Dean's Update December 2020

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Dear New York Medical College (NYMC) Community:

I hope this message finds you and your families safe and well. This has been an extraordinarily difficult year for all of us, and during this special season it is important to remember to take the time to appreciate the many blessings in our lives and keep those who have experienced loss and hardships this past year in our thoughts and prayers. This year, the holiday season will be different, but we can all now look forward to an end to this pandemic when our lives will start to approach better normality. I wish you and your families a brighter and healthy new year.

NYMC continues to be a sought-after place for students to take their first steps on their path to become physicians. To date, NYMC received over 15,000 applications to the School of Medicine (SOM)—more than a 25 percent increase over last year and the highest number of applicants in the history of the SOM. Interviews are being conducted by the SOM Office of Admissions, which I am pleased to participate in weekly, as we work to build another outstanding class of medical students.

Updates

The searches for new chairs of the Departments of Neurology and Radiation Medicine and the new combined Department of Pathology, Immunology and Microbiology are progressing well. I would like to express my thanks to the search committees, especially committee chairs Kelly A. Hutcheson, M.D., M.B.A., chair and professor of the Department of Ophthalmology, Renee Garrick, M.D., vice dean and professor of clinical medicine in the SOM, and chief medical officer of Westchester Medical Center, as well as Julio A. Panza, M.D., professor of medicine, for their dedication and the hard work they undertook to present us with an excellent slate of candidates for further consideration.

I would also like to congratulate Mill Etienne, M.D.’02, M.P.H., FAAN, FAES, associate dean for student affairs and associate professor of neurology and medicine, on his recent appointment to the college-wide position of vice chancellor for diversity and inclusion. In this new role, Dr. Etienne will work to enhance the diversity of the entire NYMC and Touro College of Dental Medicine (TCDM) community by promoting equity and inclusion in all aspects of teaching, student life, faculty recruitment, clinical practice and research. He will also oversee the Office of Diversity and Inclusivity, continuing to work closely with Ray Whitt, M.D., assistant professor of obstetrics and gynecology, and Yvonne Thornton, M.D., professor emeritus of obstetrics and gynecology, as well as a new assistant to the vice chancellor to be named.

As we continue to expand opportunities for SOM students to develop their clinical skills, I am pleased to share that we have formed academic affiliations with two area multispecialty practices, Westmed Medical Group in Westchester and Refuah Health Center in Rockland County, New York. You can read more about these new affiliates later in the newsletter. We also expect to increase the number of students in certain rotations at NYC Health+ Hospitals/Lincoln.

We have also formed a task force to review coverage of medical imaging in the curriculum. The goal of this effort, which will be chaired by Gregory Almond, M.D., chair of the Department of Emergency Medicine, will be to create a proposal for the curriculum committee with specific objectives, including point of care ultrasound, by March.

Medical student career advising continues to be an important focus in the SOM. Jane Ponterio, M.D.’81, senior associate dean for student affairs and associate professor for obstetrics and gynecology, held an outstanding career advisor planning meeting earlier this month and provides an update on the outstanding resources available to students in this area later in this newsletter.
It has been good news that COVID-19 positivity rates on campus have remained so low. I am pleased to see certain areas of the campus opening up once again, including the SOM student lounge, which is open by reservation for small groups of students, as well as The Café coffee shop and campus store, which is offering pre-packaged meals for takeout.

While this time of year is traditionally a time when we would gather with family and friends in celebration, we must continue to recognize our collective responsibility to take recommended safety precautions as we work to contain the spread of COVID-19 and protect ourselves, our families and the NYMC community. We are all excited about the rollout of two highly effective COVID-19 vaccines with more on the way. We will continue to update you on opportunities to receive these vaccines on campus.

The new NYMC travel policy for employees and students, incorporating New York State Governor Andrew M. Cuomo’s updated testing mandate, is more restrictive. With the spike in cases of COVID-19 in the United States, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has posted updated guidelines for celebrating the holidays safely. We urge the NYMC community to follow these guidelines and the New York State guidelines for travel.

It is my sincere wish that you enjoy a happy and safe holiday season and a healthy new year.

Sincerely yours,

Jerry L. Nadler, M.D., MACP, FAHA, FACE
Dean of the School of Medicine
Professor of Medicine and Pharmacology

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Update on Career Advising

At NYMC, we have a team approach to career advising.

Students are encouraged to visit and utilize the AAMC Careers in Medicine website which has a four-phase approach to career exploration. The website has recently been updated.

The House Advisory Dean system is in place and offers career guidance to all its student members. Coincident with the House Advisory Deans Meeting on December 10, house representatives from each of the M1 to M4 classes were invited to attend a portion of the meeting. In this way, new initiatives and upcoming events can be discussed and real-time feedback gleaned on events held to maximize both student success and satisfaction. The virtual career center housed in LEO, the learning management system for SOM students, is being updated. New specialty advisory pages are being rolled out with more robust and updated information about each of the major specialties.

In addition, a new College-wide platform, Graduway, is in the beta phase. For the SOM, Graduway will match students with SOM alumni mentors in the desired specialty. The Graduway platform will facilitate contact between SOM students and the extensive SOM alumni network of physicians. Preceptorships are being arranged by faculty in the Department of Family and Community Medicine, which will match students with practitioners in the area. Students may then shadow these physicians to learn about their specialty, what office practice is like and if the specialty is a good fit for them.

On December 3, the first meeting of more than 50 career specialty advisors was held on Zoom. The elements of the team approach to career advising were reviewed. In addition, plans were made to add further resources for SOM students. Informational interviews will be conducted with these career specialty advisors covering a wide range of topics about their medical specialty, practice opportunities, opportunities for fellowship sub-specialization, length of training, competitiveness, etc. These interviews will be recorded and available for on-demand viewing.

A series of live Zoom career nights are planned for physicians from three specialties to host an informational session as well as an extensive post-presentation Q & A.

Jane Ponterio, M.D.’81, senior associate dean for student affairs
and associate professor of obstetrics and gynecology
School of Medicine Class of 2024 Marks Start of Journey as Medical Professionals During White Coat Ceremony

The SOM Class of 2024 marked a traditional milestone on their journey to becoming physicians at the White Coat Ceremony on November 29, 2020, when they officially donned their white coats for the first time and swore an oath they had developed as a class, which included a commitment to compassionate patient care and inclusivity. Though the event this year was held mostly virtually, the Office of Student Affairs went above and beyond to inject some normalcy into the event by holding ten separate, small and safe gatherings during the month prior at which students could don their white coats in person and swear their oath as a group. Videos from each gathering were then combined into a virtual collage for the event, where even with their masks on you could see the joy and pride of students as they marked their transition from laypeople to medical professionals. View the video of the White Coat Ceremony.

During all ten gatherings, students received a personal address by SOM Dean Jerry L. Nadler, M.D. “The White Coat Ceremony is very symbolic of the responsibility to the world and opportunity that you uniquely have as future physicians of helping humanity, especially now when the wounds of health disparities and the difficulties many populations face in dealing with the pandemic as well as other diseases on an ongoing basis has been brought to the forefront,” said Dr. Nadler. “Whether you go into research and potentially develop the next vaccine or treatment, into academic medicine, community medicine or private practice, you can make tremendous contributions.”

The White Coat Ceremony was begun in 1993 at Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons by Arnold P. Gold, M.D., professor of clinical neurology and clinical pediatrics, who believed that the existing practice of students taking the Hippocratic Oath at the end of their four years of medical training occurred four years too late and that the oath should instead take place at the start of medical education. NYMC has held white coat ceremonies annually since 2000.

“From a young age, reciting my medical school oath and donning my white coat was something I envisioned as being the key milestone marker of my entrance into medical school and passage hood to becoming a physician. There is an indescribable feeling of physically putting on your white coat, symbolizing a cloak of healing, while reciting extremely powerful words concurrently, promising to yourself and all those around you what you vow to uphold as a physician,” said Elana Rosenthal SOM Class of 2024. Read the full story on White Coat Ceremony.

As a central part of the ceremony, the oath is meant to acknowledge the student’s obligation of caring for the patient. For the last few years, NYMC has allowed each student class the option of developing their oath.

“We had given the Class of 2024 the option to use last year’s oath, however they preferred to create their own oath because it would be more meaningful to them and would also make it easier for them to hold each other accountable to living up to the oath as they go through their four years here at NYMC,” said Mill Etienne, M.D.’02, M.P.H., FAAN, FAES, vice chancellor for diversity and inclusion, SOM associate dean for student affairs and associate professor neurology, who with Ira Bedzow, Ph.D., director of Biomedical Ethics and Humanities Program, UNESCO Chair of Bioethics and associate professor of medicine, guided the students through the process.

To develop the oath, 24 students, representing each house, served on the committee, however everyone in the Class of 2024 had an opportunity to comment and give feedback before the oath was finalized. For members of the Class of 2024, creating the oath proved to be a very meaningful experience.

“It is heartwarming to see so many students voice the shared value of strengthening empathy and humanism in medicine by doing more to incorporate the marginalized and impoverished segments of our society,” said Sania Azhar, SOM Class of 2024. “Many students echoed the importance of building a united front against inequity in medicine to provide altruistic care to every patient.” Read the full story on students’ experience developing the white coat ceremony oath.

Special thanks are extended Jane Ponterio, M.D. ’81, senior associate dean for student affairs, and Jonathan Pessolano, director of student affairs, for their hard work in making this event such a success.

DEAN’S UPDATE
Faculty Promotions

The Office of the SOM Dean wishes to congratulate our faculty who have achieved promotion in rank in their respective departments/disciplines.

**ANESTHESIOLOGY**
Irim Salik, M.D.
Clinical Associate Professor of Anesthesiology
Westchester Medical Center

Garret Weber, M.D.
Clinical Associate Professor of Anesthesiology
Westchester Medical Center

**HEALTH SCIENCES LIBRARY**
Deborah A. Crooke, M.L.I.S., M.P.H.
Assistant Professor of Health Sciences Library
New York Medical College

**MEDICINE**
Ira J. Bedzow, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Medicine
New York Medical College

Marta Christov, M.D., Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Medicine
Westchester Medical Center

Aileen Ferrick, Ph.D., R.N.
Assistant Professor of Medicine
Westchester Medical Center

May M. Rabadi, Ph.D.
Research Assistant Professor of Medicine
New York Medical College

**PATHOLOGY**
Sudhir Jain, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Pathology
New York Medical College

**PEDIATRICS**
Heather L. Brumberg, M.D.
Professor of Pediatrics
Westchester Medical Center

Lila Mae Pereira, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Pediatrics and Psychiatry and Behavioral Medicine
New York Medical College

**PHYSIOLOGY**
Rajamma Mathew M.D.
Research Professor of Pediatrics and Physiology
New York Medical College

Brian Ratliff, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Physiology and Medicine
New York Medical College

**RADIOLOGY**
Shekher Maddineni, M.D.
Clinical Associate Professor of Radiology and Surgery
Westchester Medical Center

Samuel J. McCabe, M.D.
Clinical Associate Professor of Radiology
Westchester Medical Center

**REHABILITATION MEDICINE**
Stephen D. Kornfeld, D.O.
Clinical Assistant Professor of Rehabilitation Medicine
James J. Peters VA Medical Center

Gang Li, M.D.
Clinical Assistant Professor of Rehabilitation Medicine
James J. Peters VA Medical Center

**SURGERY**
Matthew E. Bronstein, M.D.
Clinical Assistant Professor of Surgery
Westchester Medical Center

Ramin Malekan, M.D.
Clinical Associate Professor of Surgery
Westchester Medical Center

Kartik Prabhakaran, M.D.
Clinical Associate Professor of Surgery
Westchester Medical Center

**TENURE**
Peter Rhee, M.D.  Professor of Surgery with Tenure
Neil W. Schulger, M.D., Professor of Medicine with Tenure

**EMERITI**
Nora Bergasa, M.D., Professor of Medicine
Arthur Cooper, Ph.D., D.Sc., Professor of Pharmacology
Alberto Nasjletti, M.D.  Professor of Pharmacology
Matthew Pravetz, O.F.M., Ph.D., Professor of Cell Biology and Anatomy
Gary Williams, M.D., Professor of Pathology
DEAN’S UPDATE

SOM Forms Affiliations with Westmed Medical Group and Refuah Health Center

Continuing to expand opportunities for students to develop their clinical skills, NYMC has formed academic affiliations with Westmed Medical Group in Westchester and with Refuah Health Center in Rockland County, New York, designating both as teaching sites for the training and education of undergraduate medical students. “At NYMC, we take pride in our robust network of affiliated hospitals and ambulatory care sites that offer our students an outstanding range of educational opportunities to further develop their clinical skills. These new partnerships reflect a continual enhancement to the clinical learning environment for our students,” said SOM Dean Jerry L. Nadler, M.D. “We look forward to working with the leadership and faculty at Westmed and Refuah Health Center as we embark on this endeavor that we are confident will be mutually beneficial for years to come. I would like to extend special thanks to Martin Katzenstein, M.D. ’78, associate professor of pediatrics and chair of the Board of Advisors, who played an integral role in securing both of these new affiliates.”

The affiliation with Westmed establishes elective rotations in pediatrics, neurology, rheumatology, gastroenterology, cardiology, radiology and obstetrics and gynecology. Westmed is a multispecialty practice, offering more than 60 medical specialties and sub-specialties across 13 locations in Westchester County, New York, and Fairfield County, Connecticut.

The agreement with Refuah Health Center establishes a core clerkship in family medicine. Refuah Health Center uses a patient-centered medical home model in which each patient’s care is overseen by a clinician-led care team that coordinates treatment across multiple specialties at four sites in the lower Hudson Valley as well as in South Fallsburg in upstate New York, and through its mobile medical van program. Read the full story on new academic affiliations.

New Programs in Nutrition and Culinary Medicine Generate Great Interest

This fall, the SOM, in partnership with Health Meets Food, is developing new programs related to nutrition and culinary medicine, which have already generated great interest among students from across the NYMC community. Culinary medicine is a new evidence-based field that unifies the science of nutrition and metabolism with practical, patient-based, decision-making and physician counseling. The Health Meets Food program provides online educational modules and hands-on culinary training and lifestyle lessons to help health care professionals understand and communicate the impact of good nutrition on their patients’ health.

“This partnership will provide new core educational and elective opportunities to expand our focus on this critical aspect of person-centered health care,” says Jennifer L. Koestler, M.D., senior associate dean for medical education and associate professor of pediatrics and medicine. “Through the integration of nutrition and culinary skills within the medical curriculum, we hope to increase the number of future physicians who have an understanding, appreciation and the necessary skill development in applied nutrition and lifestyle management.”

“As a medical student with a background in clinical nutrition who advocates for health education and proactive care, I believe that one of the most beneficial prescriptions a physician can give patients for prevention and longevity is diet,” says Jessica Rosen, SOM Class of 2024, who along with SOM Dean Jerry L. Nadler, M.D., was instrumental in bringing the new program to NYMC and serves as president of the Culinary Medicine Interest Group. “As medical students, we can learn differential diagnoses and about the plethora of diseases and their causes, however, illness does not happen outside the context of human response. One of these human responses is the lifestyle one chooses to lead and the diet one chooses to engage in.” Read the full story on the new programs.

Faculty in the News

The notable achievements and experience of the NYMC faculty in the health sciences is well recognized. Therefore, their expertise is often sought by the media. This is just a small sampling of faculty recently featured in the news.

William H. Frishman, M.D., chair emeritus of the Department of Medicine and professor of medicine, on the most important qualities for a good doctor – The American Journal of Medicine, November 11, 2020

Anna Rozenshtein, M.D., M.P.H., associate professor of radiology, on medical students taking the match into their own hands – Diagnostic Imaging, October 13, 2020
Fourth-Year Student Receives AMSNY Diversity in Medicine Scholarship

Sheba Ebhote, SOM Class of 2021, is one of ten students state-wide to receive the 2020-2021 Associated Medical Schools of New York (AMSNY) Diversity in Medicine Scholarship, funded by the New York State Department of Health. The scholarships are designed to increase the number of physicians working in underserved communities, while addressing financial barriers for medical students from underrepresented backgrounds. The scholarship is available to those students who have completed an AMSNY post-baccalaureate program and who commit to work in an underserved area in New York upon completion of their medical education.

Before completing the AMSNY post-baccalaureate program at NYMC in 2017, Ms. Ebhote traveled to Honduras and Panama on several medical mission trips.

“My medical mission trips were very important in helping me to develop my leadership skills. I was on the executive board of Global Medical Brigades all four years of my undergraduate college, first as business outreach and then as secretary, and worked to recruit volunteers, doctors and raise funds for medications for the medical mission trips. This was one of my first experiences seeing how high-volume clinics are managed and maintained. Although I am grateful for the experience, I now see that many of the same chronic diseases I saw abroad, such as diabetes, hypertension and kidney disease, are also still represented in underserved communities here in the United States. Thus, my career goals have evolved during medical school to include caring for the most vulnerable communities in NYC.”

Ms. Ebhote plans to work as a primary care physician in Brooklyn, where many Afro-Caribbean areas have a high prevalence of chronic diseases. She also hopes to go on to obtain her master’s in public health with a concentration in health policy, and become a leader and an advocate who will impact research, funding and health policies among these underserved communities.

Faculty Publications and Updates

NYMC faculty are notable scholars and researchers who are recognized for their accomplishments and published in leading journals across a wide range of health science disciplines. This listing represents just a small sample.

Padmini Murthy, M.D., M.P.H., M.S., M.Phil., CHES, FRSPH, clinical assistant professor of family and community medicine in the SOM; and professor and global health director in the Department of Public Health, Division of Health Policy and Management, in the School of Health Sciences and Practice (SHSP), was selected as the American Medical Women’s Association (AMWA) 2021 recipient of the Bertha Van Hoosen Award, named in honor of the founder and first president of AMWA.

Shetal Shah, M.D., professor of pediatrics, was awarded the 2020 American Academy of Pediatrics Local Hero Award.

Amy Ansehl, M.D., assistant professor of family and community medicine and associate dean for student experience in the SHSP, and Padmini Murthy, M.D., M.P.H., M.S., M.Phil., CHES, FRSPH, clinical assistant professor of family and community medicine in the SOM; and professor and global health director in the Department of Public Health, Division of Health Policy and Management, in the SHSP, have published the book Technology and Global Public Health.


Charles S. Pavia, Ph.D., adjunct associate professor of medicine, published “Clinical implications of nicotine as an antimicrobial agent and immune modulator” in Biomedicine & Pharmacotherapy.


See full list of recent Faculty Publications.
Welcome to our new faculty from across our affiliate sites.

**Appointments** (January 1, 2020 through December 8, 2020)

- **Reena Agarwal, M.D., M.P.H.**  
  Clinical Assistant Professor of Medicine  
  Westchester Medical Center

- **Sanket Agarwal, M.B.B.S.**  
  Clinical Assistant Professor of Medicine  
  NYC Health+Hospitals/Metropolitan

- **Ruth E. Alejandro, M.D.**  
  Clinical Assistant Professor of Rehabilitation Medicine  
  NYC Health+Hospitals/Metropolitan

- **Kevin Donnelly, M.D.**  
  Clinical Assistant Professor of Anesthesiology  
  Westchester Medical Center

- **Igor Elman, D.O.**  
  Clinical Assistant Professor of Medicine

- **Kareem M. Eltaki, M.D.**  
  Clinical Assistant Professor of Anesthesiology  
  Good Samaritan Hospital

- **Ma. Carla Angela H. Evangelista, M.D.**  
  Clinical Assistant Professor of Medicine  
  NYC Health+Hospitals/Lincoln

- **James B. Fesko, M.D.**  
  Clinical Assistant Professor of Rehabilitation Medicine  
  James J. Peters VA Medical Center

- **Andrew A. Fulvini, Ph.D.**  
  Research Assistant Professor of Microbiology and Immunology  
  New York Medical College

- **Sweta Goel, M.D.**  
  Clinical Assistant Professor of Neurology  
  Good Samaritan Hospital

- **William A. Gomes, M.D., Ph.D.**  
  Associate Professor of Radiology  
  Westchester Medical Center

- **William M. Goumas, M.D.**  
  Clinical Assistant Professor of Surgery  
  Good Samaritan Hospital

- **Catherine A. Gruffi, M.D.**  
  Clinical Assistant Professor of Anesthesiology  
  Westchester Medical Center

- **Arie Gunarso, M.D.**  
  Clinical Assistant Professor of Medicine  
  NYC Health+Hospitals/Metropolitan

- **Ansab Abbas Haider, M.B.B.S.**  
  Instructor of Surgery  
  Westchester Medical Center

- **Louis I. Heller, M.D.**  
  Clinical Assistant Professor of Medicine  
  Westchester Medical Center

- **Andrew C. Bushnell, M.D.**  
  Clinical Assistant Professor of Emergency Medicine  
  Rome Memorial Hospital

- **Maria Castaldi, M.D.**  
  Clinical Professor of Surgery  
  Westchester Medical Center

- **Nidal A. Isber, M.D.**  
  Clinical Assistant Professor of Orthopaedic Surgery  
  Richmond University Medical Center

- **Rajkumar Jeganathan, M.D.**  
  Clinical Assistant Professor of Surgery  
  Good Samaritan Hospital

- **Gurmeen Kaur, M.B.B.S.**  
  Assistant Professor of Neurology and Neurosurgery  
  Westchester Medical Center

- **Elizabeth Ann Cody, M.D.**  
  Instructor of Orthopaedic Surgery  
  New York Medical College

- **Donelle L. Cummings, M.D.**  
  Clinical Assistant Professor of Medicine  
  NYC Health+Hospitals/Metropolitan

- **Nicole E. Delgado-Salisbury, Ed.D.**  
  Assistant Professor of Family and Community Medicine  
  Saint Joseph’s Medical Center, Yonkers

- **Azfar Chak, M.D.**  
  Clinical Assistant Professor of Medicine  
  Good Samaritan Hospital

- **Kar-Mei Chan, M.D.**  
  Clinical Assistant Professor of Anesthesiology  
  Westchester Medical Center

- **Vasu Chirumamilla, M.D.**  
  Instructor of Surgery  
  Westchester Medical Center

- **Robin Hershkowitz, M.S.W.**  
  Clinical Assistant Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences  
  Westchester Medical Center

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  Clinical Assistant Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences  
  Westchester Medical Center

- **Reena Agarwal, M.D., M.P.H.**  
  Clinical Assistant Professor of Medicine  
  Westchester Medical Center
Michael Kim, M.D.
Instructor of Neurosurgery
Westchester Medical Center

Joshua R. Klein, D.O.
Clinical Assistant Professor of Surgery
Westchester Medical Center

Nigel Knox, M.D.
Clinical Assistant Professor of Anesthesiology
Westchester Medical Center

Albert Hyukjae Kwon, M.D.
Assistant Professor of Anesthesiology
Westchester Medical Center

Lindsey R. LaPointe, M.D.
Clinical Assistant Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology
Westchester Medical Center

Kyu-In Lee, M.D.
Clinical Assistant Professor of Medicine
Westchester Medical Center

Peter W. Lementowski, M.D.
Clinical Assistant Professor of Orthopaedic Surgery
Westchester Medical Center

Teresa M. Lemma, M.D.
Assistant Professor of Pediatrics
Richmond University Medical Center

Lea DeFrancisci Lis, M.D.
Clinical Assistant Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences
NYC Health+Hospitals/Metropolitan

Winson Lo, M.D.
Clinical Assistant Professor of Medicine
Good Samaritan Hospital

Sadaf R. Lodhi, D.O.
Clinical Assistant Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology
Westchester Medical Center

Andrew J. Loftus, M.D.
Clinical Assistant Professor of Emergency Medicine
NYC Health+Hospitals/Lincoln

Mara M. Lugassy, M.D.
Clinical Assistant Professor of Medicine
Westchester Medical Center

Uchenna Madubuko, M.D., M.P.H.
Clinical Assistant Professor of Anesthesiology
Westchester Medical Center

Michael T. Mantello, M.D.
Clinical Assistant Professor of Radiology
Richmond University Medical Center

Shoshana Marmon, M.D., Ph.D.
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