



Winter 2024

CAMPUS QUARTERLY

MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN



Our school continues to branch out and make a difference—not just within our four walls but in New Jersey’s communities and beyond. We hosted the regional Student National Medical Association (SNMA) conference for the first time, and some of our faculty and students published groundbreaking research in the last few months. The future is indeed looking bright here at HMSOM.

Dr. Jeffrey Boscamp
President and Dean

HMSOM NEWS

HMSOM Hosts SNMA Region IX Conference

“Breaking Barriers and Empowering Change” was the theme of the Student National Medical Association (SNMA) Region IX Regional Medical Education Conference (RMEC) 2023, held on Dec. 2-3, 2023.

The conference lived up to its name. Drawing about 300 medical students, pre-med candidates, doctors and even promising high schoolers to the Hackensack Meridian School of Medicine (HMSOM) campus, the crowd learned how best to make a positive impact by creating a diverse health care workforce in the 21st century.

“This was an excellent conference, and it showed how committed we are to diversity, equity and inclusion,” said Jeffrey Boscamp, M.D., president and dean of HMSOM.

“We are continuing to make headway in attracting attention from diverse candidates, including those traditionally underrepresented in medicine,” added David Kountz, M.D., MBA, MACP, the senior associate dean of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, and chief academic officer and Vice President for Academic Diversity for Hackensack Meridian *Health*. “This is a historical necessity.”

The first day of the conference was split into three “tracks”: a general health track, a pre-med track, and a medical student track. The talks and panels offered a full range of experiences, including how to choose a medical school, what the recent affirmative action decisions by the U.S. Supreme Court mean for medical school admissions, testing prep, insights about residencies, time management, preparing for Match Day, and many other topics that impact doctors-in-training.

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The keynote speaker was Antona Oladipo, M.D., FSCI, FACOG, obstetrician-gynecologist at Hackensack University Medical Center, and assistant professor of maternal-fetal medicine and surgery and co-director of “The Developing Human” course at HMSOM.

The following day featured an afternoon Community Service Event at Eva’s Village in Paterson. The health fair included free COVID-19 vaccines, blood pressure readings, and activities.

“This event marks a significant moment as it is the first time in several years that we have the pleasure of gathering in person,” said Latia Skerving, the Region IX director, chair of the RMEC planning committee, and a fourth-year medical student at State University of New York (SUNY)-Downstate. “We extend our sincere gratitude to HMSOM for graciously hosting and providing us with the space to convene.”

The SNMA, according to their website, “is committed to supporting current and future underrepresented minority medical students, addressing the needs of underserved communities, and increasing the number of clinically excellent, culturally competent and socially conscious physicians.”

HMSOM Faculty Publish Study Describing Novel Curriculum

Medical students are presented with a case on Monday. During the course of the ensuing week, they learn, discuss, and discover the patient’s presentation, symptoms, condition, and treatment –culminating with an integrated understanding of the patient, the illness, and the underlying sciences on Friday. The students not only learn from the faculty - they learn from each other and from sources across the breadth of the medical literature.

The Patient-Presentation Problem-Based Learning Curriculum (PPPC) is a foundation of the Hackensack Meridian School of Medicine (HMSOM) curriculum



- and a novel, team-based way of teaching. The faculty who developed it [have now published a paper in the journal *Medical Teacher*](#) to explain how and why it works - and also how it might successfully improve medical education far beyond the Nutley campus of the school, opened in 2018.

The article “Expanding the scope of problem-based learning at Hackensack Meridian School of Medicine integrating domain-general skills with domain-specific content,” was authored by five HMSOM faculty members: Miriam Hoffman, M.D., vice dean of academic affairs; Tovah Tripp, M.D., FACP, director of PPPC; Ofelia Martinez, M.D., MPH, assistant dean of medical education; and librarians Christopher Duffy, MLIS, and Peggy Dreker, MPA, MLS.

Each week of the pre-clerkship curriculum is framed with a weekly patient case and provides the clinical scaffolding for everything learned that week, according to the paper. It allows the students to integrate and apply material from the basic sciences, clinical sciences, and health systems science, and builds their skills in clinical reasoning, information gathering, and team collaboration as the work progresses through the week. The curriculum is primarily student-driven, culminating in students working together to integrate what they have learned throughout the week and applying it to the patient case.

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SAVE
THE
DATE



Hackensack Meridian
School of Medicine

HMSOM
MEDICAL
EDUCATION
WEEK

MAY 13 - 17, 2024

123 METRO BOULEVARD, NUTLEY, NJ 07110





Hackensack Meridian
School of Medicine

The Office of Research and Graduate Studies
Hackensack Meridian *Health* Research Institute
Hackensack Meridian *Health* Foundations

SAVE THE DATE!

3RD ANNUAL

Medical Student Research Day

An In-person Event

MAY 3, 2024

12:30 - 4:00 PM
IHS Campus

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Lewis C. Cantley, PhD

Harvard University, Division of Medical Sciences

Followed by student oral presentations & poster presentations. Lunch will be provided.



Hannah I. Lipman, M.D., MS, HEC-C



\$3 Million Gift to Endow Bioethics Chair

The Hackensack Meridian Health Foundation held an investiture ceremony for Hannah I. Lipman, M.D., MS, HEC-C, vice president of Bioethics at Hackensack Meridian *Health* and a professor in the Department of Internal Medicine at Hackensack Meridian School of Medicine. The endowed chair is thanks to a \$3 million gift from Kalmon D. Post, M.D., to create the Linda Farber Post Chair in Bioethics at Hackensack Meridian School of Medicine in honor of his wife, Linda Farber Post, BSN, MA, JD. This is the first endowed chair funded by Dr. Post and will support the work of Dr. Lipman.

“The creation of this chair, made possible by Dr. and Mrs. Post’s gift, will ensure that our students gain a keen understanding of bioethics as an integral part of health care delivery and teach our students to consider the human side of medicine, including the social, psychological, moral, cultural and ethical issues in the care of patients that grow more challenging every year,” said Robert C. Garrett, FACHE, CEO, Hackensack Meridian *Health*. “Dr. Lipman’s visionary leadership has been exceptional in the field of bioethics, both at Hackensack Meridian *Health* and throughout her remarkable career, and we are so pleased that she is our inaugural recipient.”

“I am deeply grateful for Dr. Post’s kindness in making this most generous gift in honor of his wife, Linda Farber Post, to establish the Linda Farber

Post Chair in Bioethics,” said Joyce P. Hendricks, president and chief development officer, Hackensack Meridian *Health* Foundation. “This incredible gift not only pays tribute to a wonderful individual, but will forever bestow a distinction that will resonate with its recipients, like the remarkable Dr. Hannah Lipman, for years to come. Thank you, Dr. Post, and congratulations to Dr. Lipman on being the first recipient of the Linda Farber Post Chair in Bioethics!”

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HMSOM Researchers: Data Shows Clinical Trials Becoming More Inclusive

Clinical trials and medical research have been historically lacking in diversity among all groups.

But recent trends have been turning the tide at least somewhat toward equity and inclusivity, according to a new meta-analysis published by a team of investigators from Hackensack Meridian School of Medicine (HMSOM), the Hackensack Meridian *Health* Research Institute (HMHRI), and three HMSOM students.

The meta-analysis of clinical trials, which included New Jersey patients from 2017 to 2022, shows more diverse representation - and better reporting of race and ethnicity factors, [according to the new paper in the Elsevier journal *Global Epidemiology*](#).

“The past five years have seen an overall uptick in the equity of race/ethnicity reporting and inclusivity of clinical trials, as compared to previously reported data, presaging the potential acquisition of ever more powerful and meaningful results of such intervention studies going forward,” write the authors.

The team used the Clinicaltrials.gov registry to identify nearly 500 clinical trials that took place at least in part in New Jersey.

Of this group of trials, greater than 97 percent reported on race and/or ethnicity of the enrollees, according to the findings. The participation in the trials assessed collectively still showed a majority of 76.7 percent White participants, but the Black participants made up about 14.1 percent of the enrollees, which is slightly higher than the 2020 U.S. Census percentage figure (which was used as a reference standard.)

The proportion of participants of Asian and Hispanic descent, however, was slightly lower than the corresponding Census figures.

Thus, more inclusivity work needs to be done, according to the authors.

“Our five-year snapshot reveals that most trials report on race/ethnicity - and inclusivity is improving,” the authors conclude. “While there is still some way to go to have the demographic numbers in these trials match U.S. Census values, our results suggest that recent efforts are having an effect.”



Hackensack Meridian *Health* Foundation Receives Grant from Bank of America to Support the Human Dimension Program at Hackensack Meridian School of Medicine

Funding to advance health equity in Paterson, New Jersey, and educate the next generation of health care professionals by leveraging partnerships with community-based organizations.

Hackensack Meridian *Health* Foundation is pleased to announce the receipt of a generous \$100,000 grant from Bank of America aimed at advancing health equity in Paterson, NJ, and supporting the education of the next generation of physicians participating in the Human Dimension program at Hackensack Meridian School of Medicine (HMSOM).

“We are truly grateful for Bank of America’s generous grant, which will foster the next generation of compassionate physicians and empower them to make substantial strides in advancing health equity in Paterson,” said Joyce P. Hendricks, president and chief development officer, Hackensack Meridian *Health* Foundation. “Hackensack Meridian *Health* is the largest, most comprehensive health system in New Jersey, and we are committed to improving the health and well-being of all of our residents in this great state. Philanthropic support from our

corporate partners, like Bank of America, allow us to make a significant impact in the communities our medical students serve.”

Opened in 2018, HMSOM’s unique curriculum fosters teamwork and a humanistic focus on community wellness through its Human Dimension program. The school integrates the biomedical, behavioral, social and health systems sciences in the context of the patients and communities, with a focus on underserved cities across New Jersey, such as Paterson.

“Our Human Dimension program at Hackensack Meridian School of Medicine teaches our students how to be compassionate doctors, capable of integrating the social determinants of health into their practice to achieve health equity with a focus on prevention as well as curing illness,” said Jeffrey Boscamp, M.D., president and dean, HMSOM. “Moreover, this humanistic approach during their medical education provides our students with a critical first step in understanding the professional culture of health care - and how resilience and empathy can strengthen it. We are so pleased to have Bank of America’s support and know that their generosity will help shape our physicians of tomorrow.”





Ashley Bonney

Voices of HMSOM: Bonney Always Knew Medicine Called

In Ashley Bonney’s earliest memories, there were always doctors, hospitals - even surgeries - on the family calendar.

Her little sister, six years younger, was born without a small bowel. The first four to five years of her sister’s life were watched carefully, under constant care. Bonney spent more than a few holidays in hospitals, as her sister underwent a liver transplant, and other unique procedures.

Through it all, Bonney saw how good the surgeons were at fixing a child’s life-threatening problems—and gracefully answering questions from the family.

“We spent a significant amount of time in the hospital as a family,” Bonney recalled. “Two of the surgeons, in particular, became near and dear to us.”

That’s why Bonney, now a fourth-year medical student at the Hackensack Meridian School of Medicine (HMSOM) who is poised to graduate in the spring, aspired to become one of those medical heroes working so doggedly for their patient. Now Bonney is at its cusp.

“Ashley Bonney will make a terrific doctor, considering all of her accomplishments,” said Jeffrey Boscamp, M.D., the president and dean of HMSOM.



FEATURED FACES

MEDICINE IN INTERESTING TIMES

Bonney grew up in Maryland and excelled academically. She received her Bachelor of Science degree in Biomedical Sciences from the Rochester Institute of Technology in 2018. For a stint afterward, she worked in health care—including a role as a chief scribe for an orthopedist, and a job as a patient-care coordinator at an ophthalmology office.

Her experiences convinced her to pursue her long-term dream of being a doctor. The philosophy of HMSOM resonated with her early on, and it ended up being a perfect fit.

“The mission and vision of the school was very important to me—and it continues to be,” she said. “This institution was the only one to address inequities directly, it seemed. The Human Dimension is very active out in the community, for instance.”

COVID presented challenges for direct outreach, of course. Bonney and the rest of the 2020 cohort started all their studies virtually—not at all what she and other patient-focused clinicians-to-be had anticipated. But the pandemic also presented a unique set of circumstances that made her a better doctor, according to Bonney. Her very first direct patient experience during medical school was administering the SARS-CoV-2 vaccine at the State of New Jersey-run “mega-site” at the Meadowlands. She and other medical students thus took part in the effort to turn the tide on a once-in-a-century health crisis.

“It was a great time to go to medical school - it

enriched everything I did,” she said. “And when we finally did get back to in-person, I said, ‘I’m going to be the first person back in the classroom.’”

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Munifa King

Voices of HMSOM: King Bringing Equity to Family Medicine

Ever since she was a little girl growing up in the Caribbean, Munifa King lived—and breathed—the importance of medicine. With severe childhood asthma, the occasional attack that required a trip to the doctor was really a full excursion for her and her family in Trinidad and Tobago.

“It was basically a whole-day event,” recalled King recently. “But after I went, I would feel better, every time. That was my earliest introduction to medicine—and it inspired me to become a physician.”

But her inclinations toward a life of healing were also prompted by the experience of others: even in her earliest years, she would always tell her mother that she would become a doctor and help her mother with her ailments.

King is a fourth-year medical student at the Hackensack Meridian School of Medicine (HMSOM) and is well on her way to receiving her MPH degree from Thomas Jefferson University through a partnership program between the two institutions. She is poised to graduate in the spring with both an

MD and an MPH, and is aiming for a residency in family medicine. She intends not only to have a direct hand in healing—but also to improve medicine’s capacity to make everybody better through advocacy. She’s already won awards for her outreach and acumen, and she is ready to make a difference.

“I want to practice medicine, I want to care for my community,” she said recently, in an interview.

“Munifa King is a standout student, and we are so proud she is implementing so much of the mission and vision of our school,” said Jeffrey Boscamp, M.D., president and dean of the medical school.

VISION

King came to New York City with her mother for better opportunities when she was in the sixth grade. Her mother cooked and cleaned for a living, working in a Brooklyn school for some years before a major spinal injury left her unable to work. Neither of her parents finished high school, but the importance of an education was always paramount at home.

“My mother made a lot of sacrifices for my sister and I, and for our family,” recalled King. “She’s always been really supportive of my education, and made sure I used the resources she wasn’t fortunate to have growing up in the Caribbean herself.

“We didn’t have much,” she continued. “My mom didn’t go to school, or have a high-paying job. But we were always imbued with values to work hard, and that education can make a difference in your life.”

She pursued her undergraduate degree in Health Science at Stony Brook University as an Educational Opportunity Program student and graduated with honors. From there, she discovered vital pipeline programs like NERA Medprep, which amounted to about three summers of “academic enrichment exposures” that got her involved in shadowing and clinical research, including at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, the Hospital for Special

Surgery, and the Stony Brook University Hospital Emergency Room. Those experiences provided her with the context she needed to confidently take the plunge into the full pursuit of a medical degree.

“It was so essential, to tie all those experiences together,” she said. “If I didn’t have that mentorship, and those opportunities to apply to pipeline programs, I wouldn’t be here today.”



IMPLEMENTING A MISSION

Applying to medical schools brought her into contact with many; HMSOM stood out for her, based on what it stands for.

“I wanted to be at a place that cared about the community and that cared about training doctors who care about the community and want to make a difference,” she said.

Upon starting, she thought she would be a pediatrician. But from the first panel of visiting doctors in the very first week at school, continuing throughout her rotations and her work in the Human Dimension program, family medicine quickly became her path. All rotations had their draw and their allure; but family medicine seemed to tie it all together for what she wants to do professionally.

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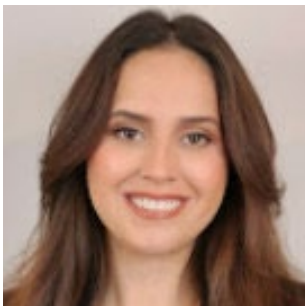
HMSOM UPDATES

New Hires, New Roles



Andrea Arroyo, community liaison, brings 18 years of experience working with youth and adults with special needs, including providing Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) in school settings and homes and providing

job coaching services. She is pursuing a B.A. in Psychology and is looking forward to expanding the population she works with. She enjoys baking, cooking, crafting and watching TV. She looks forward to being a part of the HMH team.



Shege Cira, community liaison, earned a B.S. in Public Health from Montclair State University and holds a Bachelor of Public Health degree from Albania's University of Medicine. She has experience with

community outreach and public health in Albania, including working for the National Association of Public Health and providing health education to the Albanian Roma community on HIV/AIDS and TB. Among her hobbies are reading, baking and trying new recipes. She is excited to embark on her new journey and looks forward to meeting you all.



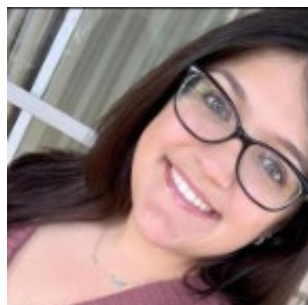
Bhupal P. Bhetwal, MS, PhD, has joined the department of Medical Sciences as an Associate Professor. He holds a Master of Science in Medical Physiology from the B. P. Koirala Institute of Health Sciences, Nepal,

and Ph.D. in Cellular and Molecular Physiology and Pharmacology from the University of Nevada School of Medicine (UNSOM). Dr. Bhetwal was awarded a two-year American Heart Association fellowship and has published 13 original research papers in the field of smooth muscle contraction and the role of contractile proteins in human breast cancer cell survival. Dr. Bhetwal has served in the American Physiological Society and as president of the Indiana Physiological Society. Dr. Bhetwal served on the Physiology faculty of Marian University College of Osteopathic Medicine where he played a crucial role in establishing the Master in Biomedical Sciences program. Dr. Bhetwal lives in Livingston with his wife, their two young children, a golden retriever and a turtle. He enjoys playing soccer and fishing with his children.



Sarah Kokkinakis, MA, joined the Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment team on January 8, 2024. Sarah earned her B.S. in Astronomy and Astrophysics from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University

and a Master of Arts in Teaching from William Paterson University, where she developed data analytic and programming skills and proficiency in several operating systems. She previously worked as a Data Coordinator for a NJ public school district where she was responsible for managing the district's student information system, Google administration, technology equipment and more. In her free time, she enjoys walking her poodle mix, Rhea, and playing on her Nintendo Switch.



Mariah DeCilla is the new Administrative Assistant in the Office of Finance and Operations. Mariah graduated from Montclair State University with a BA in Psychology and brings years of experience. Mariah was an

Operations Associate at Public Partnerships, LLC, before joining HMSOM. In her free time, Mariah enjoys spending time with family and friends, walking with her dog, reading and practicing yoga.

Congratulations to HD's Very Own Dr. Anjali Gupta and Dr. Melissa Figueroa

The Hackensack Meridian School of Medicine's M2s celebrated a rite of passage on November 30, 2023, with the 5th Annual Student Clinician Humanism Ceremony. The Student Clinician Humanism Ceremony is an annual event that was started by the 2018 cohort as a way to honor the students and show that they were active in the Humanism sphere since the school was not yet eligible for the Gold Humanism Awards. Each year the M2s build on the initial 2018 cohort's ceremony and add pieces that resonate with the cohort. Last year, the 2021 cohort decided to add an awards component and created three awards: 1) the *Service to Students Award*, 2) the *Bonita Stanton Humanism Award*, and 3) the *Excellence in Teaching Award*.

This year, the 2022 cohort added some additional awards. They expanded the Excellence in Teaching award to include both Clinical and Biomedical Science award categories. They also added a Facilitator of the Year Award that recognizes exceptional leadership, mentorship and care for students while facilitating curricular small groups. An Excellence in Advising Award was also added to acknowledge the professional development, academic success and well-being advisors demonstrated throughout Phase 1.

This year, the Student Government Association took responsibility for producing the ceremony. The event began with some musical selections by Jasper Lee and Matthew Luebke. Following the musical selections, Dean Jeffrey Boscamp, M.D., opened the ceremony by telling the students that this is the biggest transition students will have until they graduate. Dr. Boscamp said, "On Monday, when you walk into the clinical team, you are ready to be a big part of that team." Dr. Boscamp reflected on humanism and what the students are doing on the clinical team. He said, "**Don't underestimate the power of a medical student**, particularly with regard to humanism. You are the ones who will take the best history, you are the ones who will actually have time to sit with the patients...you actually have time to pull up a chair and that is what you should do." He concluded by letting the students know that patient care is what they have been preparing to do and they should enjoy their time in clerkships.

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HDimension Group 12 took on their first community health project at Hackensack Middle School in January. They attended the middle school's parent-teacher conference to share tips on 'Talking To Your Kids About Vaping,' and provide pamphlets in Spanish and English. The Human Dimension program is an integral aspect of our curriculum; we love seeing how our students bring it to life!



We are stronger when we work together! SOMLifts met up at Blink Fitness in Clifton for their first meeting with new co-leaders, Jasmine, Matt and Jon! Wellness is different for everyone, and to many of our M1s, the gym is wellness.



Meet our M1s who are taking over this year's Student Government Association. Look out for more SGA sponsored events over the next few months. The new members look forward to serving our community at HMSOM!