Personal Medical Battles Spur Students to Become Physicians

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AIM-High Camps | Student Gives the Gift of Life | Zika Virus Presents Health Care Challenges
COM Outlook

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I HAVE OFTEN THOUGHT ABOUT what it was like to be a student of medicine earlier in history. In the times of Aristotle or Paracelsus, medicine was an oral tradition. Student doctors learned in an apprenticeship model where the trainee shadowed the doctor and received verbal instruction in informal classrooms and at the bedside. Monks in monasteries painstakingly transcribed by hand the few books that were available.

One of the greatest changes was the development of the printing press during the Renaissance. For the first time, students had books. And since that time, until the past decade, the study of medicine has been largely about facts—the pH of blood, the differential diagnosis of lethargy, the Krebs cycle.

Today, we are at the cusp of a new renaissance. We have entered a time in history where most students can look up medical facts on their electronic devices faster than many seasoned physicians can recite them from memory. As a result, this new electronic age is revolutionizing the study of medicine.

The COM, which is midway through the design of a new curriculum, has been deeply involved in this renaissance. We are shortening the pre-clerkship time needed for learning the fundamentals and are integrating computer avatar instruction to help teach physical diagnosis. In addition, we are moving to shorter TED Talk-style lectures and flipped classroom instruction, where students study videos and articles at home and then gather to discuss applications of what they learned.

We are also developing earlier clinical experiences so the medical trainee is engaged in the care of a patient, thus putting context to all that is learned. Additionally, we are teaching students how to learn in styles that best match the learning pathways of their individual brains. Most importantly, we are designing a framework where reasoning, how to research, and how to think like a physician is the center around which all learning occurs.

This is a tremendously exciting venture. We move with respectful caution, knowing that our current product is excellent. But we step into the future also knowing that our students are competent, creative, and deserving of the best. We are positioning ourselves to be leaders in the new renaissance of medicine.
RECENTLY, while I was listening to the university’s president, George L. Hanbury II, Ph.D., discuss NSU’s Vision 2020 goals, he mentioned that, although the university is almost 53 years old, it has only been a merged institution since 1994, which occurred when Nova University merged with Southeastern University of the Health Sciences.

Because I have been affiliated with the university for more than three decades, Dr. Hanbury’s comments made me reflect on the creative pioneers who helped establish Nova University in 1964, particularly Abraham S. Fischler, Ed.D., president emeritus. Thanks to these visionary leaders, a new educational paradigm—related to the presentation of curricula and professions—was unveiled.

As I’ve discussed previously, it was this forward-thinking approach to education that brought Morton Terry, D.O., the founder of Southeastern University of the Health Sciences, together with Nova University—because he saw in it the same visionary attitudes and verve for the future he had envisioned while creating Southeastern University of the Health Sciences.

Since the merger, NSU has continued to reach new heights of excellence, which are reflected in its classification as a research university with “high research activity” by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. Additionally, NSU is 1 of only 50 universities nationwide to also be awarded Carnegie’s Community Engagement Classification. On a similar note, the university recently reached a significant milestone when U.S. News & World Report ranked NSU No. 214 in its 2017 National Universities Rankings.

In terms of the NSU Health Professions Division, I recently spent some time in the Speech-Language Pathology Program, which was integrated into the College of Health Care Sciences in July 2015 as part of the university’s programmatic realignment process. This realignment, which included repositioning five academic degree programs housed in other NSU colleges into the College of Health Care Sciences, has added new synergy to the Health Professions Division.

It is exciting to witness the Vision 2020 goals—which were adopted by the NSU Board of Trustees and supported by the deans and faculty and staff members—coming to fruition. NSU has clearly positioned itself as an educational exemplar of excellence. As a result, the university is leading the way for other academic institutions.
Innovative Program Explores and Masters the Art of Teaching

By Debra R. Gibbs, B.A.
Medical Communications Coordinator

On August 4, members of the college’s Chairs Didactics group marked a sixth anniversary with a breakfast at the NSU Faculty Shark Club. The dynamic group recognizes the degrees and achievements of the college’s leading faculty members, but the program is defined by its dedication to developing and enhancing the talent to teach and creating quality administrators. Just as the osteopathic mission encompasses treating the whole patient, so is the program a commitment to nurturing faculty members in evolutionary ways to educate and engage future physicians.

Elaine M. Wallace, D.O., M.S., M.S., M.S., NSU-COM dean, who created the program, put the initiative in perspective. “I am part of an educational collegium. It is the responsibility of all not only to teach, but to learn as well,” she said. “When I was in the role of executive associate dean, all of the chairs of the college reported to me. Some of them were appointed by me. I felt it was my responsibility to give them the tools to do their jobs to the best of their abilities, as well as provide thought-provoking topics in education to consider.”

With Wallace choosing the topics and materials when the program started, some members were reticent and viewed the program as another responsibility on their long to-do lists. As the gatherings continued, however, interest, comfort, and exchange increased. Members learned the meetings symbolized a haven created for the expression of any opinion without fear of retribution or rebuke.

“I think, now, most look forward to the fellowship and the discussions the meetings engender. We have also grown from a group of individual educators to a team of colleagues who are able to act cohesively as a team of closer friends,” Wallace said.

The group of 20 members meets twice a month, analyzing the broad responsibilities faced by the departmental chairs, including teaching and administration, as well as supporting staff members and students.

Embracing the multifaceted exchanges brings surprises along with successes. Barbara Arcos, D.O., associate professor and chair of the Department of Family Medicine, who chairs the Student Wellness Committee, likes the dynamics of the meetings—dispelling any image that portrays didactics as distant or dry.

“One never knows how a particular didactic session will unfold. There may be a pressing event or challenge that is affecting the COM that draws our attention away from our reading,” Arcos said. “There may have been an interesting concept from our reading that is then discussed at length, from many different angles. And it may be that our passion is ignited by a chance comment that draws us off on a tangent, leading to a spirited and enlightening, 90-minute session. I love them all.”

Arcos’ colleagues mirror her enthusiasm for broadening perspectives and expanding the college’s exploration of ways to advance. Kenneth Johnson, D.O., FACOOG, assistant dean of faculty, was inspired by the book The Third Alternative. “In that book, we all learned how to look at the two most logical solutions to a problem and then, more importantly, always try to find

(Continued on next page)
a third alternative. We now commonly look for the third alternative to many of our problems for the COM.”

Sometimes, however, immediate action is not the answer. “Another extremely useful idea stressed by Wallace is her axiom, ‘I think I will sleep on this before I make the final decision.’ This technique of delaying an important decision until one has literally slept overnight has proven to be extremely helpful in choosing the best action to take,” Johnson said. “Finally, we have learned not to give away our power to adversaries who do not have good intentions. Using that and other practices from the sessions, I have been able to help new and more-junior faculty members to begin to develop their careers, with a much better understanding of how to help them get to the top.”

There can be as many ways to reach the top as there are chairs in the college. Jennie Q. Lou, M.D., M.Sc., director of the Biomedical Informatics Program, realized how success starts with what each chair brings to the table. “The most useful information I have gained from the program is that I am more aware of my own strengths and weaknesses, of my own leadership style, and how I can use my strengths to better lead my program,” she explained. “I feel energized and more confident with the energy I need to work with my fellow faculty members, students, and all other colleagues. I believe the passion and energy we bring to our everyday encounters with our colleagues and students are contagious, and they are the key to our success.”

Lou also shared a quote from E. M. Kelly that put the team spirit into perspective: “Remember the difference between a boss and a leader: A boss says go—a leader says ‘let’s go.’” Without a doubt, the team continues to go.

Creating harmony requires choosing a goal and creating a level of comfort. In her two years with the program, Phyllis Filker, D.M.D., M.P.H., assistant dean of graduate and community education, said the sessions offered a “safe venue to share ideas and values without judgement or repercussions. The ongoing experience—sharing perspectives on the concepts presented in the reading materials—has helped to give an insight into how our colleagues think. In my opinion,” she added “the program helps to bring us all closer in the work environment. Previous work disagreements are left at the boardroom door as we all communicate on a different, but still academic, level.”

One of Filker’s most memorable meetings focused on the book *How Full Is Your Bucket*, which examines how our interactions—the filling and emptying of our buckets—influence our relationships, productivity, health, and longevity.

New and veteran members appreciate the exhilarating experience. Jennifer Jordan, Ed.D., assistant dean of medical education, who will observe her first year with the college in April, offered a newcomer’s perspective. “The Chairs Didactics Program offers an opportunity for intellectual curiosity and exploration,” she said. “It’s a splendid way to spend time with colleagues.” That
idea is shared by a seasoned colleague, Cyril Blavo, D.O., M.S., M.P.H.T.M., FACOP, professor and director of the Master of Public Health Program, who said the program “is a healthy forum for administrative peers to learn together and share ideas.”

On a recent September morning in 2016, Wallace arrived early to set the stage for one of the sessions. Moving with precision, she arranged the seats to make sure no one would look at the back of another. She organized the bagels, cheeses, and coffee on a black-and-white tablecloth—a personal touch to welcome her group.

When asked if she needed assistance in preparing her face-to-face setting, she smiled and proudly said, “This is my baby.”

Wallace has ignited and fostered a supportive and stimulating environment focused on trust, teamwork, and training. “When I became dean, I elected to pare out a portion of my time to continue this program,” she said. “I felt it was a way for me to stay connected to the chairs. The greater reason, however, was that I wanted and needed to continue to learn new educational information and to learn from the thoughts and experiences of my colleagues. This has truly been one of the best classes in which I have participated—in my entire career.”

“The most useful information I have gained from the program is that I am more aware of my own strengths and weaknesses, of my own leadership style, and how I can use my strengths to better lead my program.”

—Jennie Q. Lou
ALTRUIISM IN ACTION:
Second-Year Student Gives the Gift of Life

By Scott Colton, B.A., APR
COM/HPD Director of Medical Communications and Public Relations

In the late 1980s, Gloria Estefan released a song called Anything for You, which would go on to become one of her biggest hits. The heartfelt ballad, which touches on the universal theme of love in its purest form and the selfless sacrifices we would make for someone we cherish, are concepts most of us can identify with in a specific way.

When reality strikes, however, and we are ultimately faced with doing something incredibly selfless for someone we hold dear, how many of us would truly be willing to go the proverbial extra mile? That's exactly the sort of scenario second-year student Samantha L. Stewart, M.S., faced in the summer of 2014 when she learned that one of her dearest friends, Kevin Guice, was in dire need of a kidney transplant.

Stewart, who became instant friends with Guice in the fall of 2010 when they were students at the University of Tennessee, always knew he had a kidney ailment. The one fact Guice failed to disclose, however, was its severity.

“Kevin found out he had kidney disease when he tried out for a youth football league. Since that time, he was in and out of the children’s hospital trying to tackle the illness,” she explained. “Kevin had always been very private about his condition. In fact, I didn’t even know the extent of his disease until well after we graduated college. That’s when the disease started to take its toll. He was in and out of the hospital continually, and I couldn’t really figure out why.”

By the summer of 2014, Guice could no longer hide his grim prognosis, which he finally shared with Stewart and several other close confidants. Because his kidneys were failing, Guice’s life revolved around continual rounds of dialysis. “I hated it for him,” Stewart admitted. “He was limited in what he could do and where he could go. That just wasn’t a life for a young adult in his prime.”

After one particularly severe episode that involved Guice vomiting up pints of blood and requiring a swift trip to the emergency room, he revealed the gravity of his condition to Stewart. “Kevin called to tell me he didn’t want to live this way anymore. He told me he badly needed a transplant and that his mother was going to try to be the donor,” she said. “But he was hesitant to ask anyone to sign up to be a living donor. He said to me, ‘How can I require that of a friend? Who would be willing to put their life on the line for mine?’”

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When reality strikes, however, and we are ultimately faced with doing something incredibly selfless for someone we hold dear, how many of us would truly be willing to go the proverbial extra mile?
Unlike Guice, who was struggling with a serious medical issue, Stewart was thriving. In addition to working as a radiation safety tech at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee, Stewart was in the midst of pursuing a Master of Science in Molecular Biology from nearby Lipscomb University. As luck would have it, Guice’s kidney transplant team was also based at Vanderbilt University.

“I walked down to the lab and asked if I could get a blood test to see if I was a match for Kevin,” said Stewart, who earned her master’s degree in May 2015. “I told no one I was doing it, not even Kevin. I received the result several weeks later, saying I was a match.”

As preparations began for the impending surgery, which was scheduled for December 9, 2014, Stewart said she was flooded with positive emotions. “Initially, I was excited. I thought how cool it would be to share this with Kevin,” she explained. “I remained confident in my decision during the whole process. It was only a week or so before the surgery when I began to feel afraid. I wasn’t afraid for myself; it was for Kevin. I was afraid of organ rejection. But I knew we had to try and hold fast to hope.”

Following the delicate surgery, which proved to be a resounding success, Stewart awoke to find herself feeling decidedly less upbeat than she had the previous evening. “I felt like I had been hit by a truck,” she admitted. “I wasn’t used to being on pain medication, and I had a terrible reaction to the anesthetics. My face was swollen, and I vomited for about three days in the hospital, which is not fun for someone with stitches all over her abdomen. It took about four weeks before I could really even get back on my feet. I would fatigue quickly, so I had to build endurance to do a simple task like carry a jug of milk from the car. But I got the hang of it eventually and was back to my normal self in about three months.”

In the ensuing months, as Guice and Stewart recovered from their respective surgeries and life returned to normal, Stewart continued to pursue her goal of attending medical school—an aspiration that became reality when she was accepted into NSU’s College of Osteopathic Medicine.

“When I came to NSU-COM for my interview, I was excited and motivated, as if I was already a part of something,” she said. “The college allowed who I was as an individual to shine through the flaws of my past. That meant a lot to me. As I was leaving my interview, I thought to myself, ‘I could really grow and become a great physician here.’ When I was offered an acceptance, I did not hesitate to say yes. I just knew in my heart this was the place for me.”

Although it has been more than two years since Stewart truly gave of herself to save her friend’s life, their bond remains as unbreakable as ever. In May 2016, she and Guice traveled to Dallas, Texas, to participate in the National Kidney Foundation’s Camp Reynal, which was established to provide a safe and supportive environment for children with renal and urology disease. “I served as a counselor for a group of young girls,” Stewart said. “The most fulfilling aspect was being able to see kidney disease from the view of the children. It made what I did for Kevin even more special.”

For Stewart, the immense sense of joy and satisfaction she feels from knowing Guice is living a happy and healthy life is a blessing she doesn’t take lightly. “I sometimes cry tears of joy when I look at him,” she revealed. “This experience has been such a rollercoaster of emotion. It’s such a humbling experience to put the needs of others before yours. I am no saint. I am just an ordinary person who wants to do extraordinary things.

“I love Kevin. His life is valuable, and I am so glad I was able to help prolong it,” she added. “This world has a lot of hate, pain, and grief. Sometimes, however, there is a mix of hope. If you have hope, you have everything you need. I am satisfied that our story may bring hope to the hopeless and joy to those who need it most.”
Kevin Guice and Samantha L. Stewart are shown post-surgery and on the road to recovery.

Connected forever: Stewart and Guice share an unbreakable bond.

This world has a lot of hate, pain, and grief. Sometimes, however, there is a mix of hope. If you have hope, you have everything you need. I am satisfied that our story may bring hope to the hopeless and joy to those who need it most.

—Samantha L. Stewart
AIM-High Motivates High School Students to Consider MEDICAL CAREERS

By Scott Colton, B.A., APR
COM/HPD Director of Medical Communications and Public Relations

A NEW TREND at universities across the United States involves providing summer camp programs that encompass enriching and multifaceted educational experiences for high school students. In June 2016, the College of Osteopathic Medicine perpetuated this trend by coordinating a new initiative called Achieve in Medicine (AIM-High), which was established to generate enthusiasm for a career in the health professions and to instill a passion for medicine in high-achieving high school students.

Because the number of NSU undergraduate programs continues to grow, NSU-COM wanted to be at the forefront of recruiting high school students and fully immersing them in the medical field through a residential camp experience. The participating students also had the unique experience of previewing college life by living on campus in residential...
dorms with peers from Florida, Georgia, New York, Massachusetts, Puerto Rico, and Haiti.

During two separate AIM-High camp sessions, held June 12–18 and June 19–25, the 72 participating students were exposed to numerous clinical, hands-on, and experiential sessions—all with the aim of increasing their medical curiosity, reinforcing their passion for science, and exposing them to the wealth of resources available at NSU. For those requiring financial assistance, NSU-COM awarded 21 full and 6 partial scholarships.

Focus groups that included children of NSU Health Professions Division faculty and staff members were organized to ensure the camp content was relevant and interesting to teens. The result was an entertaining and educationally robust experience that provided the students with a diverse array of interactive sessions.

(Continued on next page)

AIM-High Sessions Included

- community outreach activities with underserved populations
- biomedical informatics
- suturing of pigs' feet
- disaster and emergency response with Davie Fire-Rescue Department
- CPR/first aid
- molecular genetics
- clinical diagnosis
- cow eye and sheep brain dissections
- osteopathic manipulation
- pharmacy compounding by making medicated lip balm
- the role of art in medicine
- nutrition, nanoparticles, and brain tumors
- demonstration of maggot therapy for wound care
- 3-D printing and its application to medicine
- tobacco cessation
AIM-High participants also spent a morning in NSU-COM’s Simulation Lab to learn and practice intubation skills, take vital signs, and listen to normal and abnormal lung sounds. In addition, a tour of NSU’s Oceanographic Center afforded students the opportunity to tour labs and meet with researchers to discuss current research studies.

To make the AIM-High experience as authentic as possible for the participants, 23 NSU-COM students graciously spent a portion of their semester break mentoring the high school students and sharing insights about medical school. NSU-COM students assisted NSU faculty members by engaging the participants and guiding clinical sessions.

"AIM-High was an amazing experience that helped me realize my passion for medicine,” said Polina Udalova, who is a junior at NSU’s University School. “It immersed us in so many different fields. We really got to experience various medical professions from all the different angles. Meeting the medical students allowed me to ask questions about the admissions process and the road to a medical career. All the amazing professors we met that week helped me form meaningful relationships and gain opportunities for the future. I now feel clearer about what I want and how to get it.”

Although exposing the participants to a medical milieu was AIM-High’s primary objective, the high school students did get to enjoy some fun downtime. In addition to living in the
undergraduate dorms, the students spent time at the Don Taft University Center and participated in a mix of activities, including an outdoor volleyball tournament, dinners in downtown Fort Lauderdale, movie night on campus, and game night at the dorms.

Based on the feedback from the participants and their parents, the inaugural AIM-High camps were an undeniable success. Survey results indicated that 88 percent of the participants "strongly agreed" that they would recommend this program to other students, while 82 percent "strongly agreed" that AIM-High increased their interest in pursuing a career in medicine. Parent evaluations were also extremely positive, with 95 percent "strongly agreeing" that they would recommend the AIM-High program to other parents of students interested in medicine.

“AIM-High provided students with a safe environment to explore their passion for science, meet new friends from across the country, experience college life in a dorm, and see the practice of medicine through the lens of health professionals.”

—Kristi Messer

“AIM-High provided students with a safe environment to explore their passion for science, meet new friends from across the country, experience college life in a dorm, and see the practice of medicine through the lens of health professionals,” said Kristi Messer, M.S.W., M.P.H., assistant professor of public health and disaster and emergency management, who helped spearhead the initiative.

Once the camps concluded, the students were surveyed to ascertain if they would be interested in attending an advanced camp. Because the responses were uniformly affirmative, NSU-COM hopes to launch an advanced camp in the summer of 2017 for AIM-High alumni. Dates for the second annual AIM-High camps are scheduled for the weeks of June 10–17 and June 18–25.
Hospital Foundation Provides Lasting Legacy for NSU-COM Students

By Scott Colton, B.A., APR
COM/HPD Director of Medical Communications and Public Relations

When Howard Neer, D.O., FACOFP, helped establish Doctors General Hospital in Plantation, Florida, in July 1962, he had no way of knowing the continuing impact it would have on osteopathic medical education in South Florida more than 30 years after the osteopathic hospital was sold and shuttered. During the ensuing years, approximately $10 million has been donated to NSU’s College of Osteopathic Medicine through the offshoot Doctors Hospital Foundation, which was established to benefit future generations of osteopathic physicians.

The road to establishing the nonprofit hospital began in the late 1950s when 15 local physicians joined forces to purchase 6.5 acres of land in what was then a farming community in western Broward County. To raise the requisite funds to build the hospital, Neer and the other participating physicians sold tax-exempt, first-mortgage bonds, which required them to be creative strategists and salesmen.

“We proceeded to interest people in what the hospital would look like by advertising and inviting them to visit the hospital site, which was just a shell of a building at the time,” said Neer, who serves as HPD executive associate dean for professional affairs. “On Sunday afternoons, the doctors and their spouses would give tours of the proposed emergency room, operating rooms, and other areas to anybody who would listen. Thanks to a lot of hard work, and luck, we were able to get the hospital built.”

Once it was up and running, however, keeping the 70-bed hospital solvent was an ongoing concern. “To accomplish this, we established several rules that all the physicians had to follow. For example, they would have to take turns putting in 24-hour shifts in the emergency room and donate their fees back to the hospital,” Neer explained. “We also established a bed tax, which was common at the time, where each doctor was charged $10 a day for every patient he had in the hospital.”
Despite these innovative methods to increase revenue, the hospital frequently faced a funding dilemma in the early years, which required the physicians to pitch in from their own pockets. “The insurance payments from Blue Cross Blue Shield were a big source of our income, and the checks were received on a certain day of the month,” Neer said. “The day before the money was to be paid by the insurance company, the hospital’s chief executive officer would come to each doctor’s office and tell each one of us how much of a deficit there was to pay the nurses’ salaries and meet payroll. I was asked to contribute $1,000 each month, which was a lot of money back then. But with this process, the hospital was succeeding in paying its bills and growing.”

As a result of these measures, the hospital began to flourish, eventually growing from 70 to 202 beds. “My hospital career during those 25 years was quite interesting, and I learned a lot,” Neer said. “I was the chairman of the board and helped in any way possible. I began to believe that we were going to be successful, that I would get my money back, and that we would be able to successfully pay off the bonds we had sold.”

By the time the 1980s dawned, the hospital had evolved into a success. Consequently, when it was sold to a nonmedical corporation in 1986, the proceeds created a significant pool of tax-exempt, nonprofit money that could only be used to fund other nonprofit entities. “After paying off the mortgage and all the outstanding debts, the residual money was used to create the nonprofit Doctors Hospital Foundation, which we dedicated entirely toward osteopathic student medical education at NSU’s College of Osteopathic Medicine,” Neer said.

Since the foundation’s inception, thousands of students have benefited from the yearly contributions, which are used to fund any and all aspects related to osteopathic student education at NSU’s College of Osteopathic Medicine. According to Neer, the foundation’s funds are provided directly to the college for the good of the students, rather than directly to the students.

“It has been extremely gratifying to be a part of a small group of D.O.s, who used the money from the sale of a successful osteopathic hospital they created to serve a wonderful secondary purpose—the support of osteopathic medical education,” he said.
Predoctoral OPP Fellowship Serves as Curricular Hallmark

By Scott Colton, B.A., APR
COM/HPD Director of Medical Communications and Public Relations
Adding an extra year to their osteopathic education wouldn’t seem like an academic endeavor most students would seek voluntarily. For the six students currently participating in the college’s Predoctoral Osteopathic Principles and Practice (OPP) Fellowship, however, it’s something they actively pursued—and willingly embraced.

During the one-year fellowship, students are exposed to a diverse mix of activities that includes working with patients in the Osteopathic Manipulative Medicine (OMM) Clinic. They assist faculty members with training students during the biweekly OMM labs; participate in a journal club, as well as weekly medical and leadership didactic classes; and conduct osteopathic research with a faculty member.

According to David Boesler, D.O., M.S., associate professor and chair of the Department of Osteopathic Principles and Practice, the OPP fellowship serves as a critical component of the college’s overarching curriculum. “Since this is an osteopathic medical school, the uniqueness of the osteopathic profession is hands-on care of the patient,” he explained. “The OPP fellowship gives the participating students the opportunity to develop and improve these skills, to teach these skills to each class, and instill a sense of pride in the profession. I feel that the fellowship is one of the ways we continue moving our osteopathic profession into the future and spread the word to others on what D.O.s have to offer their patients.”

“I was attracted to the fellowship for a variety of reasons,” said third-year student Hayley Talboy. “The chance to work with the OPP department was a huge draw, because the faculty members are so good at what they do. I was also drawn to it because of the clinical training it offers,” she said. “Just like anything else, if you don’t use OMM, you lose it. Therefore, the thought of focusing on these techniques for a whole year, to cultivate muscle memory, was a valuable incentive.”

Third-year student Parth Gandhi, who is a fervent OPP advocate, said the fellowship serves a unique purpose. “Our bodies are intricate machines, and only by understanding the underlying hardware can we truly understand the multitude of functions the body performs,” he said. “The Predoctoral OPP Fellowship is my way of devoting a year of my life to treating patients and getting in touch with their spirit rather than reading a complete blood count report and analyzing what ‘the patient in room 5’ may or may not have.”

In the opinion of third-year student Sara Hartey, the fellowship has added a particularly vital skill to her treatment arsenal. “I often feel as though I have acquired an extra sense while doing the fellowship,” she said. “In reality, though, I am just learning to utilize visual cues and palpatory evaluation to a heightened level. Physicians have slowly lost reliance on their own eyes and hands and become tied to costly and inconvenient machines,” she added. “While medical technology is a necessary and valuable modality, having strong observation skills will put you a head above the pack. This experience has cemented my confidence in my own analytical abilities.”

Because the fellowship consists of many different elements, the participating students are exposed to learning opportunities that complement the classroom and clinical experiences they received during their first two years at NSU-COM.

“Working in the clinic is amazing,” said third-year student Kristopher Schock. “What I enjoy most is the trust the physicians have in us as fellows. The majority of the time a patient is in the clinic, we, as fellows, are doing the actual treatments. The doctor will come in if we have any questions and do a final wrap-up at the end,” he said. “It’s great, because we have the freedom to do the techniques without having someone constantly looking over our shoulders. But at the same time, the doctors are right there if we don’t know where to go next with a treatment.”

(Continued on next page)
In addition to providing osteopathic manipulative treatment (OMT) to patients in the OMM Clinic, the fellows have an opportunity to work with and mentor first- and second-year students in the OMM Lab. “Teaching has always been a passion of mine, and it is a craft I’ve been trying to master,” said third-year student Francis Lomanta. “I would like to be able to inspire students the way my past professors did for me,” he said. “The fellowship allows me to share my passion for OPP with fellow students, as well as gain valuable teaching experience.”

Not surprisingly, the further they progress in their fellowship, the more engrossed the students become in terms of the healing results they are generating due to their ministrations. “Working with OPP professors who are acclaimed in their field gives you many opportunities to see something compelling,” said third-year student Genevieve Marshall. “The OMM Clinic has patients who have suffered from conditions that caused years of limited range of motion and pain despite pharmacological interventions and surgery.”

For many patients, the benefits of OMT are often immediate, as Marshall can attest. “Less than a month after starting the fellowship, I helped treat a woman who told me I gave her the first pain-free day she’s had in five years,” Marshall stated proudly. “The most compelling thing I’ve learned is how having a physician who takes enough time to examine the patient, do a complete assessment, and really listen can lead to the correct diagnosis and, ultimately, treatment.”

Lomanta recounted the tale of a patient who is suffering from a debilitating and disabling condition that makes even the most common daily tasks difficult to accomplish. Thanks to frequent treatments at the OMM Clinic, however, the patient has experienced reduced pain and enhanced functionality. The patient, whom Lomanta met while he was shadowing physicians at the OMM Clinic, would actually serve as the impetus that led him to pursue the OPP fellowship. “This patient has one of the most debilitating and disabling conditions I have ever seen, but she is also one of the most optimistic, encouraging, and uplifting individuals I have ever had the privilege to meet,” Lomanta said. “There are no known treatments or medications to reverse or halt her progressive condition, which has required numerous surgeries throughout the years.”
“In fact, this patient may be one of those we classify as a total medical disaster,” he added. “Many physicians have recommended various types of medical treatment for symptomatic relief, but time and time again, the patient only feels relief after visits to our OMM Clinic.”

Lomanta pointed out that “at the clinic, we are able to treat a patient’s mind, body, and spirit. At one point, we were able to restore some functional mobility, and the patient was able to walk again. She knows her condition will eventually deteriorate, but she is as resilient as they come. I believe that the OMM Clinic is part of the reason why she has become a fighter when it comes to her condition.”

As an eminently popular faculty member who has been a professor and osteopathic physician for 25 years, Boesler knows how beneficial the OPP fellowship has proven to be for the six students who are selected to participate each year. “I have seen OPP fellows grow and become leaders in the osteopathic profession,” he said. “All the OPP fellows who have completed the fellowship have said that it was one of the best years of their medical careers, and that they learned more than they could have even imagined before they started the fellowship. To me, that says it all.”

OPP Fellows Share Keen Observations

“Regardless of whether you are a student, professor, or physician, always remember that you are an osteopathic medical professional. You are endowed with the ability to empower, enable, and treat patients through your touch. Do not lose this gift in an age of technology and innovation. Remember that although technology has revolutionized and helped develop an era, it was revolutionized and developed by the hands of women and men.”

— Parth Gandhi

“Before spending time in the OMM Clinic, we were lectured too often about the power of human touch, as all osteopathic physicians are. It took some time, though, to truly appreciate this as more than a phenomenon rooted in the human need for contact. As physicians, it is our duty to inspect every aspect of our patients, which is impossible to do without laying on hands.”

— Sara Hartey

“OPP is more than just the manipulation techniques we learn in class. It is a mentality that each physician should embody. Each patient is a unit comprised of the mind, body, and spirit. In order to properly treat and assess each patient, each one of those components must be evaluated and addressed.”

— Francis Lomanta

“I have an interest in pain management, so having an opportunity to break away from the traditional medical school path to spend a year learning specialized ways to help my future patients sounded fantastic to me. It’s easy to get lost in the grind, but we have a chance to pause and focus our studies on osteopathic manipulative treatments, physical medicine, and sports medicine for a year before we jump into other rotations.”

— Genevieve Marshall

“One of the most compelling things we learn in the fellowship is how to approach patient care. Since we are working with many different doctors, we have the opportunity to see how each individual doctor conducts an evaluation of each patient. This processing skill will be invaluable later in life when we begin seeing our own patients and have to evaluate them ourselves.”

— Kristopher Schock

“Finding the key dysfunction and watching how the body resets itself when that dysfunction has been addressed is awesome. Seeing patients coming in unable to find relief to having them hop off the table without pain is an incredible experience.”

— Hayley Talboy
JAMAICA MEDICAL OUTREACH: BUILDING A LEGACY FOR OUR YOUTH

By Paula Anderson-Worts, D.O., M.P.H.
Associate Professor of Family Medicine

SUN AND FUN are major attractions for many who choose to travel to Jamaica, but service was the motivation for the youth and medical volunteers who participated in the NSU-COM Jamaica medical outreach trip in June 2016. Since its inception more than 16 years ago, the college has provided much-needed medical outreach to people living in Kingston and St. Mary, Jamaica.

One of the outreach program’s continued strengths is its interdisciplinary participation. During the June trip, NSU had student and faculty participation from the colleges of Osteopathic Medicine, Dental Medicine, Pharmacy, Nursing, and Optometry.

Another important aspect involved the number of people younger than the age of 21 who volunteered. Leading by example, the participating physicians have started to build a legacy for the youth to follow. This was evidenced by the fact that 10 of the 11 had relatives who served as supervising physicians on the medical outreach trip.

It was exciting to see the youth volunteers, who ranged in age from 9 to 20, display such an impressive level of compassion and care. They worked in teams with adult supervision and exhibited innate eagerness to participate and make a difference. They triaged patients, helped in the pharmacy, and assisted in the makeshift dental clinics. Rather than spending time on the beach or playing video games, the young attendees were deeply entrenched in the process of providing care to patients. It was inspiring to think that this group of 11 represents the future.

The sentiments expressed by the young volunteers are encapsulated in the opinions expressed by three of the participants. The legacy began with my son, Alexander Worts, with whom I was pregnant when I organized the first medical outreach trip to Jamaica.

A mix of youth volunteers, NSU-COM students and faculty members, and community physicians participated in the medical outreach trip to Jamaica.
The experience of helping others helps you to grow spiritually and emotionally.

—Paula Anderson-Worts

When I asked Alexander about his experiences, he said, "These trips are life-changing, not just for the patients, but for the participants as well. The experience of helping others helps you to grow spiritually and emotionally."

My niece, Nadia Anderson, was 20 during the last trip and has participated in these medical outreach efforts since she was 8. "I have learned so much through my involvement over the years," she said. "This program has not only been an invaluable experience that inspired me to one day become a physician, but also has continually fostered my growth as a human being. I am so grateful to have been afforded the opportunity to be involved in such an impactful initiative."

Fortunately, my family connection did not end there. In addition to involving my niece, I also invited my 9-year-old nephew, Arami Anderson, to join the team of volunteers. He thoroughly enjoyed the experience and is already making plans to participate in the June 2017 trip.

For first-time participant Isha Goel, participating in the trip was a uniquely positive experience. "Going to Jamaica on a medical outreach trip as a high school sophomore was an unbelievable experience," said Goel, who is the daughter of Anjali Bhasin, M.D., assistant professor of internal medicine. "From the moment everyone met at the airport to the time all our goodbyes were said, the team was united with one goal in mind: to help every patient we meet in any way we can," she added. "By the end of the trip, I had mastered many tasks, from writing down the patients' reasons for visiting to calculating their body mass indexes."

Moreover, I came to appreciate the services I used to take for granted."

This legacy of volunteerism continues to grow through the dedication of the many physicians committed to providing care and inspiring others to serve. Sandi Scott-Holman, D.O., assistant professor of family medicine, who has participated in the Jamaica outreach trip several times, decided to bring her daughter, Emmy Holman, and Emmy's best friend, Abigail Dickinson, who are both NSU University School sophomores.

Clarence Clarke, D.O., a 2004 NSU-COM alumnus who was instrumental in coordinating the first Jamaica medical outreach trip in 2001 when he was still a student, has committed his support for the past 16 years. Clarke, who is an emergency medicine physician in Virginia, brought his 11-year-old son with him on the June 2016 trip to provide community service.

The aforementioned examples represent just some of the many physicians and family members who volunteer their time to this worthy cause. This trip, more than any other, highlighted the fact that they are truly our future. To help perpetuate what was started more than 16 years ago, it is vital that they be encouraged to stay involved in this medical outreach program.

In addition to providing medical care to people in need, the program is building a legacy that teaches the value of people helping people. The selfless act of serving others is such an important lesson to learn, especially at an early age. It is evident that our youth are the key to keeping the legacy alive. ●
Moreover, I came to appreciate the services I used to take for granted. This legacy of volunteerism continues to grow through the dedication of the many physicians committed to providing care and inspiring others to serve. Sandi Scott-Holman, D.O., assistant professor of family medicine, who has participated in the Jamaica outreach trip several times, decided to bring her daughter, Emmy Holman, and Emmy’s best friend, Abigail Dickinson, who are both NSU University School sophomores.

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In addition to providing medical care to people in need, the program is building a legacy that teaches the value of people helping people. Nadia Anderson obtains information from a patient. Alexander Worts assists with pill counting.
Student COMmunications

Student Wellness Cruise Serves Multiple Purposes

On August 3, NSU-COM coordinated its second Sunset Wellness Orientation Cruise for incoming class of 2020 students aboard the *Grand Floridian* yacht. The excursion allowed the entering students to enjoy a three-hour cruise along Fort Lauderdale’s scenic Intracoastal Waterway and get acquainted with their classmates and faculty and staff members. Another aspect of the event involved the availability of 10 student wellness stations, which were organized to provide vital information to the incoming students and help them thrive during their medical school experience and beyond.

First-year students enjoyed the opportunity to become acquainted with their peers aboard the *Grand Floridian*.

White Coat Ceremony Welcomes the Class of 2020

On August 7, the class of 2020 was officially welcomed into the osteopathic profession at the 36th annual White Coat Ceremony, which was held at the Arena at NSU’s Don Taft University Center. For the 230+ students comprising the class of 2020, the White Coat Ceremony served as an auspicious experience that officially marked their entry into the medical vocation.

In the presence of family, guests, and faculty members, the students were welcomed into the medical community by leaders of the osteopathic profession and ceremonially cloaked with their white coats. By establishing this meaningful ritual at the beginning of medical school, the intent is to make students aware of their responsibilities from the first day of training and convey the message that doctors should care as well as cure.

During the ceremony, NSU-COM faculty members cloak students in the white coats they will wear throughout their medical school experience.
News Briefs

Second-year student George Abreut coauthored an article, “The Effect of Exercise Training on Disease Progression, Fitness, Quality of Life, and Mental Health in People Living with HIV on Antiretroviral Therapy: A Systematic Review,” which was published in the Journal of Clinical and Translational Research.

Third-year student Ashley Barash was the recipient of the 2015 Journal of Forensic Nursing Education Article of the Year Award for her coauthored article, “Sexual Assault Simulation Course for Health Care Providers: Enhancing Sexual Assault Education Using Simulation.”

Fourth-year student Devin Collins coauthored a paper with NSU-COM alumna Ashley Startzman, D.O. [13], “A Systematic Literature Review of Synovial Chondromatosis and Pigmented Villonodular Synovitis of the Hip,” which was accepted for publication in the Physician and Sportsmedicine journal. He also worked with third-year student Oliver Fowler on a video project, “Benign Synovial Diseases of the Hip: Surgical Technique for the Treatment of PVNS and Synovial Chondromatosis,” which was accepted for presentation at the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons 84th Annual Meeting, which will be held March 15–17, in San Diego, California. The video will be presented as part of the symposium’s Orthopaedic Video Theater.

Third-year student Kristina Gemayel, M.S., served as first author of the article, “Autosomal Recessive Agammaglobulinemia Associated with an IGLL1 Gene Missense Mutation,” which was published in the Annals of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology.

Fourth-year students Alexandra Grammenos, left, and Kelly Corbitt and third-year students Allen Abello and Jason Mammino coauthored a paper, “Skin Indentation Firmness and Tissue Dielectric Constant (TDC) Assessed in Face, Neck, and Arm Skin of Young Healthy Women,” which was accepted for publication in Skin Research and Technology. The students worked with Harvey Mayrovitz, Ph.D., M.S., professor of physiology in the College of Medical Sciences, utilizing the latest technology for assessing skin fibrosis and elastic properties. Additionally, Grammenos and Corbitt earned a third-place award for their clinical vignette presentation, “The Rapidly Progressing MRSA Prostatic Abscess: A Rare Case,” which they received on September 10 at the American College of Physicians Florida Chapter Scientific Meeting in Key Largo, Florida.

Second-year student Michelle King, M.Sc., coauthored the article, “Autologous Platelet Rich Plasma (PRP) Intradermal Injections for the Treatment of Vulvar Lichen Sclerosus,” which will be published in an upcoming issue of the Journal of the American Association of Dermatology. She also served as coauthor of the article, “Ospemifene May Not Treat Vulvar Atrophy: A Report of Two Cases,” which was published in the June issue of Sexual Medicine, which is the official journal of the International Society for Sexual Medicine.

Second-year student Christopher Larrimore, M.Sc., served as lead author of the article, “Secondary (AA) Amyloidosis with Development of Nephrotic Syndrome,” which was published in a recent issue of Clinical Laboratory Science. Larrimore coauthored the article with first-year student Ezra Fox.

Fourth-year student Renata Orna presented a poster, “Inflammasome Activation and Semen Quality in Men with and Without Spinal-Cord Injury,” at the Florida Medical Association Poster Symposium held July 30 in Orlando, Florida. Orna coauthored the research with individuals from the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine and the Miami Project to Cure Paralysis.

Fourth-year student Kristi Ray was 1 of 21 medical students from across the United States selected to receive an American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene Benjamin H. Kean Travel Fellowship in Tropical Medicine. The fellowship is the only U.S. medical student award dedicated to nurturing a career path for physician-scientists in tropical medicine. Selectees receive airfare and up to $1,000 in living expenses for a clinical training or research project that takes place in an area where tropical diseases are endemic. Ray will travel to Manila, Philippines, from January through March to work on her project, “Mapping and Eradication of Soil-Transmitted Helminthiasis and Schistosomiasis in Rural Philippines.”

First-year student Joshua Riederman presented his abstract, “Effects of BMI on Clinical Outcomes in Adult Limb Lengthening with a Telescopic Intramedullary Rod,” at the American Osteopathic Academy of Orthopedics Annual Meeting, which was held October 13–15 in Washington, D.C.

Fourth-year students Bansari Sarkar and Irina Volosko, left, coauthored an article, “Arm, Leg, and Foot Skin Water in Persons with Diabetes Mellitus [DM] in Relation to HbA1c Assessed by Tissue Dielectric Constant [TDC] Technology Measured at 300 MHz,” which was published in the August issue of the Journal of Diabetes Science and Technology.
Student Perspective

Osteopathic Tenets Run Deep for Second-Year Student

What is at the heart of healing? Is it dedication, sacrifice, or could there be something more?

By Christopher Larrimore, M.Sc., second-year student

OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE teaches us about connectivity and promotes compassionate care. But how well are these concepts understood? During the NSU-COM White Coat Ceremony in 2015, as our dean, Elaine M. Wallace, D.O., M.S., M.S., spoke about how each one of us is here at the right place at the right time, I couldn’t help but reflect upon my journey into medical school and how it has shaped my understanding of the osteopathic philosophy.

Before applying to medical school, I developed a fascination with learning more about my heritage. My mother’s family had moved from Holland to Chicago, Illinois, in the 1860s. After the end of the World War II, however, the family spread across the country and lost contact with each other. Naturally, I sought to discover my roots.

Soon after beginning my search, serendipity struck. On an ordinary day, while driving home from work, I was listening to National Public Radio (NPR) on my car radio. A story was being aired about a family’s struggle with the U.S. government to have the skeletal remains of a World War II prisoner of war (POW) returned home. For more than six decades, this family searched, located, and petitioned to have the remains of their lost son brought home, all to no avail.

The soldier’s name was Buddy Kelder; he served as a medic in the war. He was captured by the Japanese and survived the infamous Bataan Death March, but unfortunately later died in a POW camp in the Philippines. Like many others, his body was buried in a mass grave and left behind.

As I listened to the radio, I became astounded. Buddy was my cousin, and this story, which was previously unknown to me, was about my family. I immediately contacted NPR, and with its assistance, I was soon able to reconnect with my relatives. It was truly an amazing occurrence. Indeed, I was at the right place at the right time.

Although the family’s ability to locate Buddy’s remains in a mass grave was nothing short of amazing, the government refused to exhume his body. Within months, the story became national news, and with each of us helping out, enough pressure was generated. President Barack Obama soon announced the reorganization of the agency responsible for bringing home fallen soldiers. Finally, Buddy’s remains, along with many other fallen veterans, began coming home.

As I reflected on our dean’s words at the White Coat Ceremony, I realized that healing isn’t always a direct and immediate action. Sometimes, just being present and caring is enough. I don’t take credit for what happened. However, because I was present and open in the right moment, through me passed a greater force—one that was set into motion long before I became involved, and one that, ultimately, healed countless families looking for closure.

The osteopathic philosophy of connectivity goes beyond the body and expands into humanity. What is at the heart of healing? It’s being present and being compassionate.
Personal Medical Battles Spur Students to Become Physicians

By Vikisha Hazariwala, Second-Year Student

THERE ARE DISEASES with effects we can see, and there are diseases with effects that are invisible to the naked eye. There are also diseases that heal, leaving nothing behind but a flesh-colored scar and a story to share. Four students, who faced debilitating ailments, shared their struggles and how those conflicts inspired their desires to become medical practitioners.

Hypophosphatemic Rickets
Second-year student Richard Courtney was diagnosed with x-linked hypophosphatemic rickets at the age of 18 months—a rare and genetic form of rickets involving a Vitamin D deficiency, which affects the shape of a person’s bones. By the time Courtney was two, he was part of an ongoing clinical trial led by one of the leading experts on his condition. This required him to travel to Shriners Hospital for Children in St. Louis, Missouri, one or two times a year.

“My time at the children’s hospital is where I learned the most invaluable lessons, not about books or science, but about life,” Courtney said. “Most of the other patients had to spend months to years in the hospital for a single stay due to their bone disorders and horrible burns, so being around these other children, who carried on with their lives like nothing was wrong, was always something that stuck with me.”

During his stay at Shriners Hospital for Children, Courtney discovered his own compassion and drive to enter the medical field. “Despite going through numerous operations and constantly seeing different specialists, I was always able to feel comfortable around those who were in charge of my health,” he said. He was now sure of the type of physician he wanted to become—one who could reassure his patients, just as his physicians were able to reassure him.

Crohn’s Disease
Second-year student Sandeep Chugani was diagnosed with Crohn’s Disease—an inflammatory bowel ailment—10 years ago. He suffered from a debilitating flare-up during the last two months of his first year of medical school and lost more than 15 pounds. As a result, he underwent small-intestine surgery during the six-week summer break at UF Health Shands Hospital in Gainesville, Florida.

Chugani planned to return to NSU-COM to begin his second year in the fall of 2015, healthier than ever, but many complications made his road to recovery challenging. He developed a bowel infection that landed him back in the hospital for another six weeks, during which time he was fed through a tube. Due to the severity of his disease, Chugani eventually had to endure a temporary loop ileostomy—a surgery that removed part of his ileum and replaced it with a pouch that lay hidden beneath his shirt.

“There were plenty of sleepless nights and embarrassing moments in public where my bag started leaking,” Chugani admitted. “But as crazy as this sounds, the experience was the best thing that could happen to me.”

The extent of Chugani’s disease, and the length of his recovery from the surgeries, meant he had to miss a year of medical school. As a result, he was able to see what other patients were going through, and he developed an insatiable desire to heal others. He learned what it meant to be a caring physician who takes the time to listen to one’s frustrations and patiently answer questions.
Thyroid Cancer

“You have cancer” are three words the next two students heard in the years leading up to beginning medical school. One wished to remain anonymous because her cancer is not yet fully in remission. She recounted feeling a swollen lymph node on the front side of her neck, initially disregarding it as a mono infection. However, the swelling and pain persisted for weeks before she decided to visit her physician.

She was referred to an ear, nose, and throat doctor, who used a scope to probe her throat. Because the source of her discomfort wasn’t found, the physician ordered a CT scan, which showed calcified nodules in her thyroid, indicative of cancer. The biopsy of her thyroid and lymph node was positive for stage 2 papillary thyroid cancer.

“My swollen lymph node wasn’t visible to anyone, but I could feel something wasn’t right,” she said. “My doctors said I could have had the cancerous nodes on my thyroid for years and have never known it until my lymph nodes picked it up and reacted to it, alerting me to the potential problem.”

Although her cancer was resected, she follows up with an endocrinologist every three months to have her hormone levels checked. She said that even though her cancer made her gain a few pounds, she has a much deeper appreciation for the signs our bodies display to alert us when something is wrong.

Testicular Cancer

Second-year student Andres Rodriguez was playing basketball with his friends when he experienced a single, sharp pain in his lower back that made him fall to the ground. He immediately visited his primary care physician, who ordered an ultrasound and CT scan of his abdomen and pelvis. The images revealed a stage I seminoma in one of his testicles.

Rodriguez and his family quickly sought care at the Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center in Miami, Florida, where he was influenced not only by his physicians, but also by the other young oncology patients he spoke with in the waiting room. “Many were in the same boat as me, and some had far worse prognoses,” he said. “We would head down to the pediatric oncology unit and interact with the kids who were receiving chemotherapy and talk to their parents to distract them.”

Rodriguez’s cancer has been in remission for the past three years, due to his physicians’ and family’s unrelenting desire to remove every cancerous cell from his body. Because of his own experiences, Rodriguez was inspired to establish his own nonprofit organization and yearly holiday toy drive to help pediatric cancer patients have an easier stay in the hospital.

All four students demonstrated a profound resilience, and learned and grew from their situations. Their drive to overcome the challenges also elicited a desire to be able to help others battle their medical maladies.
Beth A. Allen, M.S., community relations liaison at NSU-COM’s Lifelong Learning Institute, was honored with the 2016 Leadership Hollywood Award for her dedication to the community. Allen was presented with the award at the Greater Hollywood Chamber of Commerce Leadership Hollywood Class XL graduation on June 17, which was held at the Diplomat Resort & Spa in Hollywood, Florida.

Scott Colton, B.A., APR, who serves as COM/HPD director of medical communications and public relations, received an AACOM Appreciation Award from the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine (AACOM). He was presented with the award in recognition of the contributions he made to the association while serving as national chair of the AACOM Marketing and Communications Advisory Council from 2012 through 2016.

Joseph S. De Gaetano, D.O., M.S.Ed., FAAFP, FACOFP, professor of family medicine, was named Mentor of the Year by the Broward Health Medical Center Family Medicine Residency Program. The honor is awarded by the residents each summer to a faculty member who has been singled out as an exceptional educator, mentor, and role model for the academic year.

Traci-lyn Eisenberg, D.O., assistant professor of family medicine, became director of preclinical education in July. She will continue to provide clinical care in the NSU-COM clinics.
On July 20, the college organized a farewell reception for Oneka Marriott, D.O., M.P.H., FAAP, FACOP, assistant professor of pediatrics and public health. Marriott, who joined NSU-COM in October 2012, accepted a new position as chief medical officer at FoundCare, Inc.—a nonprofit organization that operates a federally qualified health center in Palm Beach County.

“I am grateful for the knowledge and friendships I have gained here at Nova Southeastern University,” she said. “I am looking forward to building on this foundation as I go forth to serve in the community.”
HEALTH CARE professionals are scrambling to deal with the Zika virus, which is a threat that is not really new, as it was first identified in a Ugandan forest in 1947. What is new, however, is its existence here in the United States, which is offering a new pool of susceptible individuals who have not seen this virus before and, therefore, have no immunity to it.

The virus grabs our attention because of its potential to cause harm to a fetus, with microcephaly being the most devastating effect. The spread of Zika in South Florida has focused on the virus’ effect on infected pregnant women and the management of babies born with evidence of infection. In addition to this demographic, the Zika virus can cause rare neurological complications in the rest of the population.

In the past two decades, we have seen the West Nile encephalitis virus in 1999, SARS in 2002–2003, MERS (Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus), in 2012, and Ebola in 2014–2015, which caused 11,310 deaths and brought greater fear than we are witnessing with Zika.

Unfortunately, we have always been reactive in dealing with these problems.

Globalization, with its increased traffic and expanding urban development, guarantees the spread of most infectious diseases. Zika will not be the last infectious disease to cause concern. It’s inevitable that new dangers will occur, but we must be better prepared next time.

The Zika virus grabbed our attention because of its explosive spread in 2015. Local transmission of the virus is exhibited in 49 countries in the Americas (including U.S. territories). As of November, there are more than 1,000 Zika-infected pregnant women in the United States, including more than 140 pregnant women in Florida. In U.S. territories, more than 2,000 pregnant women are infected with Zika.

The virus exacts an emotional as well as economic toll on the health care system. The lifetime cost of care for a microcephalic child has been estimated at between $1 million and $10 million by Tom Frieden, M.D., M.P.H., director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

NSU and South Florida are uniquely poised as research and cultural gateways for all of Latin America, having the connections, brain power, and expertise to lead the world in the fight against infectious diseases—especially mosquito-borne illnesses. As population and travel habits increase throughout the Americas and worldwide, it is imperative that we channel our intellect, research, and outreach to become leaders in the fight against infectious diseases.
Research/Scholarly COMmunications

Nicole Cook, Ph.D., M.P.A., was awarded a $14,998 Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI) Pipeline to Proposal Tier 1 capacity building award. It will be used to convene a consortium of stakeholders (patients, providers, researchers, and others) committed to conducting comparative effectiveness research (CER) in fecal incontinence in primary care and to develop a stakeholder-informed CER research portfolio that identifies research gaps and topics for future research. The long-term objective of Tier I funding is to use the skills, knowledge, and strength of the developed consortium to develop a successful research proposal that will improve the lives of patients living with fecal incontinence. The PCORI is an independent, nonprofit organization authorized by Congress in 2010 to fund comparative effectiveness research that will provide patients, their caregivers, and clinicians with the evidence needed to make informed health and health care decisions.

Michael DeFranco, M.D., who joined NSU-COM’s sports medicine team in May, coauthored a paper, “Arthroscopic Repair of Full-Thickness Rotator Cuff Tears in Active Patients Younger Than 40 Years: 2–5 Years Clinical Outcome,” that was submitted to Arthroscopy. He also coauthored a paper with third-year student Michael J. Stark, “Intramedullary Fixation of a Medial Clavicle Fracture: A Case Report,” which was submitted to the Journal of Orthopaedic Case Reports.

Jay M. Fleisher, Ph.D., M.S., M.A, whose influential research article, “The BEACHES Study: Health Effects and Exposures from Non-Point Source Microbial Contaminants in Subtropical Recreational Marine Waters,” was published in the International Journal of Epidemiology in 2010, was asked to submit a follow-up article in the peer-reviewed journal Medical Research Archives. The publication is an international, scientific, peer-reviewed journal publishing articles in all disciplines of medicine, with a focus on new research.

Marie Florent-Carre, D.O., M.P.H., served as a speaker and presenter on population health on June 9 at the South Florida Hospital & Healthcare Association’s Healthcare Summit held at the Signature Grand in Davie, Florida. In addition, she was selected by Legacy magazine as one of the Top Black Educators for 2016. The publication, which is distributed through partnerships with the Miami Herald and the Sun Sentinel, provides people of color in South Florida’s professional community with insightful information on business, careers, politics, lifestyle, education, religion, culture, and social commentary.
Stephen Grant, Ph.D., chaired a review panel for the Empire State Stem Cell Science Program of the New York State Department of Health and served as a reviewer for the U.S. Army Congressionally Directed Medical Research Program Breast Cancer Breakthrough awards. Other reviews he was involved in include Cancer Research, Chemico-Biological Interactions, Toxicology In Vitro, Journal of Carcinogenesis and Mutagenesis, and McMaster Online Review of Evidence.


Janet L. Roseman, Ph.D., R-DMT, was invited to be a peer reviewer for the Journal of the American Osteopathic Association for an article on “Empathy in Osteopathic Training and Education.” She was also invited to present a practice showcase at the Relational Practices in Health and Healthcare: Healing Through Collaboration conference that was held November 10–12 in Cleveland, Ohio.

Elliot M. Sklar, Ph.D., M.S., coauthored a paper with Robin J. Jacobs, Ph.D., M.S.W., M.S., M.P.H., “Sexual Communication and Seroadaptation Practices in HIV-Negative Midlife and Older Men Who Have Sex with Men,” which was published in the Journal of Social Service Research.
NSU-COM Establishes Department of Research

ON SEPTEMBER 26, NSU-COM took a bold step toward reaching research preeminence by establishing the Department of Research, which crosses all departmental boundaries. Although the college has maintained a strong focus on research for many years through its Office of Research and Innovation, the newly formed department is specifically charged with developing researchers, assisting current researchers in grant writing and academic publication, identifying new research initiatives, and serving as the college’s advocate regarding NSU research projects and proposals.

The following faculty members, who have been affiliated with NSU-COM for many years, were selected to oversee the various research aspects. They are

- **Nancy Klimas**, M.D., professor of clinical immunology and director of the NSU-COM Institute for Neuro-Immune Medicine, who is serving as assistant dean of research

- **Isa Fernandez**, Ph.D., M.A., medical researcher and professor of preventive medicine, who is serving as director of faculty research development and mentorship and will be responsible for the recently established Faculty Research Fellowship
Alumni in the News

Michael L. Baron, D.O. ('88), was recognized as the Physician Care Clinic (PCC) Volunteer of the Year at the DeKalb Medical Society’s annual meeting. Baron has volunteered at the Decatur, Georgia, clinic since 1997 and serves as a board member. For more than 20 years, the PCC has served local residents who find themselves uninsured or unable to afford medical care.

Hara Rosen Berger, D.O. ('11), who completed her internal medicine residency training at Mount Sinai Medical Center in Miami Beach in 2014 and her endocrinology fellowship at the University of Miami in 2016, recently joined the professional staff of Reproductive Health Physicians in Miami. In this role, she works alongside Neil Goodman, M.D., in treating thyroid and reproductive endocrinology disorders.

Kevin M. Boehm, D.O., M.Sc., FACOEP, FACEP, FAAEM ('05), was named osteopathic director of medical education at St. Mary Mercy Livonia Hospital in Livonia, Michigan, and will continue to serve as program director of the hospital’s emergency medicine residency program.

Carisa Champion, D.O., J.D., M.P.H. ('16), was appointed to the DOCARE International Board of Trustees and named as the organization’s Resident Mental Health Awareness Task Force liaison. She was also chosen to serve as an adviser to the American Osteopathic Association’s Bureau of Emerging Leaders.

Gaston Dana, D.O., FACP, FACCWS, FAAEP, FAAMA ('92), was elected vice president of the Indiana Osteopathic Association and named chief of staff at Johnson Memorial Hospital in Franklin, Indiana. In addition, he had his coauthored project, “Effects of Peri-Auricular Percutaneous Electrical Neuro-Modulating Field Stimulation (PENFS) of the Cranial Nerves on the Auto-Regulatory Hemodynamics of Intracranial Circulation in a Single Blind Sham Controlled Cohort,” published in Clinical Medicine and Diagnostics. Dana, who is certified in internal medicine, emergency medicine, wound care medicine, undersea and hyperbaric medicine, medical acupuncture, vascular ultrasound, and musculoskeletal ultrasound, also serves as an exam writer for the vascular ultrasound exam administered by the Alliance for Physician Certification and Advancement.
Thomas Green, D.O., M.M.M., M.P.H., CPE, FACOEP, FACEP (’98), earned his Master of Medical Management degree from the Heinz College of Carnegie Mellon University in May. He also became a certified physician executive in August and was appointed to the Iowa Board of Physician Assistants.

William A. Hayes, D.O. (’89), who serves as medical director of managed care for the Millennium Physician Group in Southwest Florida and its accountable care organization (ACO), played a significant role in Millennium being ranked as the No. 4 ACO in the country by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, earning a 97 percent quality rating.

Albert Lopez, D.O., FASPC (’92), who owns a practice called Lopez Internal Medicine Associates in Jacksonville, Florida, was named a Fellow of the American Society for Preventive Cardiology (ASPC) in recognition of his commitment to cardiovascular disease prevention and the ASPC. He also established Real Life Health—a personalized cardiovascular risk assessment and prevention program.

Jessica Okun, D.O., M.S. (’10), completed a neurological surgery residency at Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine in Pennsylvania and received the program’s Resident of the Year Award. She recently joined the staff at Sunrise Medical Group in Sunrise, Florida, which is part of the Tenet Florida Physician Services’ Advanced Neuroscience Network.

Joseph Stasio, D.O., FACOFP (’91), who serves as professor and chair of the Department of Primary Care at Rocky Vista University College of Osteopathic Medicine in Parker, Colorado, received the Osteopathic Family Physician of the Year Award at the American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians 53rd Annual Convention and Scientific Seminars held April 6–9 in San Juan, Puerto Rico.
FSACOFP Alumni Reception
Reunites Old Friends

APPROXIMATELY 20 NSU-COM students, as well as a number of faculty members, preceptors, and alumni, participated in the Florida Society of the American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians (FSACOFP) 36th annual Convention and Family Medicine Update held July 27–31 in Orlando, Florida. During the convention, the college coordinated a well-attended alumni reception that allowed longtime friends and peers to reconnect and network.

Traci-lyn Eisenberg ('11), left, and Beth Lanning
Victor Jaffe, D.O. (’06) and Pamela Moran-Walcutt, D.O. (’09)
Bruce Rankin, D.O. (’85), left, with Kathy and John Sadler
ON JUNE 10–12, the college coordinated its inaugural Updates in Medicine weekend at the Margaritaville Hollywood Beach Resort in Hollywood, Florida. The family-oriented continuing medical education (CME) weekend included participation from NSU-COM alumni, rural and urban underserved medicine preceptors, Consortium for Excellence in Medical Education members, clinical directors of medicine, and Interdisciplinary Generalist Curriculum physician educators.

More than 350 attendees had the opportunity to earn up to five hours of CME credit, attend a range of organizational board meetings, and network with colleagues and fellow alumni while enjoying the festive Margaritaville Hollywood Beach Resort atmosphere.

The second annual Updates in Medicine weekend has been scheduled for June 9–11, 2017.
Alumni Spotlight:
North Miami Mayor Believes in Helping Others

Multitasking alumnus balances family, mayoral, and medical practice responsibilities

By Scott Colton, B.A., APR
COM/HPD Director of Medical Communications and Public Relations

As a child growing up in Saint-Louis du Nord, Haiti, Smith Joseph, D.O., Pharm.D., always knew a career that involved helping people would significantly factor into his future. “As a kid, I always looked out for my friends and assumed the doctor role when we played,” said the 1998 NSU-COM alumnus. “I always wanted to be in a position of helping others and making a difference in their lives.”

Although Joseph admitted to having a relatively happy childhood growing up in Haiti, his life was dramatically altered when his father passed away when he was only 10, leaving his mother to provide for him and his siblings. “We always had food on the table and enough money to get by, but our financial situation was meager,” he admitted.

To create a better life for her family, Joseph’s mother relocated from Haiti to the Bahamas in 1972—and then to Miami, Florida, in 1975—to prepare a path for her children to follow, while other family members took care of them. In 1979, Joseph and his siblings migrated to the United States to join their mother in Miami and start an exciting new chapter in their lives.

Because he knew a career in the health care field was where his destiny lay, Joseph quickly began pursuing his dream of one day becoming a physician by earning a diploma in laboratory technology and securing a job as a lab technician specialist at Jackson Memorial Hospital. As the years progressed, so did his educational odyssey, which included earning an associate’s degree in the pre-pharmacy program at Miami Dade College, as well as a Pharm.D. degree from Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University.

In the ensuing years, Joseph worked as a registered pharmacist at Walgreens and as a clinical pharmacist at the Miami Heart Institute. While he was pursuing his pharmacy degree, however, Joseph learned about the osteopathic profession and felt an immediate affinity for it.

“I discovered osteopathic medicine in pharmacy school, where a professor gave many lectures on its history,” he explained. “I immediately took a special interest in it. I also liked the idea of being able to relieve someone’s back pain with just a few manipulation techniques instead of waiting for nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs or other toxic medications to act.”
As a result of his newfound osteopathic interest, Joseph decided to return to the rigors of academic life and pursue a D.O. degree at NSU’s College of Osteopathic Medicine. After graduating from NSU-COM and completing his internal medicine residency training at Grady Memorial Hospital in Atlanta, Georgia, Joseph opened his own internal medicine practice in 2001 in North Miami; it has 10 employees.

With a thriving medical practice and a family that includes wife Patricia, who is an attorney, and three children ranging in age from 13 to 24, Joseph was enjoying the type of life he could never have envisioned as a child growing up in Haiti. Although he was eminently happy from both a personal and professional standpoint, Joseph felt there was still more he could contribute to the community that embraced him years earlier.

“The idea of positively impacting people’s lives in many ways is a gratifying one,” said Joseph, who was motivated to run for elected office following a range of interactions he had with his patients over the years. “I saw patients with many social problems who kept coming to me to discuss issues related to city government.”

(Continued on next page)
Because he wanted to give back to his community, Joseph became a member of the city’s Community Redevelopment Agency Advisory Board, as well as the Quality Education Board. These experiences eventually compelled him to run for mayor. In November 2014, Joseph realized yet another life milestone when he was elected mayor of the City of North Miami.

“I enjoy the fact that I am able to care for and make a positive difference in the lives of the people who are my patients, as well as in lives of those in the city where I serve as mayor,” said Joseph, who truly enjoys his multidimensional mayoral role.

Juggling his family, mayoral, and medical practice responsibilities has proven to be an especially joyful experience for Joseph, who relishes all three facets of his multilayered life. “On a personal level, I am proud to be a husband and a father. On a professional level, I get lots of gratification from being a role model for the youth I have had the opportunity to motivate along the way,” said Joseph, who was inducted into the Miami Dade College Hall of Fame in 2009. “I am also glad I was able to open my private medical practice, just like I envisioned before I even entered medical school.”

In his role as North Miami mayor, Joseph deals with a range of issues that impact his constituents on a daily basis. “I am the face of the city and represent it whenever I am called to appear,” he said. “I preside over all council meetings and ceremonial activities and work with the council members on policy issues. As mayor, I formulate a vision for the city that will ensure its future success. I make sure our streets are repaired as needed, evaluate the city’s needs periodically, and make sure we have a balanced budget each year,” he added. “I also make sure we have enough social services for both the elderly and our youth. Another important task involves working on economic development programs, as well as business attraction and retention programs.”

As an NSU-COM alumnus, Joseph believes in financially supporting the college that helped make his dream of becoming a physician a reality. “Giving back is part of the circle of life,” he said. “I am sure the school was there for me because those who came before me gave back. It is our task to always give back to ensure that those who will come after us get the same opportunity.”

Because he came from humble beginnings and carefully crafted the life he has today, Joseph’s philosophy on attaining personal and professional satisfaction is simple yet profound. “One’s life is like a train. It goes from point A to point B during a certain period of time. We simply have to make sure we are at the station when it passes through,” he explained. “Being at the station simply means preparing yourself socially, culturally, academically, and professionally in order to take advantage of the opportunities when they come along.”
Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the following donor list. If you notice an error or omission, please contact Kathy Sadler, director of intramural affairs in the Office of Student and Alumni Affairs, at (954) 262-1029 or ksadler@nova.edu.

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NSU-COM Students, Alumni Garner AOF Honors

On September 16, several members of the NSU-COM family were recognized at the American Osteopathic Foundation (AOF) Honors ceremony in Anaheim, California. The event recognizes excellence among osteopathic physicians, educators, students, and other individuals. Listed below are the recipients; some scholarships come with a cash award.

- **Tyler Cymet**, D.O. *(class of 1988)*
  W. Douglas Ward, Ph.D., Educator of the Year

- **Jennifer Berkovich**, D.O. *(class of 2013)*
  Outstanding Resident of the Year in Pediatric Medicine ($5,000)

- **Ashley Van Putten** *(class of 2018)*
  Welch Scholars Grant ($1,500)

- **Chandni Patel** *(class of 2019)*
  Rossnick Humanitarian Grant ($500)

- **Benjamin Reinherz**, D.O. *(class of 2012)*
  Rossnick Humanitarian Grant ($500)

- **Veena Abraham** *(partner of Michael Cecilia, D.O.—class of 2016)*
  Donna Jones Moritsugu Memorial Award

NSU-COM Establishes Bachelor’s Degree in Public Health

In the fall of 2017, NSU-COM will welcome its inaugural undergraduate class of Bachelor of Science in Public Health students. The program integrates a health science core curriculum with progressive health care topics currently influencing populations on a local and global scale. Students who complete the program will gain a firm foundation in public health, which is formed from a combination of hands-on experience and faculty-led instruction.

Earning a bachelor’s degree in public health can open doors to a range of career and graduate education opportunities.

Many students who complete their B.S. in Public Health often continue their educational path by pursuing a Master of Public Health or a degree in the health professions. This unique program is the first of its kind in the United States that also prepares physicians through an established track of completing their B.S. in Public Health in three years, followed by a four-year Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine degree.

To learn more about the program, please contact Kristi Messer, M.S.W., M.P.H., at km1320@nova.edu or at (954) 262-1072.
The College recently added a new academic offering to its growing list of programs—the Certificate in Functional Nutrition and Herbal Therapies—which is designed to help healthcare professionals understand the tenets of herbal and functional medicine in a systems approach. More than 30 percent of Americans use nutritional and herbal supplements, but healthcare professionals are often unaware of the subsequent health effects and possible negative consequences.

Herbal Therapies Certificate Joins Academic Offerings

The College recently added a new academic offering to its growing list of programs—the Certificate in Functional Nutrition and Herbal Therapies—which is designed to help health care professionals understand the tenets of herbal and functional medicine in a systems approach. More than 30 percent of Americans use nutritional and herbal supplements, but health care professionals are often unaware of the subsequent health effects and possible negative consequences.

During their coursework, students will explore the scientific research of vitamin, herbal, and diet therapies and how to use these to optimize health and wellness. The program will also address toxicity-related issues and major safety concerns arising from the use of various diets and herbal therapies, as well as the challenges associated with effective safety monitoring.

For additional information about the certificate program, please contact Lynn Lafferty, Pharm.D., N.D., M.B.A., at llaffert@nova.edu.
ON SEPTEMBER 21, NSU officially opened its much-anticipated Center for Collaborative Research (CCR)—one of the largest and most advanced research facilities in Florida.

During the ceremony, the university announced a financial gift from AutoNation to name the NSU AutoNation Institute for Breast and Solid Tumor Cancer Research, which is located within the CCR. The institute is focused on developing and advancing improved methods of prevention and treatment to ultimately eradicate cancer. The gift to name the NSU AutoNation Institute brings the company’s cumulative giving to NSU to more than $10 million.

Indianapolis 500 champion Ryan Hunter-Reay joined the festivities to unveil the new AutoNation/Hunter-Reay Research Lab, which is located within the institute. Hunter-Reay is helping support cancer research at NSU through his nonprofit organization—Racing for Cancer, Inc.

Located adjacent to the university’s Health Professions Division complex on NSU’s Fort Lauderdale/Davie Campus, the 215,000-square-foot, six-story CCR is equipped with wet and dry labs. Other features include cutting-edge research equipment, such as access to a high-performance computing environment, and resources such as Florida LambdaRail, which is a high-speed broadband service delivery network with connectivity throughout the nation.

“NSU is a knowledge-based industry with a $3.2 billion economic impact in the state of Florida,” said George L. Hanbury II, Ph.D., NSU president and CEO. “The CCR is purposely designed for researchers, students, and industry to come together, pool resources, and develop effective and innovative solutions in health care, bioinformatics, technology, cybersecurity, and business. This is a key part of achieving a larger vision to further integrate higher education research, business, and health care for the benefit of the residents of Broward County, South Florida, and beyond.”

In May 2016, HCA East Florida received state approval to build a hospital on NSU’s Fort Lauderdale/Davie Campus. Once the hospital is completed, it will be within walking distance from the CCR and NSU’s Health Professions Division complex, providing additional opportunities to further integrate research and clinical trials.

“With access to HCA’s vast resources for clinical trials, and opportunities to partner with private ventures, our university is poised to become a national and international hub for startups and established technology companies, resulting in high-paying jobs and innovative discoveries,” said H. Thomas Temple, M.D., NSU’s senior vice president for translational research and economic development.

In order to efficiently address key issues facing humanity, NSU has established several research institutes and centers using a multidisciplinary, interprofessional approach. The CCR is the hub for this research, which is conducted at locations throughout the university and at its regional campuses. The established institutes include

- NSU AutoNation Institute for Breast and Solid Tumor Cancer Research
- NSU Cell Therapy Institute—a partnership with researchers from the Karolinska Institutet in Sweden
- NSU Emil Buehler Research Center for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
- NSU Institute for Natural and Ocean Sciences Research
- NSU Institute for Neuro-Immune Medicine
- NSU Rumbaugh-Goodwin Institute for Cancer Research

In addition, the United States Geological Survey (USGS) occupies the entire first floor of the CCR. The USGS and NSU partner on research involving hydrology, water resources, and greater Everglades restoration efforts.
All CCR occupants benefit from its core facilities, including the Genomics Core Facility for sequencing human genes associated with disease; the Flow Cytometry Core Facility for isolating special cell types, such as immune and stem cells; the Cell Therapy Core Facility for developing immunotherapies and regenerative medicines; and the Imaging Core Facility, which features advanced digital microscopy capabilities.
NSU News of Note

NSU Earns Noteworthy Worldwide Ranking

The *Times Higher Education* World University Rankings identified NSU as 1 of 20 universities in the world, and just 1 of 9 universities in the United States, that could “challenge the elite universities” and become globally renowned by the year 2030. Firetail, a higher education strategy consulting firm, identified 20 institutions out of 346 originally considered. The elite 20 were selected because they have an opportunity to become a new generation of “challenger” universities that will be quick to rise in rankings globally during the next 10 to 20 years. The rise will be, in part, because of the institutions’ long-term visions and short-term execution strategies, as well as an understanding of the changing world and their role in it.
The
Health Care
Legal Eagle

By Fred Segal, J.D.

Representations and Warranties in Physician Contracts: Honesty Is Essential

WHEN I APPLIED to become a member of the Florida Bar, the first piece of advice I received was to be honest—or else it would come back to bite me. The message was simple: Intentionally hiding something that could have a negative effect on your application would only make it worse.

I didn't have any skeletons to be worried about, but I know people who neglected to disclose theirs. Not surprisingly, the Florida Board of Bar Examiners discovered the transgressions and did not immediately give these people a license. This advice should apply for all licensure that you have or will apply for throughout your medical career.

The same concept should apply to the employment agreements you sign throughout your career. Most physician employment agreements require the physician to disclose, if they exist, certain issues that have arisen in the physician's past that could negatively affect the employer or are potential red flags.

Representation and warranty provisions in a physician contract, which must be signed, essentially state that a physician agrees that the representations listed in the contract are true. For instance, almost all contracts have a provision stating that the physician is licensed to practice medicine. Also, physicians are commonly asked to show that they are eligible to receive payment from the Medicare program for services provided to patients, or whether they have been sanctioned by the state or federal government for fraudulent or similar conduct.

Additionally, a physician may be asked to disclose certain items on an exhibit attached to the document. For example, a provision may request that a physician disclose any legal matters to which he or she is currently a party (e.g., malpractice litigation or contractual dispute).

Upon entering into a contract with a physician group, hospital, or any other health care entity, if the agreement states that you represent a listed group of facts that are true, don't sign the agreement unless they are true. If the contract requires you to disclose a matter before signing it, you must disclose it. Otherwise, upon the employer's discovery of the omission, the employer will have cause to terminate your contract immediately. In addition, some states require health care employers to disclose to the state licensure board, or the National Practitioner Data Bank, instances where a physician has been terminated for cause.

Given all this, you should always keep in mind the popular theory “the cover-up is always worse than the crime” when approaching issues regarding disclosure requirements in a contract. The consequences for failing to disclose are far worse than any potential repercussions for disclosure—even if it costs you a job.

Fred Segal is a health law attorney in the Miami office of the law firm Broad and Cassel and a graduate of NSU’s Shepard Broad College of Law.
NSU Offers Two Free Types of Programs

Option 1
A two-hour session where participants learn how to develop a successful quit plan.

Option 2
Support groups meet once a week for six weeks and cover a variety of topics including coping with withdrawal symptoms, managing addiction, and preventing relapse.

Free nicotine patches, lozenges, and gum are available to help tobacco users cope with nicotine withdrawal symptoms (while supplies last and if medically appropriate).

(954) 262-1580 ahectobacco.com

IQuit with AHEC is the in-person option of Tobacco Free Florida’s free and easy ways to quit. Programs cover all forms of tobacco. Sponsored by the AHEC Tobacco Program of Nova Southeastern University’s College of Osteopathic Medicine and the State of Florida Department of Health.