

UConn HEALTH

HEALTH CAREER
OPPORTUNITY PROGRAMS

Health Professions

Aetna HPPI Pipeline

Partnership Initiative

December 2020

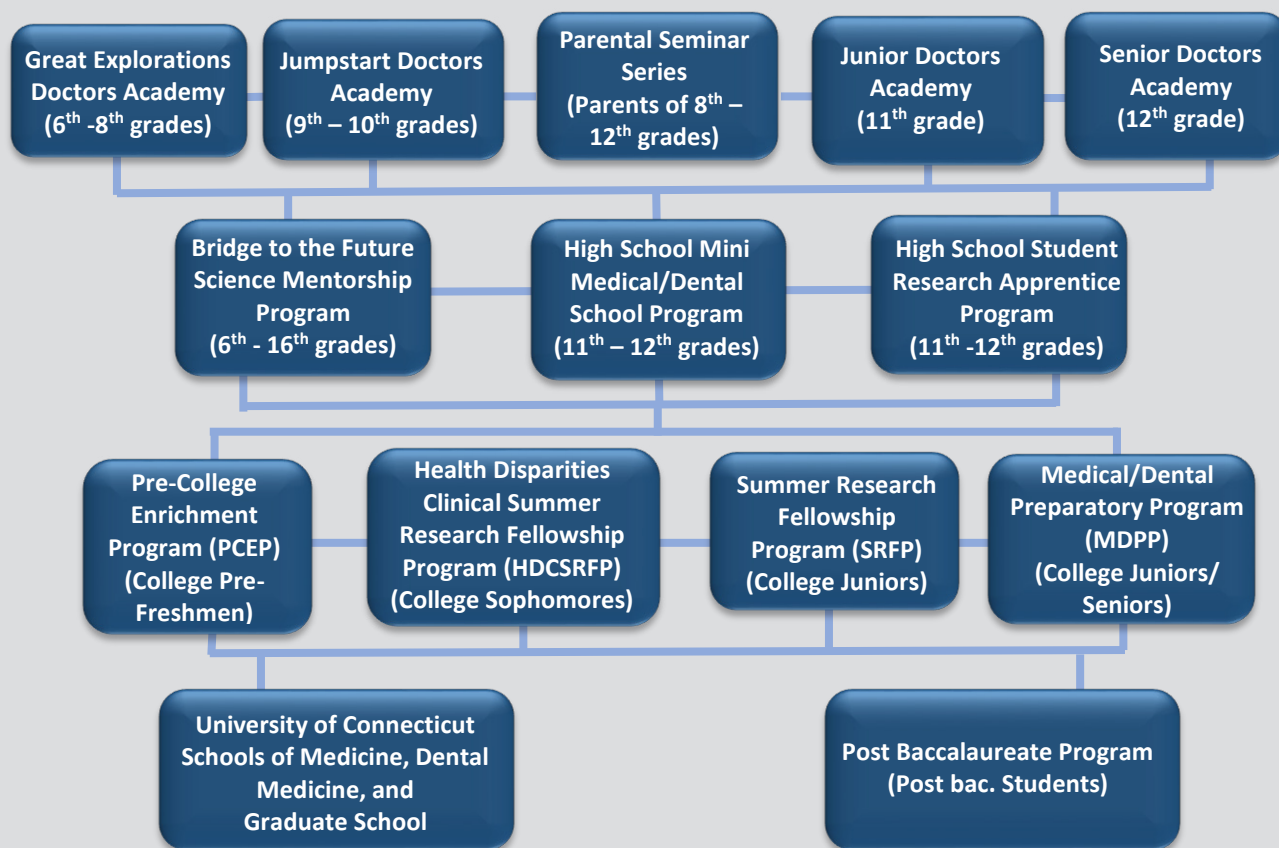


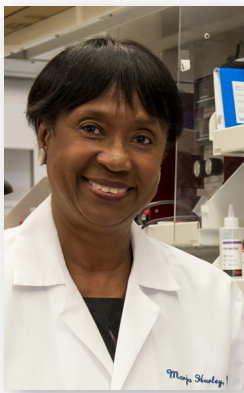
Department of Health Career Opportunity Programs

Read about the Aetna Health Professions Partnership Initiative and Pipeline Programs at:

health.uconn.edu/hcop

Aetna Health Professions Partnership Initiative Pipeline





Welcome from...

Marja Hurley, M.D.

*Professor of Medicine and Orthopaedic Surgery
Associate Dean of Health Career Opportunity Programs
Founding Director of Aetna Health Professions Partnership Initiative
UConn Schools of Medicine and Dental Medicine*

The COVID-19 pandemic of the year 2020 has impacted many aspects of our programs for middle, high school, and college students, yet the Department of Health Career Opportunity Programs and its Aetna Health Professions Partnership Initiative Programs (Aetna HPPI) have been very successful in delivering many components of the Aetna HPPI virtually. The department is an integral part of the Schools of Medicine, Dental Medicine, and Graduate educational community at UConn Health. The Schools of Medicine and Dental Medicine are actively committed to the recruitment, retention, and graduation of diverse medical and dental students who are capable of providing culturally competent health care.

The department continues to support currently enrolled medical, dental, and graduate students of diverse backgrounds and expanded these efforts through implementation of a Medical and Dental Alumni seminar series as well as programs for middle school and high school to increase STEM proficiency by new collaborations with the Connecticut Science Center.

The Aetna HPPI programs have proven to be top-notch because the participants have successfully completed their undergraduate degrees and have actualized their goals of entering medical, dental, or graduate school. It is for this reason that the programs sponsored through the Department of Health Career Opportunity Programs are recognized as a national model. Despite COVID-19, we had 145 middle school, high school, and college students participating virtually in our 2020 summer programs through the Aetna HPPI. During the 2020-2021 academic year, we anticipate approximately 250 students participating in our Aetna HPPI Saturday Academy and college programs virtually.

I am gratified that the community recognizes the importance of these programs in promoting diversity in the health professions. Dr. Patrice Desvigne-Nickens, medical officer in

the Heart Failure and Arrhythmias Branch in the Division of Cardiovascular Science in the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute (NHLBI), served as our keynote speaker at the closing ceremony of our 2020 summer programs. Dr. David Woods, orthodontist at Main Street Children's Dentistry and Orthodontics, Havre de Grace and Elkton, Maryland, and a craniofacial orthodontist at Johns Hopkins Pediatrics in Baltimore, Maryland and Dr. Michael Woods, orthodontist in private practice at Simply Southern Smiles, Statesville, North Carolina both UConn School of Dental Medicine Class of 2010 graduates, served as our dental alumni speakers at the summer closing ceremony.

This year, I congratulate our graduating seniors participating in the high school Aetna HPPI Doctors Academy who were all accepted into colleges and special congratulations to the Health Career Opportunity Programs scholars in the School of Medicine (SOM) and School of Dental Medicine (SODM) graduating class of 2020. In the SOM, 20% of the graduating class are Health Career Opportunity Programs scholars, while 22% of the graduating class in the SODM are Health Career Opportunity Programs scholars. We are also proud that 60% of the underrepresented students currently enrolled in the SOM are Aetna HPPI pipeline students, and 54% of the underrepresented students currently enrolled in the SODM are Aetna HPPI pipeline students.

I thank our faculty, staff, and students at UConn Health and partner institutions for their dedication and support. Also special thanks to our funders including the John and Valerie Rowe Health Professions Scholars Program Endowment Fund that support some of our existing programmatic initiatives.



A note from...

Granville Wrensford, Ph.D.

Assistant Dean and Associate Director

Health Career Opportunity Programs

UConn Schools of Medicine and Dental Medicine

This has been a tumultuous year for our department. As the world reeled under the effects of the coronavirus, so too did the department. Yet despite the pandemic, we were able to quickly transition in March to a virtual learning environment. This allowed us to complete the academic instruction of the various grades. All of our face to face activities and enrichment trips were cancelled. I must commend the teachers, counselors, mentors and staff who made adjustments under trying conditions to ensure that we completed the academic instruction of the programs. We had an amazing virtual closing ceremony where we celebrated the achievements of all the participants especially the graduating seniors. These graduating seniors later individually collected their personalized lab coats.

Despite the challenges, we were still able to engage in several activities before the pandemic struck. This past year, we also continued our collaboration with the Connecticut Science Center. Through the organization of the Advancement Program Manager, Amy Sailor, a group of our Doctors Academy students participated in a series of hands-on activities at the center. This allowed our students to obtain a more comprehensive and focused experience beyond the regular exhibits at the center.

It pleases me to see such a large number of students excited about the health sciences and careers in the health professions. I am grateful to the many individuals who have contributed to the success of the programs, which can be seen at various stages of the pipeline. At the middle and high school levels, we have seen a high persistence rate from one grade to the next. The graduating high school seniors have consistently performed at a higher level on the SAT compared to other students in the Hartford school district. Each year all of the graduating seniors have been accepted and matriculated in college. Currently, there are several students enrolled in medical and dental school who have participated in our pipeline programs.

As we prepare for another year, I must acknowledge the parents, guardians and students of the programs for their firm commitment. A special thank you to the department's staff, faculty, students, and other professionals here at UConn Health and the larger community who have volunteered their time to mentor and interact with the participants in our programs.



Greetings from...

Kerry-Ann Stewart, Ph.D.

Assistant Director of Health Career Opportunity Programs

Assistant Professor of Public Health Sciences

UConn Schools of Medicine and Dental Medicine

It has been a pleasure serving as assistant director for the Department of Health Career Opportunity Programs. The community that the department has built is one that will continue to assist students from diverse backgrounds who aspire to be health professionals. It is truly gratifying to observe the growth and development of the students as they transition to the next level of their education, whether it is the 2020 graduates of the Senior Doctors Academy embarking on a new phase of their academic journey as college freshmen or our new medical and dental students being welcomed to the first-year class.

Although this year the world has been met with uncertainty, we still continued to strive to provide a rich environment for students to learn exciting and innovative concepts to gain more experiences within the health professions. Additionally, we have continued to strengthen the pipeline by expanding our collaborations and our programs virtually. We certainly achieved a great deal in the 2019-2020 academic year with our participation in the Annual Biomedical Research Conference for Minority Students, the Student National Medical Association Region VII Medical Education Conference hosted by UConn School of Medicine, and the first Black Doctors Day in Hartford.

I am always excited about the future of our pipeline students. It is truly rewarding to see your hard-work pay off as you accomplish your goals. I thank the UConn community for its unwavering support of these programs, even during these challenging times. I would especially like to thank our program faculty and instructors, medical and dental student mentors, seminar speakers, counselors, and tutors who made the Doctors Academy, Pre-College Enrichment Program, and Medical/Dental Preparatory Program possible.

Congratulations to...

Jeremy Figueroa-Ortiz, D.M.D.

Dentist, Dental Student, Mentor



Dr. Jeremy Figueroa-Ortiz graduated from UConn School of Dental Medicine in May 2020.

Dr. Figueroa-Ortiz attended the University of Connecticut where he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Allied Health Sciences in 2016 to prepare him for dental school.

Currently Dr. Figueroa-Ortiz is attending a 6 year MD Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery Residency Program at the University of Michigan. He states it is a long road but over time he really became infatuated with direct surgical intervention in the head and neck area. Over the years, he received nothing but support and encouragement from everyone in the Health Career Opportunity Programs department in his pursuit of this endeavor.

At about the age of 15, Dr. Figueroa-Ortiz was invited by a friend to attend the Bridge to the Future Science Mentoring Conference. Through his participation in the forensic dentistry workshop he decided to pursue a career in dentistry. From this point, he would receive updates on different opportunities in the Department of Health Career Opportunity Programs, participating in summer research and enrichment opportunities including the High School Student Research Apprentice Program, Medical/Dental Preparatory Program-Track I-DAT Prep, and the Health Disparities Clinical Summer Research Fellowship Program. “My thought process,” Dr. Figueroa-Ortiz states, “was to meet as many people and shadow as much as I could. Since I essentially did not have a clear sense on how to be successful in dentistry, I figured finding good mentorship was a way I could supplement my gaps in knowledge.” It was also gratifying to him to be a mentor in these activities during dental school.

Dr. Figueroa-Ortiz’s best professional and personal experiences with Health Career Opportunity Programs were finding out what he wanted to do for the rest of his life and having a broad group of people who look like him and have a similar background. Presently, he feels like he has a friend in every state and medical/dental specialty that he can connect with.

He leaves the following words of advice to the younger generation of students interested in the health professions: “Keep like-minded people in your circle because you ultimately pick up the habits of those around you. Secondly, learn what you want to do and say yes to every opportunity that crosses your path. You never know who you’ll meet or what you’ll learn. You can never have too much exposure. Finally, learn who you want to be and remind yourself of this along the way. Dental and medical career paths are long and thinking back to this can help you make important decisions and judgements.”

Congratulations to...

Nia Harris, M.D.

Physician, Medical Student, Mentor



Dr. Nia Harris graduated from UConn School of Medicine in May 2020.

Dr. Harris attended Amherst College, Massachusetts completing her Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology in 2014.

Dr. Harris is currently doing her psychiatry residency at NewYork-Presbyterian / Weill

Cornell Medical Center in New York City. She plans to complete a Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Fellowship following residency.

During her childhood Dr. Harris began to think about a career in the medical profession. She says, “My parents say I have verbalized my desire to be a doctor since I was a child.” This childhood dream became something that she actively worked to make a reality following personal and family medical experiences that highlighted the importance of holistic health care, including mental health. She entered college with a goal of pursuing medicine as a profession.

Dr. Harris has been involved with the Department of Health Career Opportunity Programs since high school. Her mother, who is her biggest supporter, heard about the Aetna HPPI Doctors Academy Program from a family friend. After completing the Senior Doctors Academy she continued the pipeline programs participating in the Health Disparities Clinical Summer Research Fellowship Program, the Summer Research Fellowship Program, and the Medical/Dental Preparatory Program Track I-MCAT Prep from then until the summer of 2016. She also participated in the Medical/Dental Preparatory

Program Track II-Basic Medical Sciences (BMS) program in the summer of 2016, prior to starting medical school, which was her best Health Career Opportunity Programs experience. She states, “During the [BMS] program I had the opportunity to meet some of my future classmates, get to know some of the medical school faculty members, and experience a taste of the medical school curriculum. It confirmed for me that I was on the right path!”

She leaves the following words of encouragement and advice to the younger generation of students interested in health professions: “YOU are the future of medicine! It’s not always going to be easy, but you CAN do it! Do not let anyone tell you that you cannot. I am excited to see what you all WILL accomplish!” She also shared a few quotes that have encouraged her throughout her life and career as a medical student:

- “If you can’t fly then run, if you can’t run then walk, if you can’t walk then crawl, but whatever you do you have to keep moving forward.” – Martin Luther King, Jr.
- “If you don’t like something, change it. If you can’t change it, change your attitude.” – Maya Angelou

Congratulations to...

Richard Jimenez, D.M.D.

Dentist, Dental Student, Mentor



Dr. Richard Jimenez graduated from UConn School of Dental Medicine in May 2020.

Dr. Jimenez received his Bachelor of Science degree from Western Washington University in Bellingham, Washington. In 2015, where he majored in Molecular and Cellular Biology and minored in both Chemistry and Business Administration.

Currently Dr. Jimenez is working at Hilltop Family Dental Clinic in Tacoma, Washington for one year as an Advanced Education in General Dentistry (AEGD) resident. He chose this residency because he is interested in working in a community health center in an underserved area. Additionally, this residency helps with obtaining a faculty position which Dr. Jimenez also has the desire to work in an academic setting.

At the age of 18, Dr. Jimenez decided to pursue a career in dentistry. Dr. Jimenez states, “After having braces junior year of high school, I saw the aesthetics of dentistry and the need

for more access to dental care.” While participating in a six-week medical and dental educational program in Washington, he ultimately found his passion for dental medicine.

While searching for other dental preparatory programs online, he found the Medical/Dental Preparatory Program Track I-DAT Prep at UConn Health which aligned with his goals. From the time participating in this program in 2014 Dr. Jimenez has been involved with the Department of Health Career Opportunity Programs. His best experience with the department was going from a participant to working as a mentor and tutor for the Medical/Dental Preparatory Program Track I-DAT Prep. This stemmed from his interest in tutoring other students in group or one-one sessions in chemistry during his undergraduate years. He is proud of the DAT students’ progress in the program as well as them actualizing their goals of admission to dental school.

He leaves the following words of advice to the younger generation of students interested in the health professions: “Take advantage of opportunities; keep your eye on the finish line, and don’t ever forget where you came from.”

Congratulations to...

Grethel Millington, D.M.D.

Dentist, Dental Student, Mentor



Dr. Grethel Millington graduated from UConn School of Dental Medicine in May 2020.

She completed her undergraduate studies at Oakwood University in Huntsville, Alabama in 2012 earning a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology.

Additionally, Dr. Millington graduated from the University of Cincinnati’s College of Medicine with a Master of Science degree in Molecular and Developmental Biology in 2016.

Dr. Millington is currently completing a year in General Practice Residency (GPR) Program in Dentistry at the Veterans Affairs Hospital in Manhattan, New York. Her career goal is to practice general dentistry in private practice and to continue to be involved in serving underserved communities. She also aims to continue to mentor students interested in the dental profession. In the long-term, she hopes to be able to give back to her hometown in rural Jamaica through developing community care centers dedicated to improving oral health.

While completing her thesis research in a craniofacial development lab at the University of Cincinnati, Dr. Millington decided to become a dentist. She states, “I was more intrigued by the clinical aspect of oral and craniofacial biology and wanted to be involved with direct patient care.”

It was while interviewing for dental school admissions at UConn that Dr. Millington learned about the Health Career Opportunity Programs department. During the interview, she met with Dr. Marja Hurley and several students who were a part of the Department of Health Career Opportunity Programs. She was captivated by the environment of support and encouragement that the department fosters and immediately knew that she wanted to be involved. Dr. Millington expresses that the most precious experience she had with the Health Career Opportunity Programs department was mentoring incoming medical and dental students in the Medical/ Dental Preparatory Program Track II. She says, “In this summer program, I had the privilege to be a part of preparing students to begin their new journey as dental and medical students.”

She leaves the following words of advice to the younger generation of students interested in the health professions: “It is never too early or too late to start, and don’t be afraid to ask for help if unsure of how to proceed. In my case, I found dentistry at the age of 25. It was a scary experience to switch career paths, but through seeking guidance from my mentors, I made the decision to pursue dentistry. Choosing to become a dentist was one of the best decisions that I could have made.” Additionally, Dr. Millington advises: “Always seek help from those who have travelled the same path before you. While in health professional school and throughout your careers, continue to seek out mentors. I was privileged to have Dr. Hurley as a research mentor and several School of Dental Medicine faculty members who were always present to provide mentorship and guidance.”

Congratulations to...

Aloys Nsereko, M.D.

Physician, Medical Student, Mentor



Dr. Aloys Nsereko graduated from UConn School of Medicine in May 2020.

Dr. Nsereko attended the University of Central Arkansas in Conway, Arkansas. Upon completing his undergraduate studies in 2014 he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in both Chemistry and Biology.

Dr. Nsereko decided at age 15 that he wanted to become a physician while witnessing a family member’s passing after not being able to receive the needed medical attention to treat the condition. From this personal experience, he was determined to become a transplant surgeon to help save individuals who are in similar situations. Dr. Nsereko is currently doing his general surgery residency at Baystate Medical Center in Springfield, Massachusetts. Following residency he intends to complete fellowship training in cardiothoracic or transplant surgery. He desires to spend part of his career serving underserved communities across the globe with a special emphasis in sub-Saharan Africa.

Dr. Nsereko participated in the Medical/Dental Preparatory Track II-Basic Medical Sciences program sponsored by Health Career Opportunity Programs for 6 weeks which he believes helped to set him up for success as a first-year medical student. “My medical education and the entire journey through medical school was positively impacted by the generosity of the Health Career Opportunity Programs department,” states Dr. Nsereko.

Dr. Nsereko’s best Health Career Opportunity Programs experience was being part of the Aetna HPPI Doctors Academy mentoring program for four academic years and two summer sessions. He says, “It has been a joy to see my students grow from young 9th graders to incredibly smart, determined, dedicated and resilient 12th grade young men and women who will soon graduate from high school.” He is extremely proud to have had an opportunity to invest in their future education by giving them a glimpse of what to expect; how to adapt to change in their environment while simultaneously maintaining a long-term determination to see their goals into fruition.

Dr. Nsereko leaves the following words of encouragement and advice to the younger generation of students interested in health professions: “Medicine is certainly the most rewarding profession and yet it is the most challenging one to achieve. If you keep your eye on your ultimate goal, you will enjoy a lifelong experience of not only improving the lives and health of others, but yourself as well. When things get hard (and they most definitely will), remember that others before you have overcome the same hurdles you now face. Do not give up. Stay focused, keep pushing and you will get there. Remember to reach out for advice and guidance and to establish a strong support system around yourself.”

Congratulations to...

Tiahna Spencer, M.D.

Physician, Medical Student, Mentor



Dr. Tiahna Spencer graduated from UConn School of Medicine in May 2020.

Dr. Spencer graduated from the University of Connecticut in 2015 where she earned her Bachelor of Science degree in Physiology and Neurobiology with minors in Psychology and Neuroscience. These fields of

study aligned with her interest in research and medicine.

Dr. Spencer will continue her training at UConn School of Medicine for a preliminary general surgery year with plans to pursue Orthopaedic Surgery in the future.

Dr. Spencer decided to pursue a career in medicine at a young age. The best contributing factors were her interest in science, and more so, the joy she had when improving people's lives

and making them happy. Her courses and experiences in high school and college helped to affirm her decision to pursue a medical career.

In her junior year of her undergraduate studies, Dr. Spencer became involved with the Department of Health Career Opportunity Programs. She enjoyed participating in the Medical/Dental Preparatory Program-Track I-MCAT Prep program and found the professional development sessions of great value. She also participated in the Medical/Dental Preparatory Program-Track II- Basic Medical Science program the following year, which was her best Health Career Opportunity Programs experience. She says, "It was an experience where I could prepare for medical school, but more than that, I met my support systems: my mentors and my closest friends."

Dr. Spencer leaves the following words of encouragement and advice to the younger generation of students interested in the health professions: "Medical and dental school will be a very interesting time in your life. It is exhilarating at times, but you'll also find that you will be challenged in ways that you may have not experienced before socially, academically and even physically at times. During those moments, it is imperative that you remember you made it to medical/dental school; you are an amazing student and will overcome these challenges like you have in the past!"

Congratulations to Our Mentors and Past Program Participants — UConn Medical, Dental, and Graduate School 2020 Graduates

Akosua Adzenyah, D.M.D.

Elizabeth Atteh, M.D.

Samuel Crooks, M.D.

Liana De La Torre, D.M.D.

Jeremy Figueroa-Ortiz, D.M.D.

Nia Harris, M.D.

Salem Harry-Hernandez, M.D.

Rabale Hasan, M.D.

Rafique Haynes, M.D.

Richard Jimenez, D.M.D.

Maschal Mohiuddin, M.D.

Matthew Murphy, M.D.

Aloys Nsereko, M.D.

Mary Ojukwu, M.D.

Chidinma Okafor, D.M.D.

Jorge Ortiz Colon, M.D.

Bridget Quevedo, D.M.D.

Darnell Robin, M.D.

Brandon Shore, M.D.

Tiahna Spencer, M.D.

Carolina Vicens Cardona, M.D.

Rafael Vissepo Barba, M.D.

Health Career Opportunity Programs Medical/Dental Student 2020 Bridge Mentoring Award Recipients



**Jeremy Figueroa-Ortiz,
D.M.D.**



Aloys Nsereko, M.D.

The Department of Health Career Opportunity Programs recognized one dental student and one medical student for their continued participation and involvement in the Aetna HPPI Programs with the Bridge Mentoring Award. The 2020 recipients were: Jeremy Figueroa-Ortiz, D.M.D., oral & maxillofacial surgery residency, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan and Aloys Nsereko, M.D., general surgery residency, Baystate Medical Center, Springfield, Massachusetts.

Department of Health Career Opportunity Programs Outstanding Student Award Recipient



**Grethel Millington,
D.M.D.**

The Department of Health Career Opportunity Programs recognized a member of the Class of 2020 for outstanding performance throughout their professional education. The 2020 recipient was Dr. Grethel Millington, General Practice Residency (GPR) Program in Dentistry at the Veterans Affairs Hospital in Manhattan, New York.

Medical and Dental Student Organizations Exemplary Service Award Recipients



**Salem-Michael Harry-
Hernandez, M.D.**



Elizabeth Atteh, M.D.



Rabale Hasan, M.D.



Amy Nwaobasi, M.D.



Tiahna Spencer, M.D.



**Jeremy Figueroa-Ortiz,
D.M.D.**

The Department of Health Career Opportunity Programs and the UConn Chapters of the Latino Medical Student Association (LMSA), Student National Medical Association (SNMA), and Student National Dental Association/Hispanic Student Dental Association (SNDA/HSDA) recognized medical and dental student members of the Class of 2020 for their exemplary service. The LMSA recipient was Salem-Michael Harry-Hernandez, M.D., Internal Medicine Residency, Johns Hopkins Hospital, Baltimore, Maryland. The SNMA recipients were Elizabeth Atteh, M.D., Pediatrics Residency, Duke University Medical Center, Durham, North Carolina, Rabale Hasan, M.D., Obstetrics and Gynecology Residency, Stony Brook Teaching Hospital, Stony Brook, New York, Amy Nwaobasi, M.D., Family Medicine Residency, Thomas Jefferson University, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and Tiahna Spencer, M.D., Preliminary General Surgery year, UConn Health, Farmington, Connecticut. The SNDA/HSDA recipient was Jeremy Figueroa-Ortiz, D.M.D., Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery Residency, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

Congratulations to the Senior Doctors Academy Graduating Class of 2020!



Lisbette Acosta
Yale University



Kristin Alexander
American
International College



Syed Ali
University of Virginia



Lloydia Anderson
Northeastern
University



**Joseph
Annan-Kingsley**
University of
Connecticut



Aaliyah Anthony
Southern Connecticut
State University



Diandra Bennett
University of
Connecticut



Jannell Brown
University of
Connecticut

**Hard Work
Career-Focused
Optimal Performance
Persistence**



Preeya Diana
University of
Connecticut



Elis Diaz
University of
Connecticut



A-Shira Douglas
Eastern Connecticut
State University



Kacia Flynn
American University



Kayla Jaman
Springfield College



Bushrah Khan
Tufts University



Samee Malik
University of
Connecticut



Adwoa Mansa
Central Connecticut
State University



Thais Mantilla
University of
Connecticut



Yasmin Mohamad
University of
Connecticut



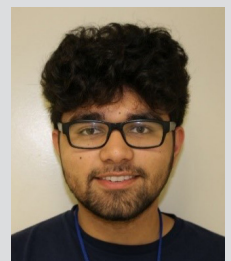
Oge Okoh
University of
Connecticut



Pocahontas Parker
Goodwin University



Khadijah Stanford
University of
Connecticut



Dawud Zakir
University of
Connecticut

John & Valerie Rowe Scholarship Recipients

The Department of Health Career Opportunity Programs provides John & Valerie Rowe scholarships in the form of book awards to Senior Doctors Academy students from the Aetna HPPI Doctors Academy who will enroll as freshmen at UConn. John D. Rowe, M.D., and Valerie A. Rowe, Ph.D., are longtime donors to UConn, supporting students and institutional advancement. The Rowe Health Professions Scholars Program Endowment has helped hundreds of students from underrepresented populations succeed in UConn's undergraduate, medical, and graduate programs through scholarships, academic, and experiential opportunities.

Dr. John Rowe is a professor of health policy and management at Columbia University and former chairman and CEO of Aetna, Inc. He previously served on the UConn Board of Trustees and the UConn Health Board of Directors. Dr. John Rowe was awarded the Carole and Ray Neag Medal of Honor for his remarkable contributions to medicine and UConn Health in 2012. Dr. Valerie Rowe is a retired clinical associate professor at the Graduate School of Education



Drs. John and Valerie Rowe

at Fordham University. “Jack and Valerie Rowe understand that the gift of education transforms lives. We are immensely grateful for their investment in the prestigious Rowe Scholar program, which has assisted dozens of talented students from underrepresented backgrounds succeed at UConn,” said Joshua R. Newton, past president and CEO of the UConn Foundation.

The 2020 John and Valerie Rowe Scholarships were awarded to Elis Diaz, Samee Malik, Khadijah Stanford, and Dawud Zakir. The scholarships were awarded to each recipient by Dr. Marja Hurley, professor of medicine and orthopaedic surgery, associate dean for Health Career Opportunity Programs, and founding director of Aetna Health Professions Partnership Initiative.

2020 John and Valerie Rowe Scholarship Award Recipients



Elis Diaz



Samee Malik

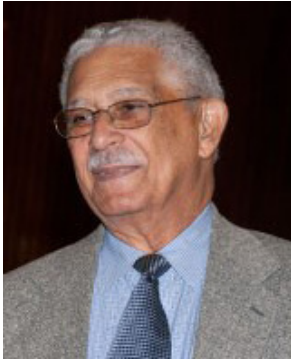


Khadijah Stanford



Dawud Zakir

Friends of Health Career Opportunity Programs – Boake L. Plessy, Ph.D. 2020 Scholarship Recipients



Boake L. Plessy, Ph.D.

In honor of Dr. Boake Plessy's contributions, UConn Health has established a scholarship fund that is used to support educational enhancement for students who participated in the Aetna HPPI Doctors Academy and are planning to continue their education at the post-secondary level.

The Friends of the Department of Health Career Opportunity Programs – Boake L. Plessy, Ph.D. Scholarship was awarded to Joseph Annan-Kingsley, Diandra Bennett, Jannell Brown, Preeya Diana, Thais Mantilla, Yasmin Mohamad, and Oge Okoh at the Academic Year Closing and Recognition Ceremony. The 2020 recipients will all be attending UConn in the fall. To contribute to the Boake L. Plessy, Ph.D. Scholarship Fund or for more information about philanthropy to support the Health Career Opportunity Programs at UConn Health, please visit <https://health.uconn.edu/hcop/donate>.

2020 Boake L. Plessy Scholarship Award Recipients



**Joseph
Annan-Kingsley**



Diandra Bennett



Jannell Brown



Preeya Diana



Thais Mantilla



Yasmin Mohamad



Oge Okoh

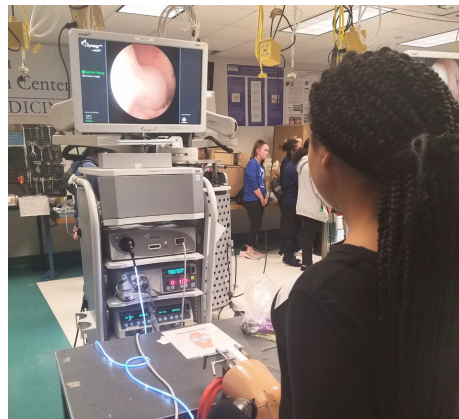
Aetna HPPI Doctors Academy

The Aetna Health Professions Partnership Initiative Doctors Academy (Aetna HPPI Doctors Academy) is designed to provide mentoring and educational opportunities which may otherwise not be available to a number of Connecticut high school students. The Aetna HPPI Doctors Academy consists of the Jumpstart 9 and 10 programs and the Junior and Senior Doctors Academies. The purpose of the Aetna HPPI Doctors Academy high school programs is to provide access and preparation to students interested in health professions who come from backgrounds where they are the first in their family to earn a four-year degree, come from modest family means, and/or are from backgrounds traditionally underrepresented in health care. Students participating in the Aetna HPPI Doctors Academy are generally recruited from the Hartford area schools and strive to become physicians, dentists, biomedical research scientists, pharmacists, nurses, and other health professionals.

The Aetna HPPI Doctors Academy has two major components, the summer program and the academic year program. The summer and academic year programs are designed to advance students' academic skill levels in math, science, and English. The programs promote personal growth through

extracurricular experiences designed to help students develop the skills necessary to succeed in the Pre-Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT), the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), and the American College Test (ACT). Seventy-six high school students participated in the Aetna HPPI Doctors Academy during the 2019-2020 academic year, and 67 high school students participated in the virtual programs during the 2020 summer.

The Aetna HPPI Doctors Academy students took an enrichment trip to the Connecticut Science Center in the fall of 2019 for their Women in Science Event. Additionally, the members of the Senior Doctors Academy attended the first Black Doctors Day Event organized by Francine Entertainment & Marketing and hosted by Senator Douglas McCrory at Dunkin Donuts Park in Hartford. They participated in the procession with prominent physicians, medical students, and community leaders in honor of Black History Month. They also participated in a genetics lab at the UConn Laboratory Experience & Diagnostic Genetics Education Program hosted by Dr. Judy Brown at Storrs and in the Inspiring Women in Engineering and Medicine program hosted by Dr. Kathy Coyner at the UConn Musculoskeletal Institute in February 2020.



Great Explorations



Great Explorations is an enrichment program designed to provide extracurricular activities in math, science, and language arts to sixth-eighth grade middle school students. A total of 40 students who participated in the Great Explorations Program in the 2019-2020 academic year were enrolled in one of three middle schools: E.B. Kennelly School, CREC Two Rivers Magnet Middle School, and Betances STEM

Magnet School. Great Explorations also offers a six-week summer academic enrichment program for rising eighth-grade participants and a 30-week Saturday Academy for current eighth-graders. A total of 17 students participated in the 30-week 2019-2020 academic year component of the program. During the summer of 2020, a total of 18 students participated in the virtual program.

Parental Seminar Series

The Aetna Health Professions Partnership Initiative's Parental Seminar Series is an opportunity for students and parents to learn more about important health issues affecting their community as well as important tips to prepare for college. Parents are asked to submit a survey on the topics they are most interested in learning about and the series of lectures are then tailored to their needs. The 2019-2020 Parental Seminar Series commenced with a college admissions and financial aid panel which included Mr. Carlos Soler, assistant director of Office of Recruitment and Admissions, Central Connecticut State University, Ms. Kayla Dayle, associate director of Admissions, Quinnipiac University, Ms. Aida Silva, senior associate director of First-Year Admissions, University of Connecticut, Ms. Katie Wilcox-Smith, associate director of Admissions, University of Hartford, and Mr. Jonathan Barden, associate director of Admissions, University of Saint Joseph. They discussed college financial aid and the admissions process. Additionally, the Parental Seminar Series included a presentation on Diabetes and



Lenworth Ellis, M.D.



Tricia Leahey, Ph.D.

Obesity by Dr. Lenworth Ellis, clinical assistant professor of medicine, Department of Internal Medicine, UConn Health and Dr. Tricia Leahey, associate professor, Department of Allied Health Sciences, College of Agriculture, Health and Natural Resources, UConn.

High School Mini Medical/Dental School Seminar Series

The High School Mini Medical/Dental School Seminar Series offers eight weekly lectures and demonstrations presented by faculty members of the UConn School of Medicine and Dental Medicine. The 2020 seminar series included topics such as genetics and genome sciences, emergency medicine, obstetrics and gynecology, otolaryngology, gastroenterology, orthodontics, and dermatology. Sixty-eight Connecticut high school juniors and seniors participated in the 2020 program.

Participants are selected by their school guidance counselors or science teachers. All students have shown a strong interest in pursuing careers in medicine, dental medicine, or the biological sciences. For more information contact Anastasia Rollins at 860-679-3484 or rollins@uchc.edu.

Pre-College Enrichment Program

The Pre-College Enrichment Program is designed to provide solid development of scientific, mathematical, communications, problem solving, and test-taking skills, and to enhance the preparedness of college freshmen. It allows students to experience a college curriculum prior to their matriculation at UConn in the fall. Students participate in the academic track (completion of academic courses) in collaboration with the UConn School of Engineering BRIDGE Program at Storrs.

This past summer, a total of 13 Pre-College Enrichment Program participants along with 12 BRIDGE Program participants also engaged in numerous virtual enrichment activities including a medical student panel, and seminars on academic success by Dr. Granville Wrensford, assistant dean of the Department of Health Career Opportunity Programs, associate director of Aetna Health Professions Partnership Initiative, UConn Health, and the medical profession by Dr. Lenora Williams, assistant professor, Obstetrics and Gynecology, UConn Health.

Medical/Dental Preparatory Program

Medical/Dental Preparatory Program students are selected from various universities throughout the United States to work on academic skills to prepare for medical school or dental school admission. Participants of the Medical/Dental Preparatory Program Track I prepare for either the Medical College Admission Test (MCAT) or the Dental Admission Test (DAT), while the participants of the Medical/Dental

Preparatory Program Track II take courses in the basic medical sciences to prepare them for the first-year curriculum of medical and dental school. A total of 47 college students and recent college graduates participated in virtual academic classes, seminars, workshops, test-taking strategies, and other enrichment activities provided by UConn Health during the six-week summer 2020 program.

Aetna Health Professions Partnership Initiative 2019-2020 Academic Year Closing Ceremony

The Department of Health Career Opportunity Programs held virtually its annual Academic Year Closing and Recognition Ceremony for the Aetna Health Professions Partnership Initiative (Aetna HPPI) Doctors Academy on May 20, 2020. The Aetna HPPI is an education consortium offering a comprehensive program of educational enrichment and support activities to increase the competitive applicant pool of diverse students who are interested in careers in the health professions. This academic year's Closing and Recognition Ceremony marked the culmination of a very positive academic year enrichment experience for middle and high school students from the Greater Hartford area who participated in the Great Explorations, Jumpstart, and Junior and Senior Doctors Academies. The new University of Connecticut, President Thomas Katsouleas participated in the closing ceremony. Welcoming remarks were given by Dr. Bruce Liang, Dean, UConn School of Medicine. Student reflections were given by Elis Diaz, Senior Doctors

Academy Class of 2020 graduate; and Tanya Miller, Senior Doctors Academy Class of 2016 graduate, UConn Class of 2020 graduate. The evening's festivities also included Special Recognition Awards to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of Great Explorations, Jumpstart, and the Junior Doctors Academy participants. The recipients of these awards were: Seiwa Lukelwa and Makiah Morris of Great Explorations; Keyanno Cohen and Mark Manson of Jumpstart 9; Rafy DeLosSantos and Tamia Percy of Jumpstart 10; and Saffiya Heyligar and Adriana Mantilla of the Junior Doctors Academy. Most of the Senior Doctors Academy graduates have chosen to further their education at universities in Connecticut with 11 of them enrolling at UConn. Elis Diaz, Samee Malik, Khadijah Stanford, and Dawud Zakir, were each awarded the John and Valerie Rowe Scholarship, and Joseph Annan-Kingsley, Diandra Bennett, Jannell Brown, Preeya Diana, Thais Mantilla, Yasmin Mohamad, and Oge Okoh were each awarded the Boake L. Plessy Scholarship.



Doctors Academy graduating class of 2020 with mentor and third year medical/MPH student, Gian Grant (right).

UConn Schools of Medicine and Dental Medicine Provide Programs for Underrepresented in American Health Care Professions

Excerpt of article written by Jennifer Walker, UConn Health

From High School: Elis Diaz



A top priority for UConn's Schools of Medicine and Dental Medicine has long been the recruitment and retention of students from diverse groups who are underrepresented in American health care professions. The Department of Health Career Opportunity Programs in the Schools of Medicine and Dental Medicine sponsors the Aetna Health Professions Partnership

Initiative (Aetna HPPI) summer and academic year programs. This initiative was developed to promote diversity in the health professions and is a formal educational consortium offering a comprehensive program of educational enrichment and support activities for under-represented, disadvantaged and first-generation students applying to medical and dental schools, graduate programs in biomedical sciences, nursing, pharmacy, and allied health programs.

The Aetna HPPI is a continuous pipeline for middle/junior high school, high school, and college-level students, which has been successful in helping participants realize their dreams of becoming health care providers. The programs are therefore instrumental in aiding the development of the future health career workforce in the U.S.

This past May, Elis was part of 23 students in the Aetna HPPI Doctors Academy program who graduated high school and will be entering prestigious colleges in the fall including UConn, Yale, Tufts, and Northeastern to name a few. Eleven of the students, including Elis, will be enrolling at the UConn Storrs campus in the fall.

The Aetna HPPI Doctors Academy is in addition to their regular academic schedule and provides students with grade appropriate math, science, and English courses as well as standardized test preparation. It offers a six-week, Monday-Friday, Summer Academic Enrichment Program for the selected students and a 30-week Saturday Academy during the academic school year where students can continue to enhance their academic skills, college preparation, and exposure to careers in the health professions. Classes are held at UConn Health, and transportation is provided to Hartford residents.

This program helped Diaz to advance his math skills and gave him the opportunity to take courses in geometry, biology, and English to better prepare for his college education. Diaz felt like he was treated like an individual which motivated him to increase his SAT score.

He was motivated by seeing others of different races love their health care careers. "I want to wake up every day and go to a career I have a passion for, and that is what this program showed me I could do," says Diaz.

When he enters UConn in the fall he will be taking 12 credits a semester so that he can also concentrate on joining different activities to broaden his horizons. He will be studying Biomedical Engineering and has an interest in designing prosthetics as well as an interest in surgery. His future is wide open, and he is taking advantage of all the opportunities that lie ahead of him.

"The program taught me that my circumstances don't define me and that by becoming a dedicated student, nothing can prevent me from reaching my goals."

To College: Tanya Miller



Tanya Miller always knew she wanted to be in the health care field, however as a first generation college student, she needed guidance. When someone shared information on Health Career Opportunity Programs with her father, she took advantage of the incredible pipeline programs.

Prior to her junior year of high school, she started in the Junior Doctors Academy summer program. She completed the High School Student Research Apprentice Program as well as the Senior Doctors Academy before entering UConn.

When she was accepted into UConn as a freshman, Miller was also invited to the Rowe Scholars Program. “Being a member of the Rowe Scholars Program and a member of the e-board was literally a dream come true, says Miller. “I remember as a student in the Aetna HPPI Doctors Academy, we took a trip to UConn Storrs one day to be a ‘Husky for a Day’ with Rowe Scholars as our hosts. Afterwards, we were able to ask them questions about college and hear what advice they have. I remember I was sitting to myself thinking ‘I want to be a Rowe Scholar one day’ after witnessing how determined, kind, and involved on campus they were.”

Students who have participated in Health Career Opportunity Programs receive special consideration for the Rowe Scholars Program. John and Valerie Rowe Scholars are also part of the distinguished UConn Honors Program.

Whenever Miller was responsible for Rowe and Health Career Opportunity Programs collaboration events, it felt incredibly full circle in the best way possible. “Being a part of Health Career Opportunity Programs and then Rowe has shown me the power of mentorship, which is why I hope to continue being a mentor throughout my life and be there to encourage the next generation of health care providers.”

Miller graduated from UConn this past spring with a Bachelor of Science degree and is considering pursuing a Master’s degree in nursing.

Miller thanks all the leaders of Health Career Opportunity Programs who always make time to check in and help with her goals. “Dr. Stewart was there no matter where I was in the program to make time to guide me, and it was really special and important to know you always had someone in your corner,” says Miller.

Dr. Hurley was her inspiration for a documentary on female physicians called #ILookLikeADoctor which she features the stories of six female physicians with unique experiences and from diverse backgrounds. “Dr. Hurley is a great role model and an important part of UConn,” says Miller.

To Pharmacy School: Julise Marsh



Julise Marsh of Bloomfield was part of the Doctors Academy in high school. She knew she wanted to go into the health care field but, like Miller, didn’t know what avenue she wanted to take. As part of the Health Career Opportunity Programs she was exposed to many different choices by learning through field trips and speakers about the various areas of medicine. Through those

experiences, she found that Pharmacy was appealing to her.

Also part of the Rowe Scholars Program at UConn, which helps students traditionally underrepresented in the health care field, Marsh found the monthly dinners where various speakers in health care came to speak to the students of particular interest.

Upon finishing her undergraduate degree at UConn, she continued on to the UConn School of Pharmacy where she earned a Doctor of Pharmacy degree this past May.

Marsh’s goal is to increase enrollment in the School of Pharmacy for underrepresented populations. She is working with a group to help raise awareness about pharmacy as a career path for underrepresented populations through recruitment in cultural centers and reaching out to high school and college students who may not be aware this is an option for them.

Marsh is currently doing her Pharmacy Residency at Holyoke Health.

“The Program provided me with experiences and opportunities I would have never had,” says Marsh.

Aetna Health Professions Partnership Initiative Summer 2020 Program Closing Ceremony — Dental Alumni Speakers



Michael Woods, D.M.D.

Michael Woods, D.M.D. graduated from the University of Connecticut School of Dental Medicine in 2010. Dr. Michael Woods attended Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia from 2001-2005 for his undergraduate education. In the summer of 2005, Dr. Woods participated in the Health Career Opportunity Programs' Medical/Dental Preparatory Program. Dr. Michael Woods also participated in the National Institutes of Health Academy Post-baccalaureate Fellowship Research and Health Disparities Program for one year, from 2005-2006, undertaking research in Vitamin D Signaling Regulates Oral Keratinocyte Proliferation in Vitro and in Vivo. Upon graduating from the University of Connecticut School of Dental Medicine Class of 2010, Dr. Michael Woods attended the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) for a three year Orthodontics Residency from 2010-2013. In 2014, Dr. Michael Woods received the American Board Orthodontics Certification. He is currently in private practice for the past three years outside of Charlotte, North Carolina. Outside of work, Dr. Michael Woods enjoys spending time with his wife, Dr. Jennifer Bailey-Woods a pediatric cardiac intensivist, and three lovely daughters Grace, Eden, and Noelle.

David Woods, D.M.D., is a dual-trained dental specialist in pediatric dentistry and orthodontics. Dr. David Woods attended Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia from 2001-2005. Upon completing his undergraduate studies with Magna Cum Laude in 2005, he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology. Dr. David Woods participated in the National Institutes of Health Academy Post-baccalaureate Fellowship Research and Health Disparities Program for one year, from 2005-2006, undertaking research on Wnt Signaling and Secreted Frizzled-related Proteins. Dr. David Woods is an alumnus of the University of Connecticut School of Dental Medicine Class of 2010. In the year 2014, Dr. David Woods received the American Board of Orthodontics Certification. In 2015, he graduated from Maryland School of Dentistry in Baltimore, Maryland with a Doctor of Medicine degree in the specialty of Pediatric Dentistry. Dr. David Woods has also worked to build the Johns Hopkins Craniofacial Dental Clinic that treats children with craniofacial anomalies and syndromes in Baltimore, Maryland. He currently serves as an associate of Main Street Children's Dentistry and Orthodontics in Elkton, Maryland and Havre de Grace, Maryland for the past five years, and also serves at Johns Hopkins Pediatrics in Baltimore, Maryland as a craniofacial orthodontist providing orthodontic services for pediatric patients undergoing corrective jaw surgery on an as-needed basis for the past seven years.



David Woods, D.M.D.

Aetna Health Professions Partnership Initiative Summer 2020 Program Closing Ceremony - Keynote Speaker



Patrice Desvigne-Nickens, M.D., is a medical officer in the Heart Failure and Arrhythmias Branch in the Division of Cardiovascular Science in the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI). Dr. Nickens is responsible for the scientific development and fiscal management of relevant research programs focused on prevention, recognition, and treatment in cardiovascular medicine. Her research portfolio has included many mechanisms of research: investigator-initiated projects, center grants, contract and grant solicitations, and small business and conference grants to support basic and clinical investigations including clinical trials. Her current

portfolio includes a clinical trial and network, an international multisite trial, and a large pragmatic trial addressing heart failure and cardio-oncology. Dr. Nickens is responsible for initiative development, workshops, and meetings and provides updates within these scientific areas to the Division and Institute Directors. Dr. Nickens is a reviewer for several journals and is the NHLBI liaison to the Heart Failure Society of America.

Dr. Nickens received her Bachelor's Degree in Chemical Engineering from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Medical Doctorate from the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine. She began an Internal Medicine residency at the Thomas Jefferson University Medical Center and completed her training in Internal Medicine as a NHLBI medical staff fellow at the Clinical Center of the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Dr. Nickens is board certified in Internal Medicine. Dr. Nickens joined NHLBI in 1982 and was the project officer for the Thrombolysis in Myocardial Ischemia (TIMI) trial. In 1987, Dr. Nickens left NIH to serve as primary care physician in Detroit and in 1988 in Baltimore. Dr. Nickens rejoined NHLBI in 1991 and was responsible for research initiatives that investigated coronary disease in for underserved populations, including women and African Americans. Dr. Nickens's interests include training, the practice of medicine and public health policy and its impact on cardiovascular health disparities, and their effect on women and minorities.

Health Career Opportunity Programs Medical and Dental Students

The Department of Health Career Opportunity Programs plays an integral role in recruiting diverse students from around the country to the UConn Schools of Medicine and Dental Medicine and providing support for currently enrolled medical and dental students. At the beginning of each academic year, the department hosts a reception to welcome the first-year class. The 2019 Welcome Reception was held on October 1st at UConn Health for the Class of 2023. This was an opportunity for first-year medical and dental students to learn more about department resources, network with each other and upperclassmen, and hear more about research and enrichment opportunities. The medical and dental Class of 2023 was also



invited to a holiday reception on December 6, 2019 in Avon where they were able to meet the other classes of medical and dental students, as well as UConn Health alums and faculty.

Over the four years of academic training, Health Career Opportunity Programs' medical and dental students have the opportunity to participate in seminars based on their interest, engage with the wider community, coordinate hands-on activities for younger students, interact with visiting students, faculty, and community leaders, and mentor and tutor to Aetna HPPI students. The monthly newsline, compiled and distributed by the department, also keeps students apprised of externships, fellowships, conferences, scholarships, and residency programs that they are eligible for.

Additionally, department continues to support the professional and cultural events of the UConn chapters of the Student National Medical Association (SNMA), the Latino Medical Student Association (LMSA), and the Student National Dental Association/Hispanic Student Dental Association (SNDA/HSDA) and encourages student leadership at the university, regional, and national levels. These student organizations continue to be at the forefront of student life at UConn Health as well as in the greater community. In the 2019-2020 academic year, members of SNMA and SNDA/HSDA along with students in the UConn School of Pharmacy participated in the 2019 National Day of Empowerment presented by the Urban League of Greater Hartford's Young Professionals on November 20, 2019 in Hartford. The medical, dental, and pharmacy students along with Dr. Marja Hurley, the event's keynote speaker, discussed the health professions and pipeline programs with middle and high school students. Additionally, members of SNMA also participated with Health Career Opportunity Programs in the Urban League of Greater Hartford's 2020 Black History Celebration in Hartford.

The Department of Health Career Opportunity Programs also celebrates the accomplishments of UConn Health students. This year the 2020 Graduation Celebration was held virtually on May 3rd to recognize the Health Career Opportunity Programs graduates of the Schools of Medicine and Dental Medicine. Dr. Hurley and the members of Health Career Opportunity Programs wish continued success to the Class of 2020 as they begin their residency programs and professional training. It is an honor to see their achievements as they continue to make a positive impact on patient care, education, and research.



UConn Medical School Hosts New England's Student National Medical Association Meeting

Written by Lauren Woods - School of Medicine and Dental Medicine

UConn School of Medicine's Chapter of the Student National Medical Association (SNMA) hosted the Region VII Medical Education Conference over the weekend of Nov. 23.

The conference's more than 150 attendees included medical students, pre-medical and undergraduate students, and physicians from across New England. There were exhibits highlighting both medical and graduate medical programs, a research symposium, and workshops ranging from preparing medical school applications to advice on how to excel in third-year clerkships and hands-on clinical experiences inside UConn's high-tech Simulation Center.

UConn School of Medicine's SNMA Chapter co-presidents, Tije Oni and Lemuel Gordon Hackshaw, organized the successful conference which centered around the theme of "The DOC is Here: Making Your Presence Known."



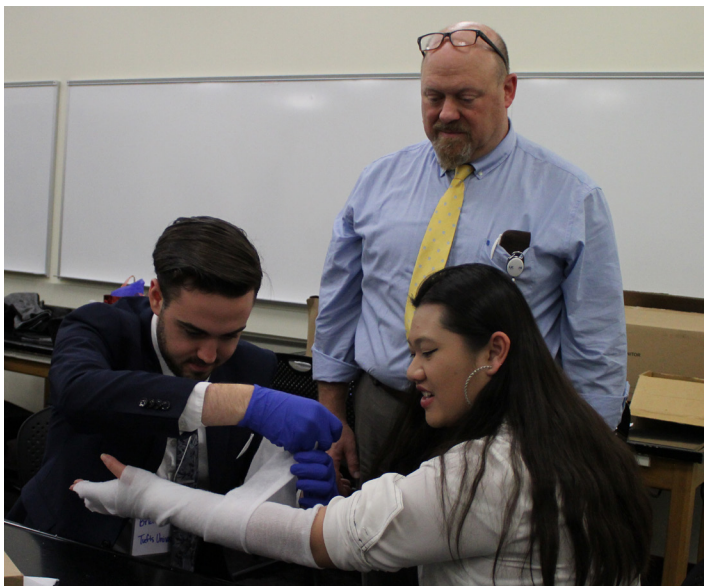
and medical and pre-medical students from all of New England to UConn Health for two days of learning and networking. The conference was a huge success, connections were made, advice and contacts were shared, and lessons were learned."

"I am so proud of UConn School of Medicine's SNMA Chapter and its successful hosting of this year's regional SNMA conference," shared Dr. Marja Hurley, professor of medicine and orthopaedics and associate dean and founding director of the Health Career Opportunity Program at UConn Health. In fact, in 1972 Hurley started the first SNMA Chapter at UConn School of Medicine.



"The privilege of hosting this regional medical educational conference is immeasurable," shared Hackshaw, UConn's SNMA Chapter President and Class of 2022 medical student. "We brought some of the most dedicated and hardworking physicians,





UConn School of Medicine Dean, Dr. Bruce T. Liang, couldn't agree more: "UConn's medical school was excited to host this exceptional group of medical students, professionals, and educators to advance the national discussions on the significant issues that are affecting us, our diversity, and our excellence in the delivery of health care to our nation's citizens."

Liang added: "This year's theme, 'The DOC is Here: Making Your Presence Known,' is essential to raising greater awareness of the challenges groups underrepresented in medicine face daily as well as educating us on how to better enhance the health of the underserved communities we serve."

The mission of SNMA is 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. With over 8,000 members in chapters throughout the nation, the SNMA dedicates its programming to serving the health needs of underserved communities and communities of color.

Student National Dental Association/Hispanic Student Dental Association – UConn Health Chapter Hispanic Heritage Month Event

The UConn Chapter of the Student National Dental Association/Hispanic Student Dental Association (SNDA/HSDA), and the Department of Health Career Opportunity Programs continue to celebrate Hispanic heritage and traditions through various activities and programs, including an annual event for Hispanic Heritage Month. This event is a way to show appreciation for the Hispanic culture of the UConn

Health community through food, song, dance, and other artistic presentations. Last year's event took place on October 16, 2019 at the UConn Health campus. The event included authentic Hispanic cuisine, both home cooked and catered from local restaurants, raffle prizes, and music and entertainment. Additionally, Zumba lessons and contests on aspects of Hispanic culture were highlights of the evening's activities.



Student National Medical Association — UConn Health Chapter Culture Shock Event



Each year the Student National Medical Association (SNMA) hosts Culture Shock, an event sponsored by the Department of Health Career Opportunity Programs. The purpose of the event is to celebrate the diversity of the UConn Health community through food, poetry, fashion,

song, dance, and other artistic presentations. Participants enjoy a wide array of local and international cuisine through generous donations from many restaurants and medical and dental students at UConn Health. This year, Culture Shock was held on January 17, 2020, in UConn Health's Keller Auditorium.

Proceeds from the event were donated to the Urban League of Greater Hartford Young Professionals in Hartford, CT and continue to benefit the mission and efforts of SNMA.

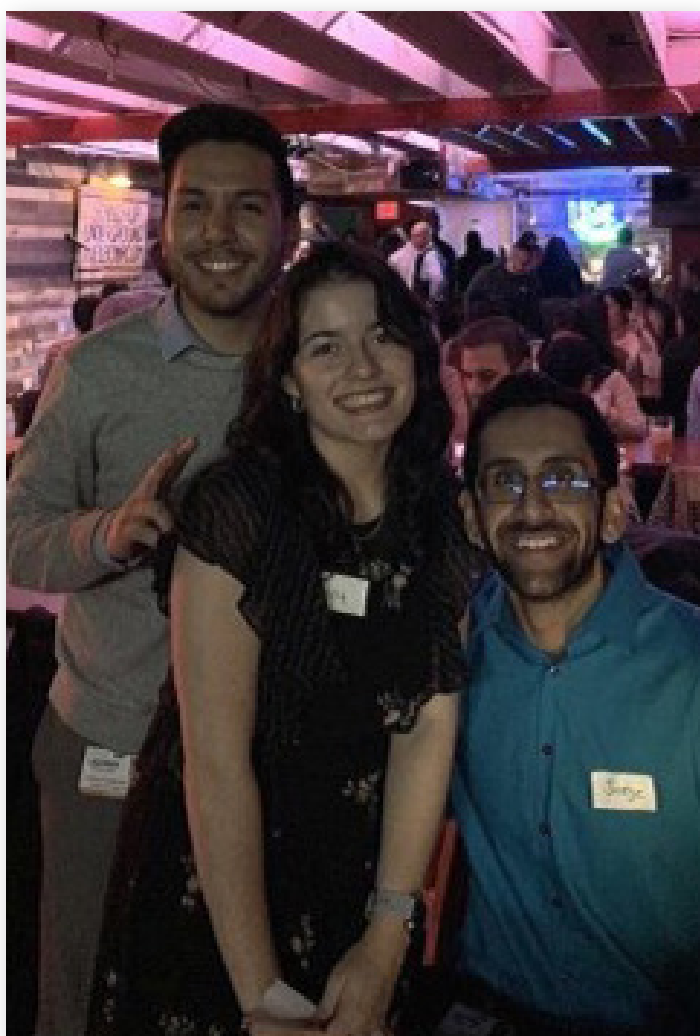
SNMA is a nationally run student organization whose mission is to “support current and future underrepresented minority medical students, to address the needs of underserved communities, and to increase the number of clinically excellent, culturally and socially conscious physicians.” The Urban League of Greater Hartford Young Professionals organization was designed to provide young professionals (ages 21-40) in the Greater Hartford area, with a forum that fosters professional development, community service, social awareness, equal access to opportunities, and self-reliance.” The ULGH-YP's dedication to empowering young people is why the UConn Chapter of SNMA chose to donate to this organization. The UConn Chapter of SNMA continues to foster a strong relationship with ULGH-YP.



Latino Medical Student Association — UConn Health Chapter Dine and Social Con Doctores Networking Event

The Latino Medical Student Association (LMSA) hosted for the first time a networking event called Dine and Social Con Doctores which took place on January 30, 2020. Dine and Social was designed to provide an informal networking and mentoring opportunity for attendings, residents, and medical and dental students. The event had a wonderful turnout of over 50 students and 50 physicians from almost 10 different specialties and fields. The event took place at the Elbow Room restaurant where food was generously sponsored by

the Department of Health Career Opportunity Programs. LMSA organized the beginning of the event with mini-mentoring opportunities between current professionals and current students, and LMSA students acted as conversational facilitators. The event was well-received, and afterwards, participants stayed after to continue their conversations. The LMSA chapter is thankful for the feedback on the activities and hopes to continue this type of event in the future. They look forward to sharing news on their next event!



West Middle School Enrichment Visit at UConn Health

On February 14, 2020, the Department of Health Career Opportunity Programs hosted 47 seventh and eighth grade students from Hartford's West Middle School for a day of enrichment facilitated by the members of the UConn Chapter of the Student National Medical Association (SNMA).

Throughout the day, the middle school students received an overview of cardiovascular and gastrointestinal health along with healthy eating tips from the SNMA members. They also visited the Virtual Anatomy Lab for hands-on activities

focused on human organ systems, which was led by Dr. John Harrison, associate professor, Craniofacial Sciences, UConn Health. Additionally, they learned more about the body systems through clinical workshops on diabetes and blood pressure as well as an anatomy simulation. In honor of Black History Month, the West Middle students also participated in a presentation on prominent African Americans in medicine, dentistry, and science. This event was funded by The Hartford.



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and commitment to the students.

**For more information about the Pipeline Programs,
visit us at health.uconn.edu/hcop**

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