



Spring 2023

CAMPUS QUARTERLY

MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

We've done it!

The Hackensack Meridian School of Medicine is now fully accredited by the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME). It's the fulfillment of a dream more than a decade in the making. For years now, we have provided a one-of-a-kind education to train doctors who are changing the world for the better - and this is a stamp of approval we cherish.

Dr. Jeffrey Boscamp, Dean

HMSOM NEWS

Hackensack Meridian School of Medicine Fully Accredited

The Hackensack Meridian School of Medicine (HMSOM) was granted full accreditation in February by the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME), a major milestone capping a robust seven-year review process that affirms the highest standards in the training of future physicians. The school admitted its first class in 2018 and has graduated two classes, many of whom are serving residencies in Hackensack Meridian *Health* hospitals.

"This is the culmination of years of work that started with a vision to reinvent medical education to create a physician workforce to thrive in a new state of medicine," said Robert C. Garrett, FACHE, chief executive officer of Hackensack Meridian *Health* (HMH). "We are reaching our goals to keep physicians in New Jersey, to diversify the physician workforce and graduate doctors who will humanize healthcare."

The LCME is sponsored by the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) and the American Medical Association (AMA). The LCME is the accrediting body for all institutions conferring medical doctorate (MD) degrees in the United States and Canada. LCME accreditation is a voluntary, peer-reviewed process of quality assurance that determines whether the medical education program meets established standards, according to the organization. All aspects of the institution undergo rigorous review, including the entire curriculum, finances, infrastructure, and faculty. Full accreditation by the LCME confirms the high quality of the program.

"This tremendous accomplishment is a testament to the talent and perseverance of our faculty, staff, and students," said Jeffrey Boscamp, M.D., dean of HMSOM. "We are meeting every standard required of us while pioneering, among a small cadre of other institutions, an accelerated medical education program, fully embracing an active learning pedagogy, and pioneering an award-winning investment in

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our local communities through the Human Dimension course.”

Medical education programs leading to the MD degree must first hold institutional accreditation to be eligible for initial full accreditation and for continuing accreditation by the LCME.

“We have spent long hours making this dream become a reality,” said Miriam Hoffman, M.D., a vice dean of HMSOM. “We have been driven from the start to build a school that creates outstanding physicians who are ready to tackle our most pressing challenges. We are gratified to be fulfilling the mission and vision laid out for us from the outset by the founding dean, Dr. Bonita Stanton.”

“This is a huge accomplishment – and it is a testament to the terrific community of professionals which we have built over the last five-plus years,” added Stanley R. Terlecky, Ph.D., a vice dean of HMSOM.

HMSOM has grown quickly in the seven years since its founding. In 2018, the school admitted 60 students; the latest two cohorts numbered more than 160 students apiece. The first 18 students on an accelerated three-year track entered HMH residencies in 2021, and another 63 graduated in 2022, including students graduating after three years and after four years.

HMSOM’s innovative 3 + 1 curriculum includes a three-year core curriculum and an individualized fourth year, where students build an individualized educational plan that meets their professional goals and developmental needs. Students build a program from a variety of options, including HMSOM curriculum in the *Determinants of Health* – the many factors that we know impact health outcomes, including the biologic/genetic, but also other critical behavioral, social, healthcare, and environmental determinants. At the heart of the curriculum is the innovative Human Dimension course.

This immersive community-based experience links pairs of students to families in the community, with a focus on the domains of the social determinants

of health: social, environmental, psychological, and medical. Throughout their stay at HMSOM, students in the Human Dimension follow the health trajectories of individuals and families, in locations including Hackensack, Garfield, Paterson, Passaic, Bloomfield, Clifton, Nutley, Union City, and West New York.



Hackensack Meridian School of Medicine ‘Match Day’ Points Students to Career Beginnings

Students poised to graduate from the Hackensack Meridian School of Medicine with their medical degrees this spring have opened the envelopes and discovered their matches to residency programs across the country on March 17.

The 2023 Match Day career-milestone began at MetLife Stadium at exactly noon – when thousands of other medical students around the country also discovered their own new beginnings within those envelopes.

“We are so proud of these future physicians who are uniquely qualified to thrive in a new state of healthcare that will focus as much on keeping people healthy as curing illness and disease,” said Robert C. Garrett, FACHE, chief executive officer of Hackensack Meridian *Health*. “We are

eager to have our students start their residencies in Hackensack Meridian hospitals as well as other fine institutions.”

The doctors-to-be are on track to complete their medical education at HMSOM, with commencement planned for June 8.

“Match Day is always a thrill,” said Jeffrey Boscamp, M.D., president and dean of HMSOM. “It’s one of those validations of a chosen vocation – and there’s nothing like it.”

The 85 students expected to graduate include students from the 2019 cohort who are completing the four-year track, and a contingent from the 2020 cohort who are finishing their medical degree in three years, as part of the Phase 3-Residency (P3-R) option. Almost everyone in the P3-R group will assume residencies across the Hackensack Meridian Health network later this year.

They are all among an estimated 44,000 medical students across the U.S. who also learned where they will “match” through the National Resident

Matching Program® (NRMP).

This was the third Match Day for the school, which received its full accreditation from the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME) in February 2023. Students from this year’s cohort matched at hospitals across the Hackensack Meridian *Health* network, as well as locations such as Brown University/Rhode Island Hospital, ISMMS Mount Sinai Morningside - West, New York University, Grossman School Of Medicine, Montefiore Medical Center: Einstein Campus, Vanderbilt University Medical Center, among others.

Established in 1952 at the request of medical students to provide an orderly and fair mechanism for matching the preferences of applicants for U.S. residency positions, today “the Match” encompasses more than 47,000 registrants and 39,000 positions.





AROUND THE SCHOOL

HMSOM Takes Part in Roundtable with White House ONDCP

The Hackensack Meridian School of Medicine (HMSOM) has prided itself on training its students to treat opioid-use disorders for several years. In February, HMSOM representatives were able to share some of their successes with the White House.



Vice Dean Stanley R. Terlecky, Ph.D., and recent graduate Leo Gefter, M.D., a Jersey Shore University Medical Center psychiatry resident, met with Rahul Gupta, M.D., director of the White House's Office of National Drug Control Policy, for a roundtable on Feb. 22, at the Volunteers of America location in Collingswood, N.J.

Gupta, Terlecky, and Gefter were joined by members from Seton Hall University's College of Nursing and

School of Health and Medical Sciences. Together the three schools have trained students via Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) grants supporting medication-assisted treatment (MAT) training since 2018.

The value of the Interprofessional Health Sciences (IHS) campus collaboration was explored in an hour with Dr. Gupta.

To learn more about the ONDCP visit to New Jersey, [read the White House press release here](#).

First Annual SOM Medical Education Week Coming April 17 – 21!

The week will include many in-person and virtual opportunities for us to showcase the incredible medical education scholarship, research, and innovation taking place at the SOM. It is an opportunity for you to connect with colleagues, share your work, find collaborators, and learn from each other.

Highlights of the week include:

- Opening Session and Med Ed Journal Club on Monday 4/17
- IHS Book Club and Library Workshop on Tuesday 4/18
- Human Dimension Capstone student poster sessions on Wednesday 4/19
- **Medical Education Scholarship Day!** Thursday 4/20 will include:
 - Workshops on a wide range of Med Ed topics - in person
 - Plenary presentation featuring Hetty Cunningham, M.D.
 - Poster session and reception
 - Awarding of prizes for best abstracts in various categories, with oral presentations by the authors

[REGISTER HERE](#)



Hackensack Meridian
School of Medicine

Inaugural Medical Education Week

APRIL 17 - 21, 2023

Get Event Details and Register:
<https://bit.ly/MedEdWk>



MONDAY, APRIL 17

12:30 PM - 1:45 PM Med Ed Week Welcome and Med Ed Journal Club

TUESDAY, APRIL 18

12:30 PM - 1:30 PM IHS Book Club discussion of *Twice as Hard* by Jasmine Brown

2:00 PM - 3:00 PM IHS Library Workshop: "Developing Your Research Presence"

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 19

3:00 PM - 6:30 PM Human Dimension Capstone Scholarship Day

THURSDAY, APRIL 20

1:00 PM - 2:00 PM Concurrent Workshops - Round 1

2:30 PM - 3:30 PM Concurrent Workshops - Round 2

3:45 PM - 5:15 PM Plenary speaker, Hetty Cunningham, MD, on "Promoting an Anti-bias and Inclusive Curriculum: Concrete Tools Toward Excellence in Education and Clinical Care"

5:30 PM - 7:00 PM Closing Reception and posters on view





FEATURED FACES

Voices of HMSOM: Swenson, Finding Psychiatry Through a Lifetime of Experience

Gasping, the boy had arrived at the hospital with his mother, suffering from an acute asthma exacerbation. Carly Swenson, the medical student who was doing a night-shift rotation as a pediatrics sub-intern, quickly noticed in the conversation there was more going on than just the difficulty breathing. He was quiet, talking just enough to answer the questions posed to him, but nothing more than that.

The mother pulled the attentive medical student outside and confided in her, saying the boy had been struggling, and depressed.

The Hackensack Meridian School of Medicine student quickly figured out that the boy didn't have many friends – and didn't use his inhaler because he was embarrassed by it. She quickly relayed the information to the physicians in charge – with a recommendation to get the boy some mental health help. They boy got the care he needed. And the encounter helped set Swenson on her current path, toward a career in psychiatry.

"I was just so drawn to that side of the boy," recalled Swenson. "Yes, we needed to treat his asthma, but getting him some help for the root cause of what was ailing him fulfilled me more

than anything. It was one moment where I was like, 'I think this is what I want to do. What I need to do.'"

"Carly Swenson brings an empathy that is vital in medicine," said Jeffrey Boscamp, M.D., president and dean of the medical school. "She will make a difference in the lives of many people in her career to come."

FIRST HAND EXPERIENCE

Swenson was always drawn to science in her education, from her earliest school days and through her undergraduate years majoring in neuroscience.

The inspiration for medicine – that came from experiences close to home. Her brother was diagnosed early on with an autoimmune condition, so Swenson got to witness an extended narrative of care involving pediatric rheumatologists and other specialized doctors at a hospital near the family home – Hackensack University Medical Center.

But later, as she became an adult, she also was diagnosed with her own chronic condition: Crohn's disease. The years of trying to figure out what her condition was and how best to treat it left her with a fuller understanding of what it's like to be a patient.

"Living with a chronic disease has definitely given me the empathy and compassion toward others who may have long-term illnesses," she said.

Her experiences prompted her to work with the Colitis and Crohn's Foundation. For years she has

volunteered to help with fundraisers and other events to benefit the non-profit. It's something that has enriched her burgeoning career as a healer.

"I relate so strongly with that community," said Swenson. "I see myself at some point in my career working with kids with chronic illness, whether it's purely in a GI realm like Crohn's and colitis, or just other general chronic illnesses. I definitely connect to that population specifically."

CAREER BEGINNINGS TO MEDICAL SCHOOL

Swenson always knew she wanted to work to help children. She wanted to have an impact on their lives - especially after seeing what doctors had done for her brother, and even herself, at young ages.

But it was a series of organic life experiences that brought her to psychiatry – and likely child and adolescent psychiatry here, at the cusp of her graduation from medical school.

Right after her freshman year of college, she was accepted into a Summer Scholars Program at Hackensack University Medical Center – the hospital she had become very familiar with via her brother's care. Through the program, she got to rotate with different pediatric specialists. It was almost a dream, even at that stage.

But there were other experiences, too: Doing a study-abroad program in Copenhagen, which involved traveling to other parts of Europe, and seeing what medicine is like beyond the United States. She also spent a short stint working at the Riley Hospital for Children in Indiana one summer, as part of her work with young spina bifida patients.

But the work which really brought it all together came right before medical school, when she worked with the Brain Injury Research Center at Mount Sinai. For two years, she worked with patients with traumatic brain injury, and she spent time coordinating a research study that involved patients' consent to donating their brains after their death. It was demanding work, and there were communication and neurocognitive challenges aplenty, but

she found the work ultimately rewarding.

Each of these experiences, in their way, pushed Swenson toward medical school – where she started off focusing in the direction of pediatrics. But it was experiences with the human side of medicine – such as the boy in the hospital one night who was embarrassed to use his inhaler – that pushed her further into the curiosity around the human brain and its workings.

The Human Dimension (part of the core curriculum at the Hackensack Meridian School of Medicine) experience she had was also formative in her blossoming career as a clinician. Her VP (the patient Swenson was paired with in the community) was a man experiencing heart failure who was in need of an organ transplant. But in order to be eligible for inclusion on the transplant list, he needed to lose some weight. So, Swenson and her academic partner found him recipes that could help keep him healthier and shed the pounds. The man also managed depression and some other healthcare access issues. They also helped with these more immediate needs, as well: after being denied Social Security Disability benefits several times running, the two students helped the man receive the critical support for the first time; and during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, they helped the VP get a vaccine when he found himself stuck on a list, waiting.

"He told us how much we helped him," recalled Swenson. "But it really opened my eyes to the reality of the social determinants of health. It became clear: you really have to tackle the patient's life outside of them sitting in your office or the hospital – to understand what's really going on."

PERSONAL LIFE

Swenson grew up in a loving family in Livingston, with two brothers and lots of activity. Her father manages power plants and her mother works as an educator. Early on, her passion for soccer drove her to play tournaments across the country, where she and others were recruited for college. She

ultimately played Division III at Wesleyan, where she was the team captain. It was a long formative experience, she recalled.

“It was very intense. But it taught me so much about sacrifice, working together, and time management,” she said.

Her time now is spent cooking, exercising, occasionally skiing, and keeping a healthy work-life balance, considering the copious amount of studying during the course of medical school. She spends as much time with family as possible, and a large extended family includes about a dozen cousins on each side who get together for holidays.

She prioritizes. Her grandfather who passed away recently had always given the family a mantra, which she hopes to live by, even as she makes her way as a physician:

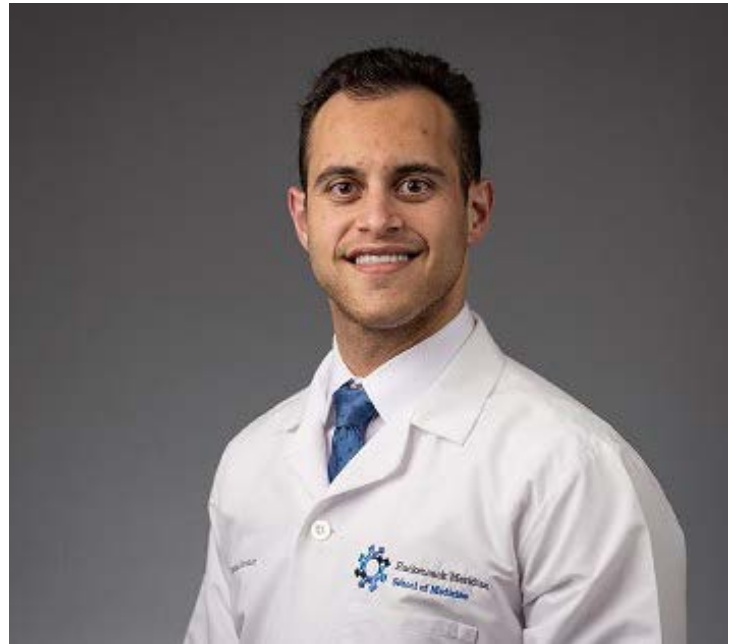
“He always said, ‘Family first, no matter what,’” she recalled.

Voices of HMSOM: Intrator Aims to Understand the Brain

Amid the spread of a new and unforeseen virus known as SARS-CoV-2, Jordan Intrator found his medical education inspired to new heights.

The Hackensack Meridian School of Medicine student was out in the community through the Human Dimension curriculum, working with a man with a heart condition who was on a transplant waiting list. This patient had not yet received the COVID-19 vaccine, and had signed up only to languish on a long waiting list. But Intrator and his student partner, Carly Swenson, working in tandem with calls and research, found the patient the access, and the shot, he so desperately needed. And with the virus raging around the community, the patient avoided the worst outcomes experienced by millions during the pandemic.

For Intrator, now expecting to graduate with his medical degree and head into residency in July,



it’s an early, simple “win” in his burgeoning career.

“This man was the sickest of the sick, the most in danger if he got the disease, a person who lives in a community which is being disparately hit by the virus – and yet he didn’t have access to the vaccine,” said Intrator. “We reached out for him, and it worked. That’s something we’re all striving for – to advocate for patients, and to create equity. He was very impactful for me. It’s something that will always stick with me.”

“Jordan Intrator is an excellent student and shows great promise as a physician; he’s shown ways to make a difference on the campus, in the clinical setting, everywhere,” said Jeffrey Boscamp, M.D., dean of the Hackensack Meridian School of Medicine. “We look forward to what he will do, from day one of his career.”

PEOPLE AND SCIENCE

Neuropsychiatry is a sometimes-overlooked niche, and it’s all in the name: it combines psychiatry’s examination of mental health disorders with neurology’s search for root causes of brain disorders.

This is where Intrator sees huge potential.

Intrator honed his interest in people, and science – and the science of people – starting with a psychology class in high school in Long Island – which

proceeded to a psychology degree from Hunter College at the City University of New York.

“I like people, and I like science,” he said. “It became fun to me to combine the two – asking questions, applying scientific principles to novel situations. To come up with ideas and apply them in real-life and explain how the world works.”

The undergraduate had his first experience in a clinical setting at the famed Bellevue Hospital in New York City. He recalls a number of patient interactions – particularly doing an intake assessment one afternoon on a gentleman with a violent history. The man was pleasantly engaging in that first encounter, but just hours later placed one of the nurse technicians in a chokehold and had to be subdued. Intrator looks at that experience and all the others as formative, in his observation of the science of treating the mind.

“I realized how fortunate I was, being able to just work with patients and see them recover, and seeing them come in acute psychiatric distress, and then get better through both therapy and medication. It was very moving,” he recalled. “Along the way, I started asking myself: What is causing this? What is happening in this person’s life? What is bringing this on? How did they get better? How can we keep them better? And how can I be a part of that?”

OPENING DOORS

Intrator attributes his success to no innate natural ability – but a willingness to learn, try new things, and reach out despite the odds. With that outlook, he pursued medical school and found himself accepted to several institutions. Ultimately, he came to the HMSOM partly because he received a full scholarship – and also because it offered a humanistic-driven, progressive vision of how to become a doctor in the 21st Century. He saw it as an inspiration to be the best he could be.

“They (HMSOM) saw something in me,” he recalled. “I told myself, ‘I’m going to prove to them that it was the right decision.’”

Intrator seized the initiative, spurring himself toward participation in a number of groups: the school’s Medical Education Committee, a student representative to the Association of American Medical Colleges, the Peer Mentoring Group, and the presidencies of the Psychiatry Student Interest Group, the Student Interest Group in Neurology, and the Neuroscience Journal Club (the latter of which he founded).

He also took part in research projects that spanned across the Hackensack Meridian Health network. Notably, this included assisting investigations into the use of psychotropic drugs, stimulants and depressants, in combination with transcranial magnetic stimulation, or TMS, and electroconvulsive therapy, or ECT.

During the summer before his fourth year, Intrator was introduced to a neuropsychiatrist, who he elected to do rotations with as part of an independent study period. He responded strongly – it became like a calling.

“This is exactly the type of practice I was looking for my entire career,” recalled Intrator.

Neuropsychiatry became the focal point of his interest. Through the course of his years working in rotations and observing mental health and the barriers to it, he remains convinced that the future is combining psychiatry with neurology to understand the physiological workings of the brain.

THE CAREER AHEAD

“Empowering patients” is a need he sees in psychiatry, where it can be too easy to become over-reliant on medication. The goal, as he sees it, is to help patients use pharmacotherapy in combination with self-care to better balance the brain so patients can better tackle their own mental health issues.

“For me it’s about defining neuropsychiatry, breaking down how the brain affects behavior, giving people their autonomy back,” he said.

Ultimately, he will want to heal patients to the best of his ability – but he also wants to continue

conducting research which may further his impact beyond even what he can do in one office or hospital.

“Research is a way to channel clinical inquiry into impacting care, and having a farther reach than the finite number of patients you can actually see on a day-to-day basis,” he said.

Intrator’s daily routine includes exercise, avidly following New York sports, and daily morning meditation. He grew up in Long Island, one of four children of an education consultant and a chief financial officer, and he remains close to them – and grateful for his upbringing.

“I have a supportive family I can drive home to. They’re my biggest cheerleaders – and I wouldn’t be where I am today without them,” he said. “Considering how much we learn about the social determinants of health here at the school, I realize how much of a privilege I’ve had, with the support system I grew up with.”

New Medical Education Learning Specialist

Priya Dattathreya arrived in February as the new Medical Education Learning Specialist. Priya is a seasoned learning specialist with a background in both medicine and education. She has extensive experience in providing individualized, strengths-based academic support to medical students. In her previous role, Priya was an Associate Professor at the Academy of Teaching and Learning, Ross University School of Medicine, where she delivered academic success programs and workshops to pre-clinical students. In addition, she has taught Anatomical and Neuro Sciences to medical students, led faculty development activities, and medical education research efforts. At the SOM, Priya will be working with



Brian Gorman, M.D., providing individual academic support and workshops to students.

New Faculty Member in Medical Sciences

Charitha Madiraju, Ph.D. joined the Faculty in the Department of Medical Sciences at HMSOM. Previously, Dr. Madiraju was an Associate Professor at Marshall B. Ketchum University, Fullerton, CA, where she was extensively



involved with the Biomedical Sciences portion of the Pharm.D. curriculum. Dr. Madiraju obtained her Ph.D. from the University of Pittsburgh and undertook fellowships at Sanford Burnham Prebys Medical Discovery Institute in La Jolla, CA. Her research interests focus on hematological malignancies and autoimmune diseases.

New Academic Chair for Psychiatry and Behavioral Health

Gary Small, M.D., has been appointed Academic Chair of the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Health. A nationally renowned psychiatrist and author, Dr. Small serves as the Behavioral Health Physician-in-Chief for Hackensack Meridian Health and Chair of Psychiatry at Hackensack University Medical Center. Prior to that, Dr. Small served as Professor of Psychiatry and Biobehavioral Sciences and Parlow Solomon Professor on Aging at the David Geffen School of Medicine at the University of California, Los Angeles. Dr. Small assumes the position held by the school’s founding chair, **Ramon Solhkhah, M.D.**



HMSOM UPDATES

Dr. Kountz Earns Ethel Weinberg Award

David Kountz, M.D., MBA, MACP, won the 2023 Alliance of Independent Academic Medical Centers (AIAMC) Ethel Weinberg, MD Award. The AIAMC is an American national membership organization of approximately 70 major academic medical centers and health systems committed to quality patient care, medical education, and research. The Weinberg Award is presented to an AIAMC individual member who best exemplifies the energy and commitment of its founder. Dr. Kountz, who has an extensive background with the AIAMC dating back to 2015, was recognized at an awards dinner in Nashville on March 24.

New LatinX/Hispanic Team Member Resource Group

The first meeting of the LatinX/Hispanic Team Member Resource Group (TMRG) was held on Feb. 9. TMRGs are voluntary groups that are organized around particular shared interests or diversity dimensions. Launched by the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI), groups are a part of DEI's strategic initiatives to create an open forum for team members to share innovative ideas, help accomplish business goals, build professional development, provide networking opportunities, and strengthen the linkage within our communities.

[Sign up here](#) for the LatinX/Hispanic TMRG. All are welcome to participate. For more information

about TMRGs, please visit the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion site on MyHMH. For further inquiries, please contact Rehat.singh@hmhn.org.

SOM Formal Held March 11, Dancing and Good Times Had By All

The Hackensack Meridian School of Medicine Formal was held on March 11. As you can tell, our students were able to cut loose, cut a rug, and have a great time off-campus.

