

NSU
Florida

SIX-YEAR COLLEGE
KPCOM announces
an exciting
program addition.

**MEMORABLE
MOMENT**
Childhood physician
creates an
indelible impact.

OMT ADVOCATE
2017 alumnus
exemplifies the
osteopathic
philosophy.

LINK

KPCOM

Nova Southeastern University Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Osteopathic Medicine



SUMMER 2025
V4.2



A bronze statue commemorating Russell Dohner's contributions to patient care was unveiled in Rushville, Illinois, in 2014.

CHILDHOOD PHYSICIAN MAKES LASTING IMPACT ON EVELYN ECHEVARRIA CRUZ

When second-year student Evelyn Echevarria Cruz relocated to Beardstown, Illinois, with her family when she was a child, the last thing on her mind was the thought of becoming a physician. That all changed, however, thanks to her memorable experience with Russell Dohner, M.D.

After settling in Beardstown—a small, working-class town—the family, which was struggling to make ends meet, met Dohner, who charged five dollars per visit and saw all patients, regardless of their background or ability to pay. “I vividly remember sitting in his clinic’s waiting room, legs swinging off the edge of the vinyl chair, watching patient after patient shuffle in without an appointment, knowing they’d be seen,” Echevarria explained. “No insurance? No problem. Five dollars in your pocket? That was all it took.”

According to Echevarria, Dohner, who would become somewhat of a national celebrity due to his compassionate brand of health care, didn’t use an electronic medical record system, just handwritten notes. “He knew each patient personally,” she said. “You weren’t a chart number; you were a person. His compassion and consistency shaped my earliest experiences with health care.”

Echevarria didn’t fully comprehend the rarity of the kind of commitment Dohner exemplified at the time, but she knew it made her feel safe, seen, and cared for. “As I got older and started volunteering at free health fairs, I realized that what Dr. Dohner gave to our community wasn’t just care; it was dignity,” she stressed.

“His example planted the seed for my interest in medicine, but more specifically, it instilled in me the kind of physician I want to become. I don’t want to diagnose and treat. I want to serve and understand,” she added. “That’s what Dr. Dohner did, which drew me to osteopathic medicine due to the emphasis on treating the whole person, not just the symptoms.”

When she became Dohner’s patient, he was already in his 80s—a throwback to an earlier time. “He practiced every day in the same suit, tie, and signature fedora hat with a stethoscope around his neck. He didn’t just provide medicine; he gave hope. That five dollars wasn’t just about affordability; it was a symbol of his philosophy,” she recalled.



“Dr. Dohner made health care accessible in a tangible way,” Echevarria added. “I watched families struggling to make ends meet walk out of his clinic with prescriptions, referrals, and reassurance—knowing they didn’t have to choose between groceries and seeing the doctor. He made my family feel seen and cared for in a place where we were still trying to find our footing. That kind of service—quiet, relentless, and deeply human—inspired me to pursue osteopathic medicine because of its holistic approach.”

Cover Photo: In March, the KPCOM coordinated an alumni reception at the Tampa Bay Regional Campus that attracted a mix of alumni, NSU leadership, and other dignitaries.



Echevarria enjoys interacting with fellow students and faculty members.

After launching her college studies, Echevarria's family relocated to Miami, Florida, compelling her to transfer schools to be closer to them. "The transition to South Florida exposed me to new health care disparities, this time in a more urban, immigrant-heavy environment," she explained. "I saw echoes of the same barriers my family faced in Illinois, but now, they were magnified by language, culture, and access in a fast-paced city like Miami."

To help make a difference, Echevarria began volunteering at health fairs. "From the Florida Keys to Broward County, I've seen how underserved populations here struggle to find reliable, affordable, and compassionate care," she said. "That reaffirmed my decision to pursue medicine and ultimately led me to NSU's Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Osteopathic Medicine (KPCOM). The school's emphasis on holistic care, community service, and producing physicians who serve with purpose aligned perfectly with everything I believe in."

As she transitions into her third-year clinical rotations, Echevarria already has her eye on what she plans to pursue as a specialty once she graduates. "I'm currently exploring otolaryngology—a field that beautifully combines surgical skills with the ability to transform lives by restoring senses like hearing,

speech, and balance," she said. "It's a specialty that demands precision, but also compassion. Whether helping a child hear for the first time, preserving a person's voice, or treating sinus disease in someone who hasn't breathed freely in years, otolaryngologists can make a lifelong impact on a patient's life."

Although she's leaning toward a future in otolaryngology, she is open to other possibilities. "I also care deeply about preventive medicine and public health, especially in rural and underserved communities,"

Echevarria explained. "Wherever I end up, I want to be the kind of physician who sees patients as people first."



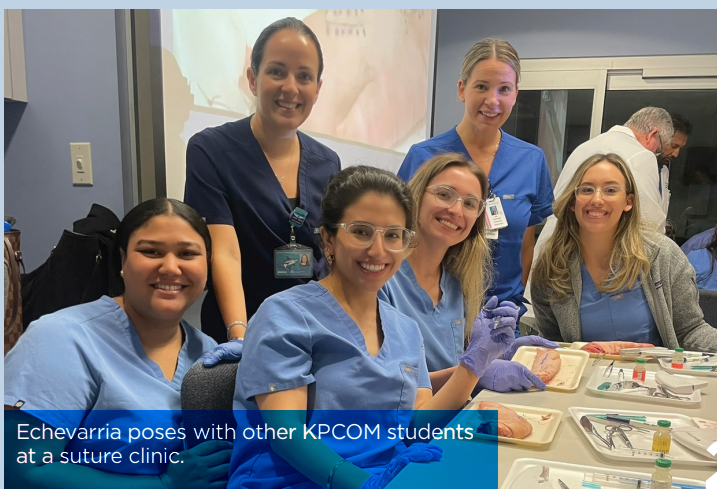
Echevarria (front row), poses with other health fair volunteers.

Thanks to her life-changing experience with Dohner, Echevarria has a clear idea of the type of physician she wants to be.

"Dr. Dohner showed me that medicine isn't about prestige but purpose," she said. "In a world where health care often feels like a privilege rather than a right, he reminded me that being a doctor is one of the most powerful ways to address systemic inequality. Dr. Dohner didn't change the world with a breakthrough invention or headline-making research. He changed it one patient at a time. That's the legacy I want to continue."



Echevarria is shown with other members of the college's Terry Society.



Echevarria poses with other KPCOM students at a sutire clinic.



Echevarria and her KPCOM peers wrote cards of encouragement for the Ronald McDonald House of Charities.



Brittany Shectman receives a certificate of excellence from Noel Alonso, M.D., associate dean of clinical education.

CONQUERING SELF-DOUBT HELPS BRITTANY SHECTMAN PURSUE HER DREAM

Third-year student Brittany Shectman, a native South Floridian, was immersed in a health care atmosphere from an early age thanks to her father, a longtime dentist. “I used to make stickers that said Dr. Shectman and always told my family I would be the next Dr. Shectman,” she explained.

The death of one of her grandfathers from Alzheimer’s disease when she was 12 amplified Shectman’s interest in pursuing a degree in

medicine. That interest was enhanced further when her other grandfather succumbed to leukemia a few years later. “Seeing what a difference their doctors made in their lives showed me the kind of doctor I wanted to be,” she said.

As she progressed through high school and began attending Florida State University (FSU) in Tallahassee, however, her resolve to become a physician was repeatedly tested. Following a series of worrisome conversations in which several teachers, counselors, and advisers told her she simply wasn’t good enough, she faced some serious self-doubt, which almost derailed her from pursuing her goal.

"It occurred quite often. They always told me I had to 'want it' more than anything, and that it would consume my life. They felt I didn't want it badly enough, because I changed my mind many times during my undergrad career, but that was only because I was constantly being told only the best of the best would succeed," she said of the confidence-sapping feedback.

"I felt so discouraged always being told I didn't want it enough," Sheckman explained. "I was told I needed to be at the top of my class, with multiple positions in clubs, volunteer hours, and research just to be considered."

When she reached college, the stress of it all took a serious toll, requiring Sheckman to take a needed break to deal with her rising anxiety. "I went through a really hard freshman year," she admitted. "I developed depression, anxiety, and a panic disorder, which made going to class and focusing on work nearly impossible."

After returning home to be with her family, Sheckman learned how to manage her depression and panic disorder with the help of a therapist. "He helped me see how I wasn't allowing myself to find my passion, because I was letting others dictate how I saw myself," she revealed. "I came to realize I deserve to follow my dreams, even if that meant not listening to my advisers."

Still, even when Sheckman returned to FSU, it took her some time to find her footing. "I started as a human resources major, switched to speech pathology, then psych, then neuro-psych, and finally ended with a major in psych and minor in chemistry," she explained. "I initially pursued a degree in human resources because I love people, and helping people was always something I enjoyed."

Because it had been ingrained in Sheckman that she wasn't "good enough" to be a doctor, she focused on careers options that could

help people in other ways. After taking several business classes, however, she began dreading them. "All I wanted to do was be back in science classes and the lab, which is why I slowly made my way to more science-based majors," she said. "I finally started to believe in myself, which is what I was lacking the entire time—self-confidence."

As graduation approached, Sheckman set her sights on medical school and a return to South Florida. "I chose NSU's Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Osteopathic Medicine (KPCOM) for a few reasons," she said. "My aunt is an NSU

graduate and spoke so highly of her time here, but I mainly wanted to be back home with my family. I needed my support system, because I knew medical school wasn't going to be easy, and having my family by my side would take away a lot of the pressure I felt to always be perfect."

After earning her bachelor's degree from FSU, Sheckman worked as a medical assistant at a dermatology office during her gap year, which is why she has an interest in doing

a related residency when she graduates from the KPCOM in 2027. "I love dermatology and would love to pursue a residency in it," she revealed. "I also shadowed a pediatrician and fell in love with the specialty, so that is another avenue I could see myself pursuing."

Because she's no stranger to doubters, Sheckman was prepared for the comments she heard regarding how difficult it is to gain entry into a dermatology residency. "What I've learned from my past experiences is that I need to believe in myself, and then good things will come," she concluded. "After all, you only need one person to believe in you—yourself!" ■



Family support is key to Sheckman's success.



JASON FAUCHEUX RELISHES THE JOYS OF OMT AND PATIENT CARE

As a child growing up in Mandeville and Covington, Louisiana, 2017 Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Osteopathic Medicine (KPCOM) alumnus Jason Faucheux, D.O., was known as the inquisitive boy who always asked “Why?”

“I always had an interest in medicine growing up. My dad is a pharmacist who always had a wealth of knowledge and a passion for medicine,” explained Faucheux of his dad, who passed that curiosity on to him. “I had a strong interest in biology, which was my favorite

subject in school. I loved to ask why, which I did often growing up. As a matter of fact, one year, my coworkers gave me a cake full of question marks because I loved to learn and ask questions.”

Faucheux recalled visiting his dad at work, which further nurtured his health care ambitions. “I remember feeling an immense sense of pride watching my dad, because he worked hard to get to where he was and dedicated his life each day to helping

people,” he said. “He always knew the answer to every question I asked him. And when people were sick, he knew exactly what medication they needed and everything about it. I know without a doubt that my dad helped inspire me to always work hard and pursue a life in medicine.”

Because Faucheux was intrigued with how the body was designed and worked, he pursued activities that immersed him in the medical field, including volunteering at his local hospital when he was in high school, which later led to his initial hospital job. “I worked at Lakeview Regional Medical Center as a progressive care unit clerk, where I got to know a lot of the doctors, nurses, monitor techs, and lab staff,” said Faucheux, who is currently a family medicine physician at AVALA Care in his hometown of Covington.

“Everyone knew of my interest in becoming a physician, so the hospital staff taught me a lot along the way and introduced me to the patient’s bedside,” he continued. “This is where I confirmed that being a doctor was the calling God was leading me to. I owe a lot to the nurses I worked with, who inspired me to be a compassionate physician who listens to the patient and understands the value of working on a health care team.”

Interestingly, Faucheux had never heard of the osteopathic profession until he worked as a respiratory therapist in the intensive care unit and met a D.O. resident—an interaction that would alter Faucheux’s future. “At that moment, the course of my life changed, as I instantly fell in love with the osteopathic philosophy of healing,” he explained of the profession’s approach to looking at the patient as a whole and its integration of osteopathic manipulative treatment (OMT) into patient care.

“She (the resident) introduced me to the director of the Louisiana Osteopathic Medical

Association, who told me about NSU’s osteopathic college. After learning about what it had to offer, I knew this was where I was meant to go,” Faucheux said.

While at the KPCOM, Faucheux became fascinated by osteopathic principles and practice (OPP). “I enjoyed seeing how it integrated into each system we studied, and how just by using my hands and listening, I could have such a profound impact on someone’s health and healing,” explained Faucheux, who became one of the college’s OPP predoctoral fellows. “We had such amazing faculty members, who inspired us and truly represented the joy it brings and the



Jason Faucheux was a proud member of the U.S. Air Force for several years.

connection you have with your patients when treating them using OMT.”

During his KPCOM days, he also became active in the Integrative Medicine Club, where the conversations Faucheux had as a club member helped add new dimensions to his education. “I was introduced to acupuncture and functional/integrative medicine in the club, which then led me to take a 300-hour medical acupuncture course, as well as courses in functional medicine, when I joined the U.S. Air Force after graduating,” he said.

Faucheux's penchant for military service actually began years earlier when he was part of the U.S. Air Force Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps during high school. "I have many great memories, including summer leadership school at Barksdale Air Force Base," said Faucheux of those treasured times.

After completing his Advent Health East Orlando Family Medicine Residency program training in June 2020, he joined the Family Health Clinic at Keesler Medical Center at Keesler Air Force Base in Biloxi, Mississippi. In 2021, however, he was deployed to Kuwait, where he served as the chief of medical staff for the 386th Expeditionary Medical Squadron.

"I led the medical team in support of Operation Inherent Resolve and Operation Spartan Shield, which enabled a 99 percent return-to-duty rate for the service members. I established an integrative pain clinic, which helped those deployed better manage the pain and impact of their jobs or injuries and get them back to duty quicker. While there, I also collaborated with three nations as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization medical liaison coordinating advanced medical care for military service members," he explained.

"D.O.s work very well with physical therapists (PTs) in regard to integrating OMT and osteopathic philosophy," he added. "Therefore, I partnered with PTs to establish an operational support team to embed specialty care and provide preventative musculoskeletal services to military service members to help reduce injuries."



Faucheux and his family pose for a fun portrait.

Once his military commitment was fulfilled, Faucheux, his wife Victoria—a palliative care nurse practitioner—and their children Olivia and Luke moved back to his hometown of Covington to be near their families. "I joined a local, physician-owned hospital called AVALA and helped the physicians establish and grow the new family medicine clinic," he explained.

"Because AVALA believes in the core value of quality care in an environment that promotes healing, as well as restoring trust between physicians and patients, I knew this was the perfect place to establish roots and take care of the people in the community where I grew up," he added. "Each day, I get the opportunity to listen to my patients; help promote healing through osteopathic family medicine; and use OMT, acupuncture, and integrative medicine in my practice."

Not surprisingly, one of Faucheux's greatest professional pleasures is having the opportunity to incorporate the OMT skills he learned at the KPCOM into his daily patient care. "The osteopathic philosophy is exactly how medicine should be. I enjoy teaching and helping my patients get to know and understand their bodies to best promote healing. This often involves improving their medical conditions and subsequently reducing their medications," he said.

"I show them how they can have a positive effect on their health when they integrate the mind, body, and spirit. I still find it amazing to see how the body changes with OMT, and how it instantly makes someone feel better," he stressed. "They walk into your office in pain or not feeling well and walk out feeling much better. As a physician, experiencing that direct impact in someone's life is why I love what I get to do each day." ■



Faucheux enjoys his current role as a family medicine physician at AVALA Care in Louisiana.



EXPLOSIVE GROWTH: KPCOM ABSORBS HEALTH CARE SCIENCES PROGRAMS

Thanks to a significant academic restructuring by university leadership, the Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Osteopathic Medicine (KPCOM) experienced massive programmatic growth effective July 1.

To promote cross-disciplinary education and improve collaboration in its health care programs, Nova Southeastern University (NSU) moved all current degree-level programs in its Dr. Pallavi Patel College of Health Care Sciences to two new schools that operate under either the KPCOM or the Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Allopathic Medicine (KPCAM).

The new Dr. Pallavi Patel School of Rehabilitative Sciences is now part of the KPCOM and includes all current degree-level programs of

- Audiology
- Health and Human Performance
- Occupational Therapy
- Physical Therapy
- Speech-Language Pathology

The new Dr. Pallavi Patel School of Health Sciences is now part of the KPCAM and includes all current degree-level programs of

- Anesthesia
- Cardiopulmonary Sciences (Respiratory Therapy)
- Health Science
- Physician Assistant
- Sonography (Cardiovascular, Medical)

"I am excited that these additions to our college will open new avenues for collaboration, research, and growth," said Elaine M. Wallace, D.O., Ed.S., M.S., M.S., M.S., M.S., KPCOM dean. "This move is totally in accordance with the trend the KPCOM has been following for the past 10 years—to recognize that many sectors of health care must be engaged to provide excellence in patient care."

This academic realignment mirrors the original mission statement of NSU's former Health Professions Division when it was established decades ago. These changes will foster the education, research, and patient care pursuits of NSU's health professions students and faculty members to

"I am excited that these additions to our college will open new avenues for collaboration, research, and growth."

—Elaine M. Wallace

take place in "a multidisciplinary setting, and, whenever possible, with integrated education... so the various disciplines will learn to work together as a team for the good of the public's health." This includes sharing campus—and outside—facilities, as well as having some combined classes and clinical experiences. ■

KPCOM LAUNCHES SIX-YEAR MEDICAL SCHOOL PROGRAM



The Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Osteopathic Medicine (KPCOM) prides itself on being a visionary institution that provides its students with the most progressive educational opportunities possible. The KPCOM, which already comprises numerous bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degree programs, is set to launch a new program this fall to help decrease the cost of education—a six-year college-medical school experience.

As with other university undergraduate programs, students in the six-year D.O. program may apply AP credits toward college coursework, allowing them to complete all required medical school prerequisites. The program also enables students to earn 90 credit hours prior to medical school admission—the current standard—and complete a bachelor's degree after their first year of medical school. Altogether, the program reduces the traditional eight-year college and medical school pathway to six years, decreasing both time and cost.

The six-year college-medical school experience, which is currently an invitation-only program, targets the advanced high school applicant. It is a Dual Admission Program that joins the dual admission 3+ and 4+ programs currently offered by the KPCOM.

“As someone deeply invested in shaping the future of medical education, I am thrilled to be a part of launching this innovative, six-year pathway at the KPCOM,” said Phyllis Filker, D.M.D., M.P.H., executive associate dean of undergraduate, graduate, technology, and community education.

“We recognize that highly motivated students should not have to choose between efficiency

and excellence,” she added. “By reducing both the time and financial burden of medical training, we are opening doors for the next generation of physicians to begin making an impact even sooner. This program reflects our commitment to supporting bright, driven students from the very start of their journey.” ■

Did You Know?

The KPCOM has transformed dramatically over the past two decades, adding numerous degree options to its academic offerings. Below is a listing of the various degrees students can pursue, including those of the new Dr. Pallavi Patel School of Rehabilitative Sciences housed under the KPCOM umbrella.

Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Osteopathic Medicine

Couple and Family Therapy

Couple and Family Therapy—**Ph.D./M.S.**

Marriage and Family Therapy—**D.M.F.T.**

Disaster and Emergency Management—**M.S.**

Foundational and Integrated Medical Sciences—**M.S.**

Health Informatics—**M.S./B.S.**

Medical Education—**M.S.**

Nutrition

Human Nutrition—**B.S.**

Nutrition—**M.S.**

Osteopathic Medicine—**D.O.**

Public Health—**M.P.H./B.S.**

Dr. Pallavi Patel School of Rehabilitative Sciences

Audiology

Audiologist Assistant—**Certificate**

Audiology—**Au.D.**

Health and Human Performance

Exercise and Sport Science—**B.S.**

Sports Science—**M.S.**

Occupational Therapy—**Ph.D./Dr.O.T./O.T.D.**

Physical Therapy—**Ph.D./D.P.T.**

Speech-Language Pathology

Speech-Language and Communication Disorders—**B.S.**

Speech-Language Pathology—**SLP.D./M.S.**

EXCITEMENT ON DISPLAY AT MATCH DAY EVENT

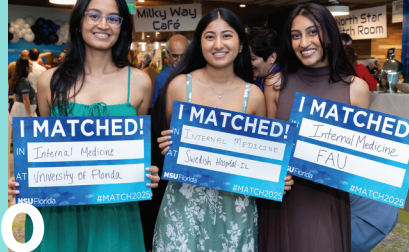
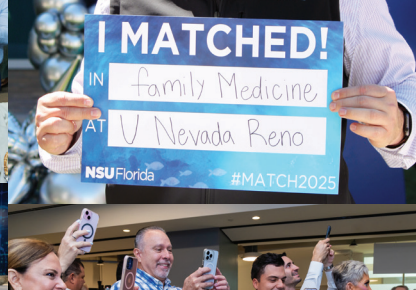
On March 21, the Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Osteopathic Medicine (KPCOM) coordinated Match Day events at both the Fort Lauderdale/Davie and Tampa Bay Regional Campuses. Excitement crackled in the air as the students waited anxiously with friends and family members to open their envelopes and see if they earned their dream matches.

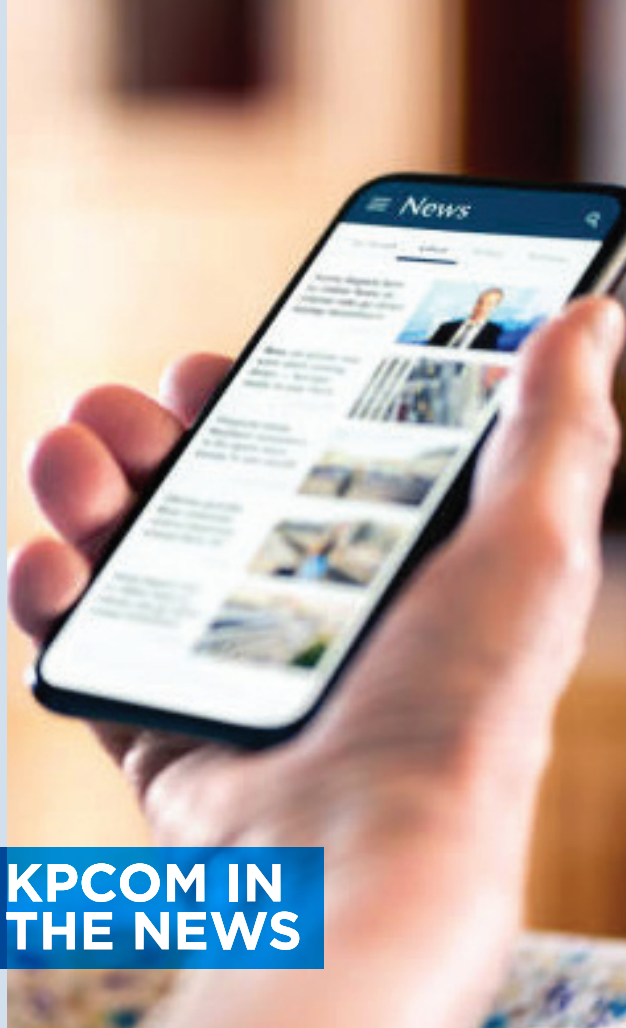
According to the class of 2025 match statistics, 374 students were scheduled to complete the D.O. program and begin their graduate medical education training in July. In terms of general statistics, 97.3 percent of KPCOM students matched, with 22 matching in the Supplemental Offer and Acceptance Program.

Additionally, 102 matched into internal medicine, 47 matched into emergency medicine, 49 matched into family medicine, 29 matched into pediatrics, 11 matched into surgery, 23 matched into psychiatry, and 6 matched into OB-GYN. From a Florida perspective, 208 graduating students are staying in the Sunshine State to begin their postgraduate training—a decrease from the 227 that did so last year.

Match Week was also cause for celebration nationwide. According to the National Residency Matching Program (NRMP), the percentage of fourth-year D.O. students matching rose to 92.6 percent—a record high during the single match era. In addition, the number of fourth-year students participating was a record-high 8,392—an increase of 4.5 percent from 2024.

Based on various sources, including the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine, this was the largest NRMP Match in history, with more than 52,400 participants competing for 43,237 positions. The percentage of positions filled by U.S. osteopathic medicine students rose to 19.4 percent—the only group of U.S. students to see an increase. ■





KPCOM IN THE NEWS

In April, the college received the maximum 10-year accreditation from the American Osteopathic Association's Commission on Osteopathic College Accreditation, earning the highest rating—granted accreditation with exceptional outcome. "This is a tribute to the achievements, efforts, and teamwork of the entire KPCOM community of faculty, administrators, students, and staff—particularly those who spent dozens of hours, even days, on the preparations and review visits," said Harry K. Moon, M.D., FACS, FRCSEd, NSU president and CEO. "As one of our state's, and even our nation's, leading providers of physicians and health care professionals, and with KPCOM graduates often choosing to practice in fields or areas of highest need, the college plays an essential role in delivering the world-class education, research, and patient care that is making ours a healthier world."

In other KPCOM news, the college earned six placements in the *U.S. News & World Report's* Best Graduate School rankings, including being ranked 38th in the Most Graduates Practicing in Health Professional Shortage Areas category, 45th in Most Graduates Practicing in Primary Care listing, and 77th in the Most Graduates Practicing in Rural Areas category. ■

TAMPA BAY RECEPTION ENGAGES ALUMNI

On March 12, the Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Osteopathic Medicine (KPCOM) coordinated an alumni reception at the Tampa Bay Regional Campus, which attracted approximately 90 alumni, community members, and faculty and staff members, as well as special guests Drs. Kiran C. and Pallavi Patel, M.D.s.

Speakers included Anthony N. Ottaviani, D.O., M.P.H., MACOI, FCCP, NSU Board of Trustees member; Elaine M. Wallace, D.O., Ed.S., M.S., M.S., M.S., KPCOM dean; Harry K. Moon, M.D., FACS,

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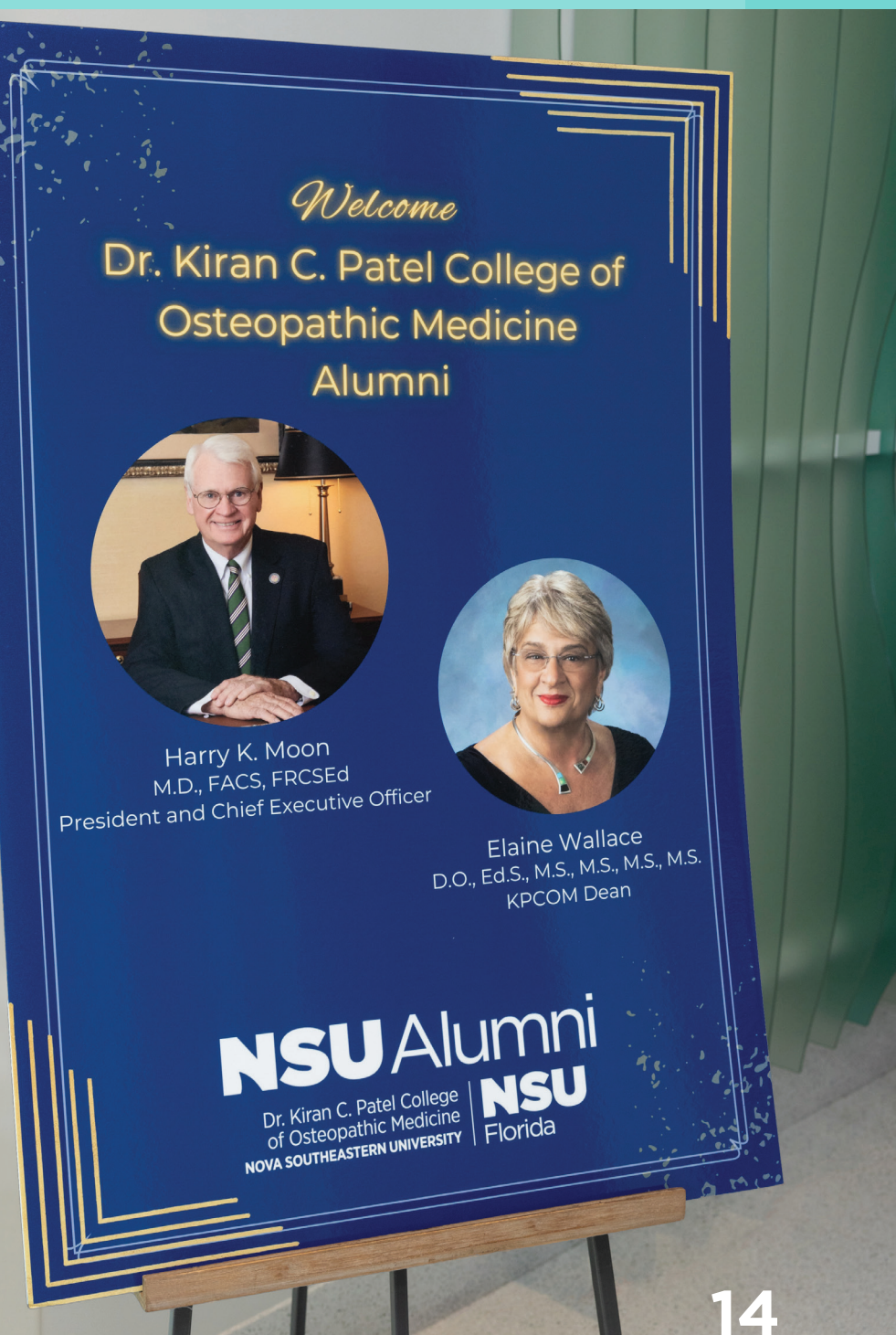


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FRCSed, NSU president and chief executive officer; Chad A. Perlyn, M.D., Ph.D., M.B.A., executive vice president and chief medical officer, executive medical director for NSU Health, and dean of the Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Allopathic Medicine; and Kenneth Johnson, D.O., FACOOG, FACOG, executive associate dean of the KPCOM's Tampa Bay Regional Campus site, who provided tours of the campus with the help of KPCOM student volunteers.

"This special reception for D.O. alumni was a unique opportunity for them to visit and tour NSU's beautiful Clearwater campus for the first time," said Kathryn W. Miller, J.D., director of development for NSU Health and Advancement and Community Relations. "They were able to meet NSU's new president, hear from Dr. Wallace about the KPCOM's successes since they graduated, and learn about the vision for NSU Health from Dr. Chad Perlyn. This inaugural KPCOM alumni event at the Tampa Bay Regional Campus energized the alumni in attendance to reconnect with NSU." ■





Leadership in Medicine Education

Shaping the Future of Medicine

Mark Sandhouse, D.O.,

UPDATES IN MEDICINE CREATES EPIC MEMORIES

On April 25–27, the KPCOM's sixth Updates in Medicine event was held at the Wyndham Grand Clearwater Beach in Florida. The gathering, which attracted more than 300 attendees, is a family-oriented, continuing medical education (CME) weekend for the college's alumni that also serves as a thank you to the clinical and rural and urban underserved medicine leadership.

This year's event, which focused on the theme Leadership in the New Millennium, featured a mix of educational and entertaining activities, including a festive welcome reception and a range of informative CME sessions presented by the KPCOM's faculty members and administrators. These included Brain-Based Leadership, Leadership in Medical Education, Leadership in Sports Medicine, Positive Psychology Leadership, and Women in Leadership.

"These engaging and thought-provoking sessions afforded attendees the opportunity to create fabulous memories and earn five



CME credits,” said Kathy Sadler, who serves as project manager to the college’s dean, Elaine M. Wallace, D.O., Ed.S., M.S., M.S., M.S.

“Additionally, spirited meetings and immersive virtual-reality demonstrations were hosted, as well as a Saturday dinner where awards were presented to honor longtime alumni who were in attendance, including Drs. Joel Rush and Bruce Rankin (40 years), Dr. Barbara Arcos (30 years), and Dr. Marie Florent-Carre (20 years),” Sadler added. “The top-notch weekend included unforgettable networking moments, laughter, and fun that allowed spectacular memories to be made. ■





KPCOM GRADUATION PHOTO GALLERY

During the commencement ceremony held May 15 in NSU's Rick Case Arena at the Don Taft University Center, 397 proud D.O. graduates marched across the stage to accept their diplomas in front of a cheerful mix of friends, family members, peers, university administrators, and faculty members. In addition to the D.O. graduates, other newly minted KPCOM alumni were feted at both the May 6 and 15 ceremonies in programmatic areas, such as couple and family therapy, disaster and emergency management, family therapy, health informatics, human nutrition, marriage and family therapy, medical education, nutrition, and public health. ■



Amir Abdoly, D.O.

('14), a board-certified interventional cardiologist, joined the Southeast Georgia Health System at its Southeast Georgia Physician Associates—Cardiology office and its Brunswick Campus medical staff. Abdoly, who completed a cardiology fellowship at Broward General Hospital in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, and an interventional cardiology fellowship at Oklahoma State University in Tulsa, previously worked as an interventional cardiologist at First Coast Heart and Vascular—a cardiology practice with multiple locations across Jacksonville and Northeast Florida.

**Andrea Z. Ali-Panzarella,**

D.O., M.P.H., FAAP, FACOP ('06), a pediatrician

specializing in child abuse and a passionate advocate for children's health and well-being, released her debut children's book

Every Family Is a Tree. Inspired by her own journey through infertility, loss, and building a family through gestational surrogacy, the book illustrates the many ways families come together, emphasizing love and belonging as the true foundation of family.

**Imran Akhtar, D.O. ('15),**

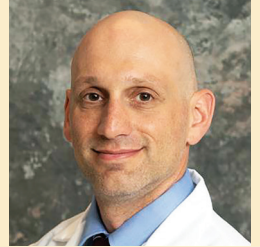
joined the St. Peter's Orthopedics team in New York. St. Peter's Orthopedics—a new practice within St. Peter's Health Partner's Medical Associates—offers comprehensive orthopedic care with a focus on personalized treatment, advanced surgical techniques, and improved recovery times.

**Kayvan Amini, D.O.,**

FACC ('01), a renowned cardiologist and president of the Broward County Medical Association, was featured in a May 27 *South Florida Sun Sentinel* article titled "New NSU President Aims to Transform Medical Education Amid Florida's Critical Needs for Health Care." He discussed several issues, including the need to identify and fund more graduate medical education spots in Florida.

**Matthew Denson, D.O. ('15),**

and **Kathryn Fitzgerald, D.O. ('15)**, joined the surgical team at Aspire Rural Health's campuses in Cass City and Marlette, Michigan. They specialize in a variety of surgical procedures, including inguinal hernia repair, gallbladder surgery, lipoma removal, and port placements.

**Tina Fabiano, D.O. ('11),**

is the new medical director of VITAS Healthcare Palm Beach.

**Lisa Gwynn, D.O.,**

M.B.A., M.S.P.H., FAAP ('98), professor of

clinical pediatrics and public health sciences and associate chair of population health and

advocacy at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine, was appointed to the university's Iron Arrow Honor Society—the highest honor a person can achieve at the University of Miami.

**Ericka Hersh, D.O., M.P.H.**

('08), joined Southcoast Health in Fall River, Massachusetts. Hersh, who did her residency in obstetrics-gynecology, is focused on routine women's health care and minimally invasive surgery.



ACHIEVEMENTS

Karen Isaacs-Charles, D.O., M.S., CPE ('03), who is board certified in family practice and osteopathic manipulative medicine, joined the VCU Health Stony Point 9000 health care team in Richmond, Virginia. She holds medical licenses in New York, Virginia, and Maryland, allowing her to serve a range of patients and communities.



Gregory James, D.O., M.P.H., CMD, FACOFP *dist.* ('88), received the Osteopathic Family Physician of the Year Award at the American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians' (ACOFP) 62nd Annual Convention and Scientific Seminars held April 2–6 in Palm Springs, California. The award, which is presented to a member who exemplifies what the ACOFP believes an osteopathic family physician should be, honors physicians who have made outstanding contributions to the osteopathic profession and local communities, while being a role model to peers and students.



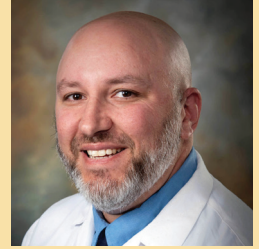
Jeena Kar, D.O. ('20), was named associate program director for psychiatry at the University of Florida, becoming the first osteopathic physician to hold this position. In this role, she will be creating a pediatric didactic curriculum for the general residents, mentoring them for a career in child and adolescent psychiatry, and doing clinical teaching.



Constance Katsafanas, D.O. ('12), a board-certified neurologist who serves as program director of Florida Atlantic University Schmidt College of Medicine's neurology residency program, joined the Marcus Neuroscience Institute, which is part of Baptist Health. She will oversee the neurology residency program at Boca Raton Regional Hospital.



David Magness, D.O., M.B.A., DipABLM, FACOFP ('09), medical director of Premise Health's Center for Living Well—EPCOT's primary care office that provides patient care to Disney World cast members and their covered dependents, is president-elect of the Florida Society of the American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians. He also completed his American College of Lifestyle Medicine board certification.



John Moore, D.O., M.P.H., FAAFP ('98), was named dean of Rocky Vista University's Montana College of Osteopathic Medicine, after previously serving as acting dean since January 2025. He joined Rocky Vista University in 2022 as director of the Master of Medical Sciences Program.



Jessica Okun, D.O., M.S., FACOS ('10), recently opened her private practice Compassionate Neurosurgical Care. She has office locations in Plantation and Fort Lauderdale, Florida, and operates at several area hospitals. She specializes in cranial, spinal, and peripheral nerve surgery and is committed to providing surgical expertise with a holistic approach to patient care.



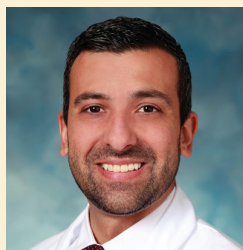
Vanessa Osting, D.O., M.P.H., FACR ('04), is the assistant chief of ambulatory care at the James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital in Tampa, Florida, and chief medical officer at the VA Lakeland Outpatient Center.



Alejandro (Alex) Paya,

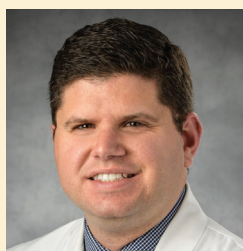
D.O., M.H.A., FACP ('07),

is the new chief medical officer of HCA Florida Healthcare's West Florida Division. He will oversee the clinical quality and patient safety programs for the division's 18 hospitals and 36 emergency locations along Florida's West Coast. Paya previously served as the chief medical officer for HCA Florida JFK Hospital in Atlantis—a 516-bed tertiary hospital with multiple locations in Palm Beach County.

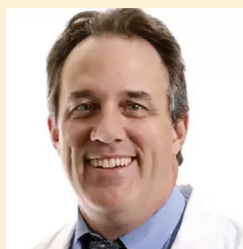
**Gregory Semon, D.O.,**

FACS, FACOS ('08), an

associate professor in the Department of Surgery at Wright State University's Boonshoft School of Medicine in Dayton, Ohio, received the Academy of Medicine Award for Excellence in Medical Education and Research by a Senior Faculty Member. He also received the 2025 Excellence in Research and Scholarship by a Clinical Faculty Member Award from the Boonshoft School of Medicine.

**Shawn Thomas, D.O. ('02),**

joined the Florida Urology Center, an affiliate of U.S. Urology Partners. The center is a full-service specialty group providing comprehensive services in five locations—Daytona Beach, New Smyrna Beach, Ormond Beach, Palm Coast, and Port Orange.

**IN MEMORIAM****Adam T. Crilly, D.O. ('97),**

of Cheyenne, Wyoming, died on April 11 at the age of 53. He was an accomplished emergency medicine physician for more than two decades who most recently worked at the Cheyenne Regional Medical Center as medical director of the emergency department and regional medical director for aligned providers





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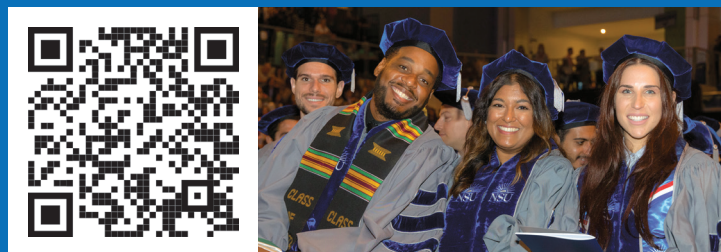
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