medical journals and chapters for textbooks about comprehensive ophthalmology and glaucoma care, including co-writing two editions of a three-volume textbook entitled The Glaucomas. Schottenstein was recognized by Continental Who’s Who with a Lifetime Achievement Award in ophthalmology for his exemplary contributions to the medical field.

Daniel Weiss, MD; Drexel/Hahnemann Emergency Medicine Residency ‘07, joined the chemical modeling software company Schrodinger, as vice president and head of early clinical development. Previously, Weiss was the senior scientific director of translational research and early clinical development with the global pharmaceutical company Chugai Pharma, where he specialized in oncology clinical studies.

Gerald Wydro, MD; Emergency Medicine Residency, HU ‘97, chair of emergency medicine at Jefferson Health – Northeast, was quoted in a December 2020 Philadelphia Inquirer article, joining with state officials in pleading with small businesses to heed COVID-19 closure orders, citing the overburdening of Pennsylvania hospitals.
IN MEMORIAM

Stephen J. Bosacco, MD, HU '66
Gail M. Barton, MD, WMC '66
Marvin H. Balistocky, MD, HU '51
Kenneth M. Bahrt, MD, HU '79
Guy Joseph Aliotta, PhD pharmacology, HU '75
Robert P. Hershkowitz, MD, HU '71
Arnold D. Goldman, MD, HU '58
Roy D. Goldfarb, PhD physiology, HU '73
Judith K. Hart, MD, MCP '72
William K. Grosh, MD, HU '54
Daniel M. Greenwald, MD, HU '68
Charles Edward Graper, MD, HU '83
Robert A. Gonzalez, MD, WMC '64
Beatrice P. Troyan, MD, HU '44
Dorothy P. Troyan, MD, HU '44

Robert L. Thompson, MD, HU '60
John C. Stoner, MD, HU '63
Paulette Rubin, MD, WMC '67
Thomas P. McGorry, MD, HU '69
Ronald Eugene McCall, MD, HU '67

Moyra Sui, MD, WMC '54
Beatrice P. Troyan, MD, HU '44

Spurgeon S. Johns Jr., MD, HU '61
Iris Marie Jessick, MD, WMC '59
Siju Li Zimmerman, MD, WMC '65
Ann Barbara Yee, MD, WMC '61

Siyu Jian, MD, WMC '54
Sumi “Mary” Mitsudo Koide, MD, WMC '56

Irene Marie Jessick, MD, WMC '59
Spurgeon S. Johns Jr., MD, HU '61
Eleanor Kane, MD, WMC '57
Iris Marlene Kaufman, MD, WMC '59
John H. Kerr, MD, HU '60
Shirley Thompson Khalauf, MD, WMC '58
John Kotakis, MD, HU '54
Audrey Krauss-Angelides, MD, HU '58
John R. Lapp, MD, HU '54
William E. Latham, MD, HU '63
Julius Lister, MD, HU '52
Barbara El Dora Lyons, MD, WMC '62

Eric and Akira, and six grandchildren. Her husband of 61 years, Harry Gottlieb, MD, a longtime faculty member at MCP, who died in 1997. She later became a teacher at the Miquon School and then the Alternative High School of Philadelphia. Gottlieb came to MCP to complete the PhD she had begun more than 20 years earlier, graduating at age 58. She attended MCP at the same time as Diane, who earned her MD in 1988, and now serves as an associate professor of psychiatry and director of student mental health services at Drexel University College of Medicine. Betty is survived by Diane, David and their spouses, and two grandchildren, Katja and Leo.

Sumi “Mary” Mitsudo Koide, MD, WMC ’56, died on February 15, 2021, at age 91. She attended Swarthmore College prior to matriculating at Woman’s Medical College. She was a longtime member of the staff at Montefiore Hospital in the surgical pathology service and a clinical professor of pediatrics and pathology at Albert Einstein Medical School. She specialized in sudden infant death syndrome, co-authoring numerous publications and remaining active in national and international professional societies throughout her career. Mitsudo was a member of the Japanese American Citizens League, serving as its president for many years. A lifelong social justice activist, she was a leader in the Japanese American redress movement for World War II incarceration camps in the 1980s, having been incarcerated herself from 1942-1945 at the Minidoka Relocation Center in Jerome, Idaho. Mitsudo is survived by her sons, Mark, Eric and Akira, and six grandchildren. Her husband of 61 years, Samuel, died six weeks after her on April 2. She is predeceased by her daughter, Sumi Lynn.

Lawrence A. Real, MD, MCP ’78, died on March 25, 2021, at the age of 72. Real earned a bachelor’s degree in psychology from Yale University and then attended MCP. He completed his adult psychiatry residency at Hahnemann University Hospital. Real spent more than 20 years with the Department of Psychiatry at Albert Einstein Healthcare Network, serving as medical director of the Belmont Center for Comprehensive Treatment for 13 years. He became medical director of Horizon House in 2010. After five years in that role, he worked in the City of Philadelphia’s Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual Disability as chief medical officer. In 2018 he returned to Horizon House as medical director. He also served as co-director of the Public Psychiatry Fellowship program at the University of Pennsylvania. Real is survived by his sons, Daniel and Michael, and his partner, Madeleine Gardberg.
Meet the Chairs

To learn more about the leadership of Drexel University College of Medicine, visit bit.ly/ducomchairs.

We will have a chair in every department.

Wei Du, MD
Professor and Academic Chair, Psychiatry

Robert Thayer Sataloff, MD, DMA
Professor and Chair, Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery
Senior Associate Dean, Clinical Academic Specialties

Susanna Evans, MD
Associate Professor and Hamot Endowed Chair, Family, Community & Preventive Medicine

Cecilia Smith, DO
Professor and Interim Academic Chair, Medicine

Itzhak Fischer, PhD
Professor and Chair, Neurobiology & Anatomy

David Tichansky, MD, MBA
Professor and Interim Academic Chair, Surgery

G. Peter Gliebus, MD
Associate Professor and Academic Chair, Neurology
Director, Behavioral Neurology & Neuropsychiatry Fellowship Program

Renee Turchi, MD, MPH
Professor and Academic Chair, Pediatrics

Richard Hamilton, MD
Professor and Academic Chair, Emergency Medicine
Associate Dean, Crozer-Chester Medical Center Regional Medical Campus

Erol Veznedaroglu, MD
Professor and Robert A. Groff Chair, Neurosurgery

Cheryl Hanau, MD
Professor and Richard Shuman, MD, Chair, Pathology & Laboratory Medicine

Brian Wigdahl, PhD
Professor and Chair, Microbiology & Immunology
Director, Institute for Molecular Medicine & Infectious Disease

Olimpia Meucci, MD, PhD
Professor and Chair, Pharmacology & Physiology

Mark B. Woodland, MS, MD
Professor and Interim Academic Chair, Obstetrics & Gynecology

Mauricio Reginato, PhD
Professor and Interim Chair, Biochemistry & Molecular Biology
Director, Cancer Biology Program

In August 2021, Jane Clifford, PhD, retired as chair of the Department of Biochemistry & Molecular Biology after more than 20 years. If you would like to send well wishes, she can be reached at jc79@drexel.edu.
The Hahnemann and MCP classes of 1971 took a trip down memory lane.

MISSED THE ACTION? WANT TO RELIVE SOME OF THE FUN?
A number of events and programs from the weekend, including “Drexel InSites: Addressing Critical Issues Through Rapid Research and Innovation” and “Drexel’s Response to the 1918 Influenza Pandemic,” have been recorded and are available for viewing in Dragon Network, Drexel’s online professional community for alumni and students. Not part of Dragon Network yet? Join today at dragonnetwork.drexel.edu.

During “An Afternoon at the Barnes,” attendees viewed artwork from the Barnes Foundation collection and discussed how experiences with art can inform personal and professional interactions.

ALUMNI WEEKEND THAT’S

CLASSES OF 1971 MEMORY BOOK
If you submitted an entry for the classes of 1971 memory book, a hardcopy of the book was recently mailed to you. All members of the classes of 1971 also received an email containing a digital copy of the book. If you didn’t receive your copy, please contact Nikki Bromberg in the Office of Alumni Relations at nlb67@drexel.edu.
Dean Charles Cairns served as a panelist for “Drexel InSights,” discussing the College’s role in accelerating COVID-19 solutions, including Drexel’s interdisciplinary effort to tackle PPE shortages.

Moussa Goldstein from Chabad Serving Drexel showed attendees how to make rugelach and taught them about Jewish traditions in baking.

Thank you to the alumni who joined us for virtual Alumni Weekend in May! Whether you celebrated a milestone reunion, explored Drexel’s rapid research innovations or gained insights into the benefits of bringing art into patient care, we are so glad you were there.

Next year, Alumni Weekend will take place from May 19 to 22, 2022. If you’re a member of the 50-year, 30-year or 25-year reunion classes of 1972, 1992 or 1997 and you’d like to volunteer to help plan your reunion, contact Nikki Bromberg in the Office of Alumni Relations at nlb67@drexel.edu.

A WRAP!

The class of 2020 enjoyed a party in honor of their first Alumni Weekend as Drexel grads.

Richardson Dilworth, PhD, explored the decade from 1965 to 1975, a transformative time for Drexel and the City of Philadelphia.

Local archivists and experts shared materials that showcased life at Drexel, Hahnemann and Woman’s Medical College during the 1918 influenza pandemic.

THANKS TO OUR VOLUNTEERS

Thank you to all of our reunion volunteers, event speakers and program hosts. It’s the time and talents of amazing volunteers like you that made our first virtual Alumni Weekend a great success. All volunteers are listed at drexel.edu/alumni/events/alumniweekend.
WHAT IS THE MISSION OF the Drexel Pathway to Medical School (DPMS) program?
Our mission is to help students historically underrepresented in medicine and those who are financially disadvantaged get into medical school. Many students have the passion and intelligence for medicine, but they often get derailed by some of the stringent medical school admissions requirements. Our job is to help them get back on track so they can realize their dream. Some students need to take advanced-level science courses and strengthen their academic skill set. Other students need to improve their MCAT scores, and we provide them with phenomenal MCAT preparation. Our program gives students the opportunity to build the skills they need to get into medical school and thrive.

HOW HAS THE DPMS PROGRAM grown since its inception in 2007?
We started DPMS as a certificate program with 24 students in 2007. It became a full master’s degree program in 2015 and we’ve increased enrollment to 55 students this summer. We’ve done this by targeting students at historically underrepresented schools and other organizations that fit our mission, such as the Latino Medical Student Association and Student National Medical Association. Since 2015, we’ve had 191 students matriculate. About 60% of those students transitioned into medical school over the first five years; most recently, that has increased to 75%.

WHAT HAS CONTRIBUTED to the success of the DPMS program?
Students often talk about the rigor of the program. The program is rigorous on purpose. We need to give students the skill set necessary not just to survive but to thrive in medical school. They are taking the full first-year medical student course load. This is not an abridged experience. By taking the full course load, they are proving to themselves just how capable they are, so they walk away with confidence and feel empowered to be successful when they transition to medical school.

We’ve increased the rigor of our summer-time enrichment program, which helps students develop critical thinking and study skills, introduces them to medical terminology and small-group learning, and helps them prepare for board exams. We also increased the educational support we provide to students, and we provide it to them earlier. We have a Big/Little program that pairs students with alumni of the program, who walk them through the educational process and give them advice based on their own experience. This year, we introduced a mentorship program where students are paired with community physicians from across the country. Currently, we have nearly 40 physician mentors, and we would like to add more. Here are a few student comments we’ve received on the value of mentorship:

I wouldn’t have been able to get through the program without my mentor.
My mentor helped me to overcome imposter syndrome.
When I had a misstep, I was able to get back on track.
I was inspired to greatness.
This was the first time I was able to have a personal relationship with a physician and felt that physician had an investment in me.

HOW DO YOU MEASURE the success of the DPMS program?
In addition to matriculation and transition to medical school, we look at the successful graduation of our students and whether they are matching in the specialties they want.

We also look at recruitment. We want to increase the volume of recruits for DPMS. That includes faculty and staff as well as students. For student recruitment, our admissions office has phenomenal connections with pre-med and pre-health advisors at a number of schools across the region as well as historically underrepresented schools. Recruiting faculty and staff is more challenging, but vital to the program. It starts with the students — if we increase the number of underrepresented students going into medicine, there will be more who pursue academic medicine. Hopefully many will stay with Drexel and teach future DPMS students. By focusing on our mission, we’re confident that we will continue to build on our success.

Q&A

Leon McCrea II, MD, MPH

Leon McCrea II, MD, MPH, is an associate professor in the Department of Family, Community & Preventive Medicine and the director of the Family Medicine Residency program at Drexel University College of Medicine. He also serves as senior associate dean for diversity, equity and inclusion. He is director of the Drexel Pathway to Medical School, an innovative one-year master’s degree program focused on helping students who are historically underrepresented in medicine and those who are financially disadvantaged get into medical school.

Interview by Nancy West
Supporting the Future of Medicine

Scholarship funds not only help finance my education, they allow me to pursue my interests.

I was drawn to Drexel University College of Medicine due to its progressive curriculum, diverse faculty and commitment to serving vulnerable populations. Philadelphia is filled with opportunities to serve. I’m here to learn and give it all I’ve got.

As challenging as medical school can be, and in an uncertain time, this really is an exciting time to be training as a physician. The world needs us.

I can’t wait to join you in our important profession.

Sara Ahmad Ali  
MD Class of 2023

THE FUTURE IS A PLACE WE MAKE.  
THE CAMPAIGN FOR DREXEL

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To learn more about supporting a scholarship at the College of Medicine, contact Andrea Pesce, assistant vice president of development, at adp77@drexel.edu or 215.432.7934.
Save the Date

MAY 19-22 2022

If you’re a member of the classes of 1972, 1992 or 1997 and you’d like to volunteer to help plan your milestone reunion, contact Nikki Bromberg at nlb67@drexel.edu.