

# THE INTERNAL POST

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE SUNY DOWNSTATE

## Internal Medicine Residency Program

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NYC  
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HOSPITALS

Kings County



Memorial Sloan Kettering  
Cancer Center™

## A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF MEDICINE

MORO O. SALIFU, MD, MBA, MPH, MACP

Dear Colleagues:

As you walk through the hallways (and ride in some elevators), you may see the *Castle Connolly Top Doctors* announcement acknowledging SUNY Downstate as the 4th ranking institution in the nation for training "TOP Doctors." It is truly gratifying for all of us to belong to this club. We all have a part to play in, at a minimum, ensuring the high quality of training is preserved, and at best, ensuring we reach to even greater heights.

I see signs of greater heights already. Last year, the board pass rate was the highest in a long time. PubMed publications and citations are up. Abstracts and poster presentations are up in local, state, and national meetings, and in some cases we won. I was in attendance at this year's NYACP meeting in Albany, where 6 of our residents made wonderful presentations. Dr. Gayatri Malhotra, PGY2 was the first place winner for the competition! I was so proud of the entire group. Let's keep that flame of inquiry burning.

I am particularly glad that wellness is now nicely integrated into the program and hope that everyone will take advantage of it. The outgoing chiefs were phenomenal. It was always exciting to come to grand rounds to hear them speak. They all performed with exemplary style and substance. We wish them the very best in their next endeavors. We also welcome the incoming chiefs as they take on the challenge of guiding us through the next academic year. It takes a village to make all of the moving parts work together seamlessly. So, thanks to all of you for playing your roles well; the chiefs, APDs, program staff, faculty, Ms. Josheila Crandall and of course, our driver, Dr. Samy McFarlane.

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## ***LOOKING TO THE NEW YEAR AHEAD***

### **MESSAGE FROM THE INCOMING CHIEF RESIDENTS**

We are excited for this upcoming year! We recognize and appreciate you -- our dedicated, motivated, creative and diligent residents -- and we can't wait to learn, teach and grow together. We thank our outgoing chiefs for all of their efforts and care. Our goal is to continue to foster a community of collaboration, wellness, academic and clinical excellence and creativity. Please let us know your ideas, your feelings and thoughts -- we are here with you and for you.

Your incoming Chiefs,

Christian Abraham, Eduardo Fernandez, Shweta Kumar, Akeem Lewis, Gordon ("Taylor") Moffat, Sridesh Nath, Yair Saperstein, Naila Shereen

## ***2020-2021 CHIEF APPOINTMENTS***

**SAMY I. MCFARLANE, MD, MPH, MBA, FACP**



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It is with great pleasure that I write to you to announce the list of Chief Residents for the 2020-2021 academic year:

**University Hospital of Brooklyn, SUNY-Downstate:** Denis Yusupov & Irsa Munir

**Kings County Hospital Center:** Richi Chowdhury, Samir Kumar, & Nikita Gupta

**Brooklyn VA Hospital:** Christopher Railwah & Daniel Shayowitz

**Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center:** Tarik Al-Bermani

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our APDs and the chiefs as well as all those who contributed to the selection process. Please join me in congratulating all the Chiefs!

# SHOOTING FOR THE STARS

## Lucas Policastro, MD

Last month, Vice President Pence announced with surprisingly little fanfare that the US will return to the moon by 2024. Explaining how it would be done so quickly and with a fraction of the budget that NASA had in the 1960s, he said "if our current contractors can't meet this objective, then we'll find ones that will...if commercial rockets are the only way... then commercial rockets it will be." For some in the field, these were fighting words. They speak to the reality that new private companies like Musk's SpaceX and Bezos' Blue Origin are opening up windows to space exploration by lowering costs without compromising quality and safety.

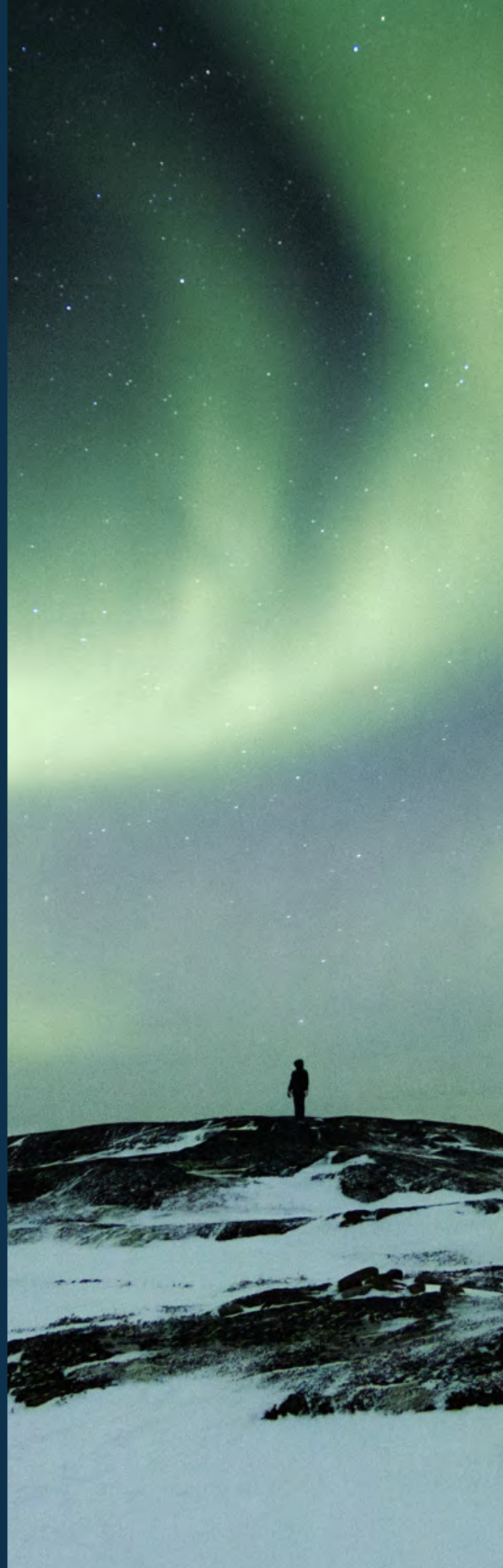
Do you think Bezos started Amazon to sell books, or Musk started Tesla to build cars? Think again. These beloved overlords only ventured into the corporate world in order to make the tens of billions of dollars it would take to fulfill their childhood fantasy—making sci-fi real. Now, backed by armies of relentless young engineers, nothing stands in their way. The new space race is not between nations, but between public and private. This is a race like none before: the finish line is Mars.

A small group of illustrious nerds are going to change the universe, but another group of nerds are needed to make it possible (me). Behind every astronaut is a physician. On Mars, it's comforting to know that if you don't explode, depressurize, freeze, or have an arterial gas embolism, a great doctor will always have your back, from Earth, with a 22 minute time delay due to the painfully slow speed of light.

Everyone: "So what are you going into?"

Me: "Space medicine"

Everyone: "Shoot for the Stars."





## *Resident Research Spotlight - NYACP 2019*

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We are so proud to have sent 6 of our residents to present their research at the February 2019 New York American College of Physicians (NYACP) Scientific Meeting.

### **Gayatri Malhotra-Gupta, PGY2 - 1st Place Winner**

Gayatri took home 1st place for her research titled "The Inhibitory Effect of Cigarette Smoke On Sphingomyelin Synthase 2." Her results demonstrate an increased airway resistance secondary to cigarette smoke exposure, which is especially harmful for patients with COPD and asthma.

### **Denis Yusupov, PGY2**

In his case report, titled "Slurred Speech Is Not Always a Stroke: A Case of Herpes Simplex Viral Encephalitis," Denis describes a 76 year-old female who was found to have focal neurological deficits, altered mental status, and positive CT findings. Multiple practitioners presumed the patient to have a stroke, however, work-up ultimately led to a diagnosis of HSV encephalitis. This case highlights the importance of confirmation bias and the importance of keeping a broad differential.

### **Angelina Zhivotovska, PGY1**

In her case report, titled "A Choking Ring: An Unusual Cause of Shortness of Breath in a Young Pregnant Female," Angelina describes a 24-year-old pregnant female at 29 weeks gestational age with no past medical history who presented with shortness of breath. CTA was performed to rule out pulmonary embolism. On closer observation of the CTA, a right aortic arch with aberrant left subclavian artery was incidentally discovered. This case report discussed aortic arch anomalies and emphasized the necessity of maintaining a broad differential when facing the chief complaint of shortness of breath.

# Resident Research Spotlight - NYACP 2019



## Chi Doan Huynh ("CiCi"), PGY2

In her case report, titled "Atypical Presentation of Cryptococcus Pneumonia Mimicking Pulmonary TB in A Patient With HIV," CiCi describes a man from Guyana, a country with a high prevalence of TB, who had clinical and radiographic evidence strongly suggestive of TB, but was ultimately diagnosed with cryptococcal pneumonia. Although TB can be a common and feared complication in patient with AIDS, it is nonetheless important to maintain a strong clinical suspicion for other differential diagnoses, even when managing patients originating from countries with high prevalence of TB. The case also highlights the importance of early sample acquisition for microbiologic analysis in order to guide therapy.

## Gordon ("Taylor") Moffat, PGY3

Taylor presented his work titled "Adherence to Procalcitonin Measurement in Inpatient Care: A Guide for Antibiotic Stewardship and High-Value Care" in the category of Patient Safety and Quality Improvement. This project analyzed how Downstate healthcare practitioners were utilizing procalcitonin measurement and their adherence to the Downstate Procalcitonin Guidelines in their inpatient management for the cessation or continuation of antibiotic use. This study further explored the risks of unnecessary antibiotic use and resistance, the role of procalcitonin in cost-efficient care, and the potential cost savings for the hospital.

## Mohammed Al-Sadawi, PGY2

We would also like to congratulate Mohammed on having his abstracted titled "Aorta-Right Atrial Tunnel: A Rare Cause of Heart Failure" accepted by the 2019 NYACP Scientific Meeting.

# Resident Research Spotlight

## Downstate Research Day

This year, 41 posters from the Department of Medicine were presented at the annual Downstate Research Day. Of the 41 abstracts, 37 (90.24%) were mentored by a faculty advisor. They are as follows:

1. **Abida Hasan** – Improving Metabolic Syndrome Screening. A Simple Addition to Assist Physicians in Identifying Patients with Metabolic Syndrome: A Quality Improvement Project
2. **Akeem Lewis** – Discordant Perspectives: Barriers to End of Life Discussions in Urban Underserved Populations
3. **Angelina Zhyvotovska** – A Choking Ring: An Unusual Cause of Shortness of Breath in a Young Pregnant Female
4. **Benjamin Silver** – Pulmonary Function Testing for Diagnosing and Treating Asthma in Primary Care: A Quality Improvement Project
5. **Bill Blessington** – Think Before You Test: Optimizing Metabolic Panel Lab Testing in an Urban Underserved Resident primary Care Practice
6. **Carl Swanson** – S-Nitrosylation of Hemoglobin: A Potential Biomarker in Sepsis
7. **Chetan Virmani** – Discussing All Options: Increasing Rates of Shared Decision Making Discussions about Bariatric Surgery in an Urban Underserved Population
8. **Christian Abraham** – Reducing Resident Clinic Cycle Time Using On-Time Starts
9. **Christian Abraham** – The Dynamic Nature of CHA2DS2VAS Score in Minority Patients with Atrial Fibrillation
10. **Christian Grant** – The Power to Choose: Prostate Cancer Screening and Shared Decision-Making in African American and Afro-Caribbean Men
11. **Christopher Railwah** – Chemical Inhibition of S100A9 Signaling Reduces Cigarette Smoke Induced Loss of Lung Function in Mice
12. **Denis Yusupov** – Diastolic Dysfunction in Patients with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease: A Meta-Analysis and a Systematic Review of Case Controlled Studies
13. **Dimitri Vital-Herne** – Improvement of Angiotensin-Converting-Enzyme Inhibitor Use in Patients with Documented Diabetic Microalbuminuria
14. **Duarxy Sainvilien** – Food as Medicine: Medical Nutrition Therapy for Patients Living with Diabetes
15. **Ganesh Keshav Thirunavukkarasu** – Cardiac Amyloid Presented as Recurrent Syncope
16. **Ganesh Keshav Thirunavukkarasu** – Quality Improvement Initiative: Multidisciplinary Approach to Increasing Influenza Vaccination Rates
17. **Gayatri Gupta** – Airway Resistance Caused by Sphingomyelin Synthase 2 Insufficiency in Response to Cigarette Smoke



**Sridesh Nath, PGY3** presented his research titled "Protein Phosphatase 2A Prevents Cigarette Smoke-Induced Cathepsin S and Loss of Lung Function" at the School of Graduate Studies "Annual Resident Day Oral Platform Presentations".





## *Resident Research Spotlight*

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### *Downstate Research Day*

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18. **Guerrier Clerger** – Dyspnea in a Patient with Sarcoidosis
19. **Ian Kaplan** – Tuberos Sclerosis with Lymphangioleiomyomatosis (LAM) Treated with Sirolimus: A Case Report
20. **Iryna Bets** – Role of F11 Receptor (F11R/JAM-A) Antagonist in Neointimal Hyperplasia
21. **Jane Moon** – Expression and Impact of Protein Phosphatase 2A (PP2A) B Subunit in COPD
22. **Joe Joseph** – Increasing Advance Care Planning in Elderly Patients Through Clinic Handouts
23. **John Michael Teotico** – Increasing Lung Cancer Screening Rates in a Primary Care Setting at the Brooklyn Veterans Hospital
24. **Justin Poon** – Cigarette Smoke Exposure Reduces Leukemia Inhibitory Factor Levels During Respiratory Syncytial Viral Infection
25. **Justin Poon** – Telehealth at the Brooklyn VA – Decreasing Barriers for Enrollment
26. **Khabbab Amin** – Unusual Presentation of Alcohol Associated Cardiomyopathy
27. **Leonel Mendoza** – Demystifying the Influenza Vaccine: Video Media Improves Vaccine Acceptance in an Urban Resident-Physician Clinic
28. **Michelle Likhtshteyn** – Outcomes of Long Term Follow Up in Patients with Iron Deficiency Anemia and Initial Negative Upper Endoscopy, Colonoscopy, and Video Capsule Endoscopy
29. **Mohammed Al-Sadawi** – Implementation of a Clinical Order Set Reduces Volume of Unnecessary Urine Cultures
30. **Monsoon Rashid** – Disseminated Invasive Aspergillosis in Patients with SLE
31. **Mosab Frefer** – Lung Cancer Screening
32. **Mosab Frefer** – Risperidone and Pulmonary Embolism
33. **Panid Borhanjoo** – Immune System and Diagnosis of Sepsis: Promising New Biomarkers
34. **Perry Wengrofsky** – Functional Mitral Regurgitation in Sick Cell Anemia and Hemoglobin SC Disease
35. **Richi Chowdhury/Xiao Wei Liu** – Case Report and Literature Review: Posterior Mediastinal Paraganglioma
36. **Rishard Abdul** – Increasing Pneumococcal Vaccination Rates in a Resident Led Primary Care Clinic
37. **Rishard Abdul** – Right Ventricular Infarction Complicated with Pulmonary Embolism
38. **Sama Al-Bayati** – A Rare Complication Following the Relatively Common Chemoembolization Procedure
39. **Sama Al-Bayati** – Improving Rates of Influenza Vaccination in Health Care Workers and Patients at an Urban Primary Care Practice: A Quality Improvement Project
40. **Vandana Kumar** – Valproate Induced DRESS Syndrome: A Case Report
41. **Violeta Capric** – Argatroban Refractory, Heparin Induced Thrombocytopenia After Coronary Intervention with Radial Artery Occlusion

## *New Medical Spanish Elective*

FRAY ARROYO-MERCADO, MD

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, there are 50 million people of Hispanic descent currently in the United States, making this population the largest group of non-English speakers in the country. The growing number of monolingual Spanish-speaking patients lends itself to significant language barriers and racial disparities in the health care system. Therefore, it has become crucial to develop some level of proficiency in Spanish to reduce these barriers and provide our patients with the best care. The Medical Spanish elective is an effective introduction to the practical application of Spanish in a medical setting. Designed for learners of all levels, the goal of the elective is to enable competent interviewing skills and effective communication between residents and patients. The elective is going to be in the Brooklyn VA and the first block will be 12B: 5/20-6/2

## *2019 AΩA Induction Ceremony*

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Congratulations to **Fray Arroyo-Mercado, PGY2** and **Denis Yusupov, PGY2** on being inducted to the AΩA honor society! AΩA is the national honor society for colleges of medicine in the United States, founded in 1902, and represents scholastic excellence, leadership capacity, professionalism and service.

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## *Commitment to Learning Incentive Program (CLIP)*

NAVNEET SINGH, MD, MBA

The Commitment to Learning Incentive Program (CLIP) is an effort to encourage and recognize the academic achievements of our residents. I am so thrilled to announce the inaugural winners of our Commitment to Learning Incentive Program (CLIP). Congratulations to the following residents for their continued engagement with their education.

-**Gold** (Personalized Stethoscope): **Guerrier Clerger, Jodan Pathinathan, & Carl Swanson**

-**Silver** (Personalized Scrubs): **Irsa Munir, Keron Matthew, Talha Mehmood, Keith Bui, Steven Massad, James Salgado**

-**Bronze** (\$25 Gift Card): **Benjamin Silver, Nicholas Nahous, Jane Moon, Yair Saperstein, Michael Teotico, Christopher Railwah, Eduardo Fernandez Hernandez, Patrick Wu**



## *Housestaff Awards & Recognition*

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### **Carl Swanson, PGY3**

We would like to congratulate Carl Swanson on winning the Doctor's Day Award at Kings County Hospital Center!

### **Yair Saperstein, PGY3**

Congratulations to Yair Saperstein on winning the first round of the International Business Model Competition for his presentation "AvoMD: Clinical Decision Support and Education at the Point of Care" and for being inducted as a student member of the Beta Iota Chapter of Delta Omega, the National Honorary Society in Public Health.

## *Faculty Awards & Recognition*

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### **Samy McFarlane, MD, MPH, MBA, FACP**

Congratulations to our very own program director, Dr. Samy McFarlane, on receiving the Alfred Stracher recognition award. The Alfred Stracher Faculty Recognition Award is given to honor a Downstate faculty member who demonstrates: (1) an active involvement in research to lessen the burden of severe illness, and (2) an ongoing commitment to mentoring younger faculty members in their research and helping them achieve independent status.



### **Steven Pulitzer, MD**

Congratulations to Dr. Pulitzer for being honored by the Medical Society of State of New York on Doctors Day, March 25, 2018. Dr. Pulitzer received citations from elected officials recognizing him for his contributions to care of our underserved population, administration and housestaff and student education.



## BIRTHDAYS

05/02 - Albert Lee  
05/03 - John Michael  
Bretana Teotico  
05/09 - Jude Noel  
05/09 - Jeremy David  
Smith  
05/10 - Helen Jinsun  
Cha  
05/12 - Gordon Taylor  
Moffat  
05/18 - Zeinab  
Charmchi  
05/23 - Jaehan Park  
05/24 - Manoj  
Jagtiani  
05/24 - Jack Kurtz  
05/27 - Donald Joseph  
Doukas

## WELLNESS CORNER

By the Wellness Committee

Downstate's Internal Medicine program has a robust Wellness Committee with much wellness programming. Since the last issue of our newsletter, we have hosted a resident Bowling Party, a 3rd annual Open Mic night (a collaborative social night involving performers from all across Downstate University and Kings County Hospital), a resident Ski trip and supported multiple firm parties. We also work together with the Chief Residents and the Department of Medicine administration to put together the Straight Outta Clarkson Clinical Knowledge QuizBowl with prizes (congratulations to TeamDownstate on the recent win). We thank the department of medicine for their unwavering support of resident wellness.

To get involved, please watch your emails for the next Wellness meeting!

### HAIKU:

***Paged by Denis Yusupov***

A buzz and a beep  
Rings out from my hips again  
A call to action.





# MILESTONES

CONGRATULATIONS TO OLTA  
TAF AJ-REDDY AND HER  
HUSBAND ON THE BIRTH OF A  
BABY GIRL! LILLIAN KAVITHA  
REDDY WAS BORN ON APRIL  
5TH, 2019 AT MOUNT SINAI  
HOSPITAL WEIGHING IN AT 8.4  
LBS.

CONGRATULATIONS TO  
YASEMIN AYTAMAN AND  
ALEKSANDR KHUDYAKOV ON  
THEIR RECENT ENGAGEMENT!  
ALEKS POPPED THE QUESTION  
TO YASEMIN WHILE ON  
VACATION IN TURKEY!



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