

UConn HEALTH

HEALTH CAREER
OPPORTUNITY PROGRAMS

Aetna Health Professions Partnership Initiative

Doctors Academy Alumni

"Where Are They Now?"

Interested in signing up for our Doctors Academy?
See what our past alumni have to say
so you can follow in their footsteps!



The Doctors Academy



Dr. Marja Hurley, Associate Dean,
Founding Director, Aetna Health
Professions Partnership Initiative



Dr. John Rowe & Dr. Valerie Rowe

The Aetna Health Professions Partnership Initiative (HPPI) programs sponsored by the Department of Health Career Opportunity Programs are recognized as a national model. In 1996, UConn Health, along with the Hartford School District, Central Connecticut State University, the University of Connecticut, and Wesleyan University, developed the Aetna HPPI in response to the Association of American Medical Colleges' Project 3000 By 2000 initiative to increase the number of students from underrepresented groups in the health professions.

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. Dr. John D. Rowe and Dr. Valerie A. Rowe, are long-time 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 as Chairman of 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. Dr. Valerie Rowe is a retired clinical associate professor at the Graduate School of Education at Fordham University.

Health Professions Partnership Initiative Doctors Academy

- Offers a 4-week summer program and a 21-week academic year Saturday academy for 8th-12th graders, and focuses on science, math, and English.
- Includes PSAT and SAT preparation, as well as college and health/STEM career mentoring and exploration.
 - The Great Explorations (8th grade)
 - The Jumpstart Academy (9th & 10th grade)
 - The Junior Doctors Academy (11th grade)
 - The Senior Doctors Academy (12th grade)
- The Doctors Academy program also offers a \$4,000 full fellowship to cover the program cost and a stipend is offered to eligible students for full participation.



Where Are They Now?

Nikay Jones

I became involved with the Doctors Academy after going to a school event and hearing current students share their positive experiences.

The Doctors Academy has been **transformative**, providing academic support, career insights, and a supportive community whose goal is to see their students excel in any career of their choice.

Favorite Great Explorations/Jumpstart 9 Experience:

It was doing dissections. This was my favorite experience because I was able to apply everything that I was learning in the classroom.

This experience was when I realized my love of science.



Nikay graduated from Bulkeley High School and the Senior Doctors Academy, Class of 2022.



Nikay is a current student at Johns Hopkins University, and is studying Computer Science and Mathematics.

"Through the Academy, I've learned valuable time management skills, and have had opportunities for research at a young age."

Words of Advice and Encouragement:

Never give up and always ask for help when needed. As long as you keep working towards your goals everything will work out. In regard to asking for help when needed, I know it can be difficult to accept that things aren't working out, but there is nothing stronger than being able to acknowledge that you need help and then going out to seek it.

Where Are They Now?

Tanya Miller



Tanya graduated from Pomperaug High School, and the Senior Doctors Academy, Class of 2016.

My journey started with the Junior Doctors Academy. **I became involved with Health Career Opportunity Programs because I had always dreamed of being involved in healthcare**, but as a first-generation [college] student, I didn't know how to get there (or if I "had what it took"). I learned more about different fields within healthcare (medicine, dentistry, public health), and I gained a variety of research experience (including in biological software and health disparities, neither of which I had experience in). I also gained valuable test-taking and resume building skills, which helped me gain acceptance in UConn's competitive Rowe Scholars Program which was another key pillar in my success. Thanks to Health Career Opportunity Programs, I never felt alone; I always knew I had multiple resources who would check in on me and encourage me to push myself.

Favorite Junior & Senior Doctors Academy Experience:

One of my fondest memories of the Health Career Opportunity Programs was when we visited UConn Storrs to be a "Husky" for that day with the Rowe Scholars. Even though it was a rainy, overcast day on campus, it was one filled with such optimism and excitement. **That day solidified for me where I wanted to be in a couple of years, and what kind of student I wanted to be once I got to college.**

"I gained so much from being involved with this Program. I made lifelong friends and mentors who I still keep in touch with today."

Words of Advice and Encouragement:

You have what it takes to achieve anything that you dream of; don't ever let anyone (not even yourself) make you believe otherwise. You being a part of Health Career Opportunity Programs is proof that you are a bright and talented student; with hard work and dedication, you can do anything. Always ask lots of questions and for opportunities (to shadow, to get involved with research, etc.)— you never know what doors might open. People want to see you (yes, you!) succeed and the worst thing anyone can say is no. Lastly, please remember that your journey in healthcare and STEM is your own personal journey, and that it's perfectly okay for yours to look different than your friends. There are so many different ways to achieve the same goal and no two stories look exactly alike. "UConn' do it!"



Tanya graduated from UConn, Class of 2020 in Physiology and Neurobiology, was a Chairperson in the Rowe Health Professions Scholars Program for 3 years, and completed a Master of Science in Nursing from Johns Hopkins University.

Where Are They Now?

Joshua Crittenden

When I entered seventh grade, I had an older sibling who participated in the Doctors Academy program. During my years at the Academy, I had the opportunity to meet scientists and medical professionals, which influenced my decision to pursue a Ph.D.

I was interested in the well-being of communities, particularly environmental health issues and concerns. The Flint Water Crisis occurred while I was attending the Senior Doctors Academy, and it led me to the fields of environmental engineering and environmental justice. I discovered that many human health factors are directly caused by environmental conditions.

Favorite Great Explorations/Jumpstart 9 Experience:

I've always appreciated the field trips. We probably went to the Connecticut Science Center more times than I can count! I also enjoyed visiting historical museums and attending conferences.



Joshua graduated from CREC Metropolitan Learning Center and the Senior Doctors Academy, Class of 2014.



Joshua is a UConn graduate, Class of 2018, and a Duke University, Class of 2023 graduate, with a Ph.D. in Environmental Engineering.

"I had the opportunity to meet scientists and medical professionals, which influenced my decision to pursue a Ph.D."

Words of Advice and Encouragement:

It is critical to take advantage of the opportunities that the Health Career Opportunity Programs provide you, as many states are now prevented from launching these programs. Now more than ever, we need students to persevere in the face of adversity in order to produce another generation of scientists and doctors.

Where Are They Now?

Amayah Wimberly-Whaley



Amayah graduated from Windsor High School and the Senior Doctors Academy, Class of 2022.

I have been involved with the Doctors Academy program and I finished by graduating from the Senior Doctors Academy. I became involved because I always knew I wanted to go into medicine and I knew this unique program was going to set me apart from my peers.

Favorite Great Explorations/Jumpstart 9 Experience:

I like learning about the human body. Anything related to humans, I enjoyed learning so science came easy to me. On the other hand, this was not the case for math, but Health Career Opportunity Programs provided resources for extra help whenever I needed it.

Most importantly, the program truly prepared me for high school.

The subjects that I learned over the summer came up again and I was able to succeed in high school.

"Being a part of this program allowed me to find my true 'why' for medicine. It also made me realize that this career is something that I want to do for the rest of my life."

Words of Advice and Encouragement:

Take advantage of opportunities such as the Doctors Academy; it is a unique program that will set you apart from other students and you learn so much inside and outside of the classroom. Even if you don't know if medicine is right for you, this program can help you make that decision.



Amayah is a current UConn Student, studying Molecular Biology, and serving as Chair of Marketing and Public Relations for the Minority Association of Pre-Medical Students.

Where Are They Now?

Day'Avian Mayo

I got involved with the Doctors Academy through my school counselor who recommended it to me in 5th grade and I took the time to fill out the requirements. When I was chosen to do an interview I was surprised I was chosen, but also **very grateful because through this program I was introduced to a lot.** I can proudly say that I know things the average person wouldn't and I'm very appreciative of this.

Favorite Great Explorations /Jumpstart 9 Experience:

The field trips, particularly the one when we went to UConn and were able to learn how to swaddle a baby with a blanket, and then got a tour of the nursing building. I also enjoyed going to the Connecticut Science Center, watching the play *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, at the Hartford Stage, and learning how to create a tourniquet.



Day'Avian graduated from Bulkeley High School and the Senior Doctors Academy, Class of 2022.



Day'Avian is a current UConn Student studying both Philosophy and Sociology. She is also a part of the Empowering Women in Law club, as well as the Human Rights and Actions club.

"It was fun, and it was even more fun that I got to do this with friends and make new ones along the way."

Words of Advice and Encouragement:

You may have an image of your ideal life, but something may alter it, and that is okay. It is common for college students to have a plan, but then change that plan when something they did not know they were interested in arises. In addition, I would like to remind you not to be too hard on yourself. The best thing you can do would be to learn from your mistakes and try to do better next time. It is time for us to change and become our strongest supporters.

Where Are They Now?

Khadijah Stanford



Khadijah graduated from Portland High School and the Senior Doctors Academy, Class of 2020.

I became involved with the Doctors Academy because my older sister was in the program and she loved her experiences so much that it made me want to join. **I've gained so much from being involved in the program**, and I think it also cultivated an environment where **I was able to meet a lot of other students who had similar aspirations and we were able to support each other.**

The aspect of health and STEM fields that really drew my attention was learning about how the human body functioned and how different disease processes can affect one's health and well-being. **I also enjoyed learning about how I could potentially make a difference in the lives and health of disadvantaged communities by being involved in the health field and advocating for these populations.**

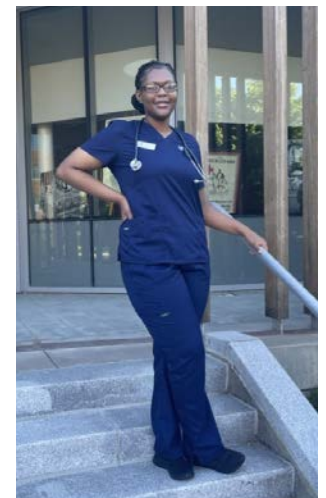
Favorite Great Explorations/Jumpstart 9 Experience:

My best Great Explorations experiences were being able to take trips to places like Mystic Aquarium, as well as meeting other students who are interested in health careers and STEM.

"One of the most important things I've gained is a passion for [understanding] health disparities and being inspired to make a difference in the lives of others."

Words of Advice and Encouragement:

Explore things that interest you and never be afraid to ask questions and seek the advice of others. I think it's really important to find out what interests you and what you're passionate about. Reaching out to people who are doing the things you're passionate about is important because they can provide a lot of insight into different careers and what it's actually like. I would also advise students to come out of their comfort zones and not be afraid to try new things.



Khadijah is a current UConn Student, studying Science in Nursing, and serving as secretary for UConn's Global Health Spaces on Campus (GloHSOC).

Where Are They Now?

Annalyees Hill

I became involved with the Health Career Opportunity Programs Doctors Academy because my oldest sister and brother attended the program. **We all had passions within healthcare and wanted to be hands-on and learn more at a young age.** I gained a lot of opportunities by being able to work at Hartford Hospital to get my foot in the door. This helped prepare me for lots of science and math classes I would take in high school. The summer program and academic year program gave me a head start and helped me be able to take advanced courses from the start of middle school and on.

Favorite Great Explorations/Jumpstart 9 Experience:

The main thing I enjoyed about health and STEM fields while I was in the Doctors Academy program was **being able to be more hands-on and being able to create a relationship with my teachers because this gave me the opportunity to learn faster and be of help.** The field trips really were the best because they made me feel like I was a doctor in a way. The food was always great and being able to get a stipend also helped with preparing for college and saving at such a young age.



Annalyees graduated from CREC Academy of Science and Innovation, and the Senior Doctors Academy, Class of 2022.



Annalyees is a current student at Southern Connecticut State University (SCSU), where she is studying Neuropsychology and English. She is also apart of the Black Student Union at SCSU.

"The program helped me create new relationships with other students and understand the dedication it takes to become anything within the health field."

Words of Advice and Encouragement:

Stay focused and as long as you try, never give up, and trust the process of life... everything will go fine. College is fun and a great experience but always keep in the back of your head why you're there. College is an experience to find yourself; and overall just remember there will be ups and downs in not only college but jobs, internships, classes, etc., but just remember in the end you will be okay and this is all a part of growing up.

Where Are They Now?

Qura-Tul-Ain Khan



From a tender age, my fascination with science and mathematics ignited a dream within me to pursue a career in medicine.

It was the foresight and determination of my parents that opened the door to a pivotal opportunity for my sisters and me: the Health Career Opportunity Programs Doctors Academy. Before I embarked on my high school journey, **they enrolled us in the Doctors Academy Great Explorations program, a step that would unknowingly alter the course of my future.**

Favorite Great Explorations/Jumpstart 9 Experience:

The Doctors Academy experience, which once seemed like a sacrifice, has revealed itself to be an invaluable gift. **It provided me with the foundation, knowledge, and support network essential for navigating the complex journey towards a career in medicine. The skills I gained from Health Career Opportunity Programs have helped me in my career path of becoming an accomplished biomedical researcher.**

Qura-Tul-Ain graduated from East Windsor High School and the Senior Doctors Academy, Class of 2018.

"Initially, the prospect of sacrificing my summer mornings for the rigors of learning did not sit well with me... Yet, as I reflect on those moments from the vantage point of today, I am overwhelmed with gratitude."

Words of Advice and Encouragement:

Although it is hard to wake up early in the morning, **take advantage of every opportunity that is provided by the Doctors Academy**, especially if you are genuinely interested in medicine. This program allows for the space to develop a platform for yourself within the medical community as well as a community to network within. Do not be afraid to ask questions and reach out to medical students and physicians to hear about their journeys, to ask to shadow, or to look over your resume. If a connection doesn't work out then do not be discouraged, there is someone or something else that is out there invested in you and your future!



Qura-Tul-Ain graduated from Wesleyan University, Class of 2022, and completed a Masters in Molecular Biology in 2023.

Where Are They Now?

Justin Ude



Justin graduated from South Windsor High School and the Senior Doctors Academy, Class of 2017.

I began my journey through the Doctors Academy when I was in the 7th grade. What I gained from the Academy is that it helped me to choose the healthcare career that was perfect for me.

I was really intrigued by the sciences which was why I was interested in health/STEM careers. **The Doctors Academy exposed me to a lot of the sciences early on which enhanced my learning and made it fun!**

Favorite Great Explorations/Jumpstart 9 Experience:

My favorite program experience was the Closing Ceremony by far. Seeing everyone come together and celebrate our accomplishments and hard work throughout the school year and the summer was always the best feelings. I also enjoyed our field trip to Boston to the Biomedical Sciences Career Program conference, where **I gained a lot of insight from different healthcare workers which was a great experience.**

"I've gained a handful of lifelong friends from this program that I still talk to today."

Words of Advice and Encouragement:

Be yourself, get involved, and strive for greatness. You never know who you may meet along the way in life. As long as you stay authentic and be the best version of yourself, that alone will take you far to build connections! No accomplishment is too far out of reach; continue to put your mind to anything you want to do and work hard!



Justin graduated from UConn, Class of 2021 in Allied Health Sciences, and graduated from UConn Accelerated Bachelor of Science in Nursing Program in 2022.

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UConn Health

**ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF OUR PARENTS, TEACHERS, PEER
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*We thank you for your support and continued encouragement and
commitment to the students.*

For more information about the Doctors Academy, please visit us
at health.uconn.edu/hcop/, or contact Tracey Higgins at
hcopacademy@uchc.edu or 860-679-8031

