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## Dean's Update, Spring 2020

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Dear New York Medical College Community:

Last year, when I was interviewing for the position of dean of the School of Medicine (SOM), I recall hearing one common theme—the tremendous humanism, resiliency and compassion that was a consistent trait among the students of New York Medical College (NYMC) SOM. That was one of the primary motivations that drew me to leave Virginia and return to New York to become the new SOM dean; for beyond what you learn from a formal curriculum, humanism and compassion is what makes a true healer.

Since arriving at NYMC, there have been many occasions when I have been proud of the wonderful accomplishments and actions of our SOM students, but never more so than by their actions over these last few weeks. Our students have shown themselves to be true healers through the tremendous effort they have put forth in support of the community in this time of great need, despite it also being a time of great uncertainty for them personally.

Rather than distance themselves, hundreds of our students instead stepped forward, organizing their peers and taking on volunteer roles at four of our major NYMC affiliate hospitals – Westchester Medical Center (WMC), Good Samaritan Hospital, Greenwich Hospital and NYC Health + Hospitals/Metropolitan – as well as delivering food, and setting up childcare and dog walking services for faculty at the front line of the pandemic. To learn more about our students' outstanding efforts, please read [NYMC Students Support their Brethren in Health Care](#) and [GHHS Supports Student Volunteer Efforts Amidst Pandemic](#).

The efforts underway to help slow the spread of COVID-19 are unprecedented in our lifetimes. When for the safety of our students, faculty and staff, we stopped in-person teaching and direct student patient contact, our faculty and technology staff also stepped up. They have done an outstanding job of creating virtual courses for all four years in very little time, so that we could maintain as much continuity as possible for our students.

Our school has also stepped up, employing the wealth of experience of our medical school faculty to move forward with valuable research in the treatment of COVID-19. Salomon Amar, D.D.S., Ph.D., vice president for research and professor of pharmacology and microbiology and immunology, Lawrence DeLorenzo, M.D., professor of medicine, Alison Lennox, M.D., clinical assistant professor of medicine, and Donald Chen, M.D., assistant professor of medicine, are working on a clinical trial to test the efficacy of a drug to treat COVID-19, in conjunction with our health care partner at WMC and pharmaceutical company Regeneron. Albert Kwon, M.D., assistant professor of anesthesiology, is serving as the clinical co-lead on a project to develop an alternate form of ventilation, which could help to address the shortage of ventilators being experienced.

As government and health care officials work to address this crisis, there are certainly many ethical issues that arise, particularly in the area of how to morally allocate limited resources. I am pleased to share with you an excellent op-ed that addresses this very

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issue, written by Ira Bedzow, Ph.D., associate professor of medicine and director of Biomedical Ethics and Humanities Program and the UNESCO Chair in Bioethics, and Lila Kagedan, M.Ed., instructional designer, director of Global Population Health Area of Concentration and assistant director of Biomedical Ethics and Humanities Program, which was published by CNN – [The Ethical Minefield of Prioritizing Health Care for Some with COVID-19](#).

I look forward to sharing more information about the important work with which the SOM faculty are involved. I applaud our students, faculty and staff for their actions, which is something to be celebrated, as is the resiliency of our SOM community, at a time when having cause for celebration is so very vital. In this update, I share some additional reasons to celebrate.

In closing, I would like to take a moment to thank the entire SOM community for their patience, commitment and flexibility as we strive to continue to deliver quality education to our students, while we personally cope with stress and uncertainty in the face of this rapidly changing health crisis. I want to particularly acknowledge our course and clerkships directors and the educational and information technology staff for their hard work to move our curriculum to an online platform so quickly. [View a list of those individuals here](#). I would also like to thank Marisa Montecalvo, M.D., medical director, NYMC Health Services, for all she is doing to keep our students safe and healthy and Lori Solomon, M.D., chair of the Department of Family and Community Medicine, for keeping the Family Health Center open during this critical time.

I hope your reading of this positive news happening here serves to inspire you and further strengthen your commitment to and efforts on behalf of this community. Together, we will get through this crisis and be stronger for it. NYMC is a resilient and caring community and I am pleased you are all a part of it. I am very proud to be the dean of the SOM.

It is my hope that you all remain safe and healthy. I wish you a happy Passover and happy Easter.

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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## Class of 2020 Celebrates Match Day Virtually

For the members of the Class of 2020, four years of rigorous study culminated on Match Day, when they learned where they were matched to medical residency programs — and will begin their careers as physicians.

We are very proud of the quality and breadth of the residencies that our medical students have secured, which includes placements at NYMC's major local partner hospitals, as well as nationally leading teaching hospitals across the country. This year, more than 200 NYMC seniors were matched to residency programs at 104 different institutions in 24 states across the U.S and in Canada, with nearly half pursuing a career in primary care. The top career choices are in internal medicine, pediatrics, emergency medicine, anesthesiology, general surgery, family medicine, radiology, orthopedics and obstetrics and gynecology.

To learn more about Match Day 2020 at NYMC, I encourage you to read the [Match Day story](#) and view the [Class of 2020 Match Results](#), as well as this [wonderful video compilation of Match Day reactions](#), put together by Kyle Flatterly, SOM Class of 2020.



# DEAN'S UPDATE

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## New Chairs Welcomed

We are pleased to welcome new chairs in the departments of Rehabilitation Medicine, Neurosurgery and of Medicine. During their long careers, each of our new chairs have distinguished themselves as clinicians, researchers and educators, and I am confident they will serve as excellent role models to our students and be great assets to NYMC.



**Paul Diamond, M.D.**, is our new Catherine and Vladislav P. Hinterbuchner Professor and Chair of Rehabilitation Medicine and director of rehabilitation medicine at NYC Health + Hospitals/Metropolitan. Dr. Diamond brings a wealth of experience to his new position, having most recently served as director of neurorehabilitation and associate professor in the Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation with the University of Virginia Health System, which he joined in 1992. [Read more about Dr. Diamond.](#)



**Chirag D. Gandhi, M.D.**, has been named chair of neurosurgery and director of neurovascular surgery at WMC. As one of the few dual-trained neurosurgeons in the country, Dr. Gandhi has expertise in both cerebrovascular surgery and minimally invasive endovascular neurosurgery. Also a professor of neurosurgery, neurology and radiology, he joined NYMC in 2017 and most recently served as vice chair of neurosurgery. Previously, he was interim chair of the Department of Neurosurgery at Rutgers New Jersey Medical School. [Read more about Dr. Gandhi.](#)



**Neil W. Schluger, M.D.**, will join us in July as our new Barbara and William Rosenthal Chair of the Department of Medicine and director of medicine at WMC. Since 2004, Dr. Schluger has served as chief of the division of pulmonary, allergy and critical care medicine at Columbia University Irving Medical Center. Most recently, he served as professor of medicine, epidemiology and environmental health sciences and as director of the Population and Global Health Track for the Scholars Projects Program and co-director of the Programs in Education and Global and Population Health for the Vagelos College of Physicians and Surgeons at Columbia University. [Read more about Dr. Schluger.](#)

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## NYMC to Participate in AAMC Pilot Survey

Ensuring that our students are well prepared to independently practice medicine during their residencies is of the utmost importance. Therefore, we are pleased that NYMC will be included in the pilot testing of a new survey tool being developed by the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC). The pilot survey, which will be conducted during the 2020-2021 academic year, will provide a standardized way to collect information from residency program directors about resident readiness, with the objective of increasing response rates and providing more consistent outcomes data on how well a resident performs in the first year of residency.

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## Commencement

As we have already acknowledged, the uncertainties involving the weeks ahead will force us to hold Commencement, the Hooding and Awards Ceremony and Military Pinning Ceremony as virtual events. While we recognize that this is disappointing, the safety and security of our students, faculty and staff remain a top priority. However, as our virtual Match Day celebration demonstrated, though we will mark these major milestones differently, they are no less joyous for our students. More details on plans for these events will be shared soon.