

# LINK

KPCOM

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







## FIRST POST-PANDEMIC TRIP AIDS PEOPLE IN COSTA RICA

After a lengthy hiatus due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Osteopathic Medicine coordinated its first medical outreach trip in nearly three years with its inaugural excursion to Costa Rica, which took place July 2-10. The trip comprised 1 D.O. faculty member, 1 volunteer, and 17 students.

According to R. Jackeline Moljo, D.O., assistant professor of family medicine and international medicine, there were actually two additional medical outreach trips planned during the same time frame. “We had organized a trip to the Galápagos Islands, which was canceled due to demonstrations in Ecuador,” she said. “There was also a trip planned to Puerto Rico, but it was canceled due to transportation problems on the island.”

### COVER IMAGE

*KPCOM students relish their first post-pandemic medical outreach trip to Costa Rica.*

During the health care team’s time in Costa Rica, the participants worked in the city of Cortes in the Punta Arenas province and visited a nursing home, where they saw 45 patients. “We reviewed the patients’ charts and did complete histories and physical exams on all the patients,” Moljo explained. “We performed osteopathic manipulative treatment, did ear lavages and wound-dressing changes, and socialized with the residents. Thankfully, they were well taken care of, as there were no bed ulcers at all, even in completely immobile patients.”

The medical outreach experience had a profound impact on the participants, including second-year student Lis Llanio. “Going to Costa Rica was one of the best experiences I ever had because of the connections I was able to create with patients and the family atmosphere that was formed amongst the students and faculty members. If I was asked to go back right now, I would say yes in a heartbeat.” ■

“I appreciated the ability to refine the clinical skills and medical knowledge I was taught in my first year of medical school, practice my medical Spanish, and connect so deeply with the patients I cared for.”

—Lis Llanio



# HIGHLIGHTS



## STUDENT INTEREST GROUP TARGETS ABUSE EDUCATION

When second-year student Supriya Dhaurali began attending the Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Osteopathic Medicine, she immersed herself in volunteering for several South Florida organizations that assist abuse victims. Her ultimate goal, however, was to establish an interest group that could involve more students to combat and prevent abuse. Earlier this year, her dream was realized with the formation of the Medical Students Against Abuse (MSAA) interest group.

“Medical Students Against Abuse strives to be a unique group that focuses on the broad topic of abuse experienced by individuals of all ages and backgrounds, regardless of race, gender, or location. The group will provide a targeted emphasis on various subtypes of abuse and neglect, such as domestic violence, child abuse, elderly abuse, sexual abuse, human trafficking, and underage marriages,” said second-year student Asha Kurian, MSAA vice president.

“Statistics show that one in four women and one in seven men have been victims of severe physical violence by an intimate partner in their lifetimes, and at least one in seven children have experienced child abuse or neglect in the past year in the United States,” Kurian added. “Our mission is to provide a platform for student doctors to learn about various types of abuse and exploitation of vulnerable populations, engage in meaningful volunteering opportunities with South Florida nonprofit organizations, and raise awareness.”

To help achieve its goals, MSAA has numerous activities and events planned, including hosting different panel discussions with faculty members that focus on child abuse. The organization is also partnering with a women’s shelter in Miami, Florida, to provide monthly talks on health-related topics. Other important initiatives include a tutoring opportunity with children and coordinating holiday drives to collect and donate food, as well as other needed items.

Dhaurali, who serves as MSAA president, hopes the organization can serve as an educational resource for both students and abuse victims. “Abuse is not always easy to identify, and victims are often unaware of the ongoing abuse they may be facing. It really can be very insidious and affect anyone—anywhere,” she explained. “We hope to get this message across to the students and the population we will be serving, so we are equipped to protect ourselves—and each other.” ■



# SPOTLIGHTS



## ALUMNI DUO NAVIGATES MARRIAGE, MEDICINE, AND PARENTHOOD

It's been a whirlwind seven years for the alumni duo of Kenneth Wojnowski, D.O. ('18) and Julia Ladna, D.O. ('19), who met in the summer of 2015 when he was a second-year student and she was a freshman starting her first day at the Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Osteopathic Medicine (KPCOM). Since meeting on that auspicious day, they have successfully meshed marriage, parenthood, and professional responsibilities despite the many challenges they have faced.

"We were both members of the Terry Society, and he was the academic peer mentor, which is how we first met," Ladna recalled. "We quickly bonded, as we were both out-of-state students from the Northeast. We kept bumping into each other at different events and at the beach, library, and church."

Ladna and Wojnowski quickly discovered they shared similar interests, values, and priorities, which led to a blossoming relationship that culminated in the spring of 2019 with the couple tying the knot one week after Ladna graduated from the KPCOM. However, because they were a year apart in their training regimens, numerous obstacles had to be overcome.

"We've had to calculate every move in order for us to reach our career goals," said Wojnowski, who began his pulmonary and

critical care medicine fellowship in July 2022 at UMASS Chan Medical School-Baystate in Springfield, Massachusetts, while Ladna started her cardiovascular medicine fellowship at the same time and location as part of a couples match. "Julia was able to establish strong relationships during her core rotations in order to match at the same program where I was for internal medicine residency training at Broward Health Medical Center in Fort Lauderdale," he explained.

"I was able to match into a one-year sleep medicine fellowship in Miami while Julia finished her last year of residency in order to place us on the same time line for fellowship applications," he added. "During that year of training, we were lucky enough to have our first child, a beautiful baby boy named Arthur, in January 2022."

Although it's been an arduous odyssey at times, the rewards far outweigh the frustrations. "There will never be a perfect time to take that trip you've always dreamed of, get a dog, or start a family," Ladna stressed. "Life is not without challenges, but all these things make it worth living." ■



## MY PATH TO PATHOLOGY

Most seven-year-olds receive dolls, clothes, or toys for their birthday. On my seventh birthday, my parents gifted me a collection of science books. Their dusty, wrinkled pages and smell suggested they had been in my family for years.



Despite being a poor, skinny girl living in Cuba, I felt like the richest kid in the world. These books introduced me to a world far outside my small neighborhood. As I grew older, my interests in science expanded to include an admiration and curiosity for the art of the human body and its relationship with disease.

Before medical school, I was already intrigued by pathology. During my undergraduate studies, I had the opportunity to shadow a forensic pathologist and was fascinated by a specialty that combined human anatomy with bringing closure to the suffering of others. During medical school, histology quickly became my favorite course.

I enjoyed tutoring struggling classmates and even made flashcards to help them identify the different types of tissues. I discovered I wanted to be part of a specialty where I could aid my patients in finding their correct diagnoses and also teach and encourage others to learn about the world of human cells.

While completing my third-year rotations at Palmetto General Hospital in Hialeah, Florida, I focused on reading pathology reports, venturing to the pathology lab, and reviewing my patients with the pathologist. It was the grandmother with a suspected gastrointestinal tumor that turned out to be benign, the young father with abdominal pain who now had an unfortunate pancreatic malignancy, the young and immunosuppressed man with confirmed *Pneumocystis jirovecii* pneumonia, and countless others who continued to nudge me toward my true passion.

In pathology, I can combine everything I love about science, the nature of disease, and the human body. Pathology has allowed me to be involved with my patients every step of the way, whether in transporting specimens, assisting with frozens, or studying the slide with the attending pathologist. I, now lovingly referred to as “Vivi the pathologist” by my peers, look forward to using my knowledge to better my community as I continue my journey in medicine.” ■

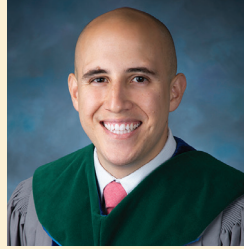
*Virginia Fernandez is a fourth-year KPCOM student.*



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# ALUMNI

**Juan S. Arana, D.O. ('19)**, joined the medical staff at Southeast Georgia Physician Associates (SGPA)-Pediatrics Southeast, which is part of the Southeast Georgia Health System. Arana, a board-certified pediatrician, is practicing at the SGPA-Pediatrics Brunswick practice.



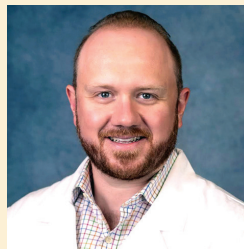
**Ahmad Bashirimoghaddam, D.O. ('18)**, recently joined the hospital medicine team at Memorial Hospital of Sweetwater County in Rock Springs, Wyoming.



**Roy Barski, D.O. ('16)**, recently established his family medicine practice Barseid Health in Aventura, Florida. Located within the HCA Florida Aventura Hospital campus, he is accepting new in-person and telemedicine patients, as well as rounding on his patients in the hospital.



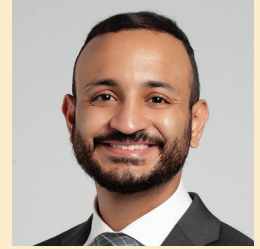
**Ryan Chapman, D.O. ('14)**, who is board certified in internal medicine and hospice and palliative medicine, was promoted to the position of chief medical officer at St. Francis Reflections in Brevard County, Florida.



**Virginia Duany, D.O. ('04)**, was promoted to the position of chief medical officer at Carolina Caring in North Carolina. In her new role, she will help ensure the highest quality of medical care is delivered while overseeing daily operations and nurturing the spirit of the nonprofit's clinical team.



**Ahmed Elghawy, D.O., CAQSM ('15)**, a rheumatologist and sports medicine physician at the Cleveland Clinic in Cleveland, Ohio, was recently promoted to assistant professor at the Cleveland Clinic Lerner College of Medicine.



**Ryan Garbalosa, D.O., FACC ('09)**, was elected to the board of the South Carolina Medical Association as the trustee for District 10 representing Sumter, Clarendon, and Lee counties. He was also reappointed as chief of medicine at Prisma Health Tuomey in Sumter, South Carolina.



**Christopher E. Keel, D.O., FACS ('09)**, was named associate professor and interim chair of urology at the University of South Alabama.



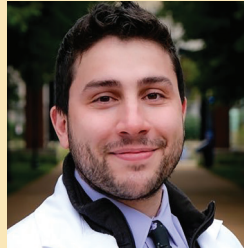
**Joshua D. Lenchus, D.O., R.Ph., FACP, SFHM ('00)**, chief medical officer at Broward Health Medical Center in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, was elected as the 146th president of the Florida Medical Association on August 6. Additionally, he is the first osteopathic physician in history to serve as the organization's president. In his Broward Health role, Lenchus oversees undergraduate and graduate medical education; patient safety, quality, infection prevention, and clinical risk; research and the Institutional Review Board; credentialing, privileging, and medical staff affairs; and the Broward Health Physician Group, including the ambulatory and community health services division.



# ACHIEVEMENTS

**Ravi Mehan, D.O., FACOI ('00)**, joined VillageMD in Chicago, Illinois, as its national medical director. He will focus on helping Village Medical clinicians offer personal, patient-centered, and coordinated primary care to improve health outcomes in the southeast region of the United States.

**Vatche Melkonian, D.O. ('18)**, was inducted into the Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Medical Society during his chief resident year as a general surgery resident at St. Louis University Hospital.



**Stephen Miller, D.O. ('00)**, is the new health officer of the Hamilton County Health Department in Chattanooga, Tennessee. Miller possesses a family practice background, along with strong work experience in the medical field ranging from emergency room physician to private practice.

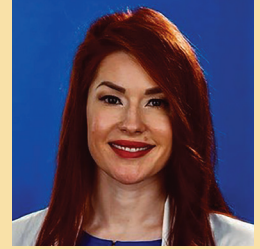
**Elizabeth Mortazavi, D.O. ('17)**, a pain medicine specialist, joined the medical staff at the Thibodaux Regional Pain Clinic in Thibodaux, Louisiana. To augment her skills, she completed a pain medicine fellowship at the Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center in New Orleans.



**Natalie N. Negrón, D.O. ('19)**, joined the medical staff at Halifax Health Primary Care, which is part of the Halifax Health Medical Center in Daytona Beach, Florida. Negrón, a board-certified family medicine physician, is practicing at the Port Orange primary care office. She completed her family medicine residency, with an area of concentration in children and adolescent medicine, at Oak Hill Hospital in Brooksville, Florida, where she served as chief resident. She also received the third-year Teaching Resident Award for demonstrating a commitment and dedication to medical and resident education.



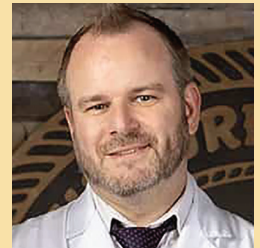
**Jessica Okun, D.O., FACOS, ('10)**, who is board certified in neurological surgery, was appointed director of spine and neurosciences at Steward Health Florida Medical Center in Lauderdale Lakes, Florida.



**Ian Singer, D.O., J.D. ('19)**, received the Family Medicine Resident Teacher of the Year Award from the Florida Society of the American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians on July 29 for demonstrating "exceptional skills and consistent dedication to teaching in the academic setting, as well as a long-term commitment to osteopathic family medicine."



**James Stull, D.O., M.B.S. ('18)**, who recently completed his family medicine residency training at the Choctaw Nation Health Care Center in Talihina, Oklahoma, joined the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma as a full-time physician at the Choctaw Nation Talihina Clinic.



**Gregory A. Williams, D.O., FAAFP ('92)**, serves as a member of the Florida Patient's Compensation Fund Board of Governors to assist in the dissolution of the fund pursuant to a bill passed by the 2022 Florida Legislature. His role is to serve as an adviser to the fund as it begins the wind-down process. The legislation requires the process to be supervised by the Florida Department of Financial Services and to be completed by December 21, 2023.







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