



DOWNSTATE
HEALTH SCIENCES UNIVERSITY

School of Health Professions (SOHP) NEWSLETTER

DIAGNOSTIC MEDICAL IMAGING
HEALTH INFORMATICS
MIDWIFERY
OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY
PHYSICAL THERAPY
PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT
MEDICAL BILLING & CODING

SPRING | SUMMER 2023

The SOHP Scoop

The School of Health Professions (SOHP) started 2023 with a couple of firsts, the launching of its first spring entering class for the Health Informatics (HI) program, formerly known as the Medical Informatics program, and its first Annual Research Day; and the beginning of the 50th anniversary of the Diagnostic Medical Imaging (DMI) program. The HI program emphasizes the intersection of technology applications with healthcare. The DMI program was the nation's first program of its kind to offer a Bachelor of Science degree with a major in sonography when it was founded in 1972.

As is customary, in May 2023 we admitted our Summer entering classes of Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, and Physician Assistant, and in late August, we admitted our fall entering classes of DMI, Midwifery, and HI. While the school year is now in full swing, the SOHP continues to acknowledge the constant advances made in the healthcare arena, and as such, makes every effort to provide students with proper training consistent with industry demands to prepare the next generation of health professionals. To this end, the SOHP has many unique attributes.

What is Unique about the SOHP?

The first unique attribute of the SOHP is a seamless introduction to interprofessional education for the students because of its seven different healthcare programs. The SOHP exemplifies this unique interprofessional characteristic with its annual Interprofessional Clinical Case Study Roundtable event that showcases how different healthcare disciplines work as a team to treat difficult patient populations. Also, the SOHP hosts an annual Career and Networking event that attracts community-based healthcare providers from all seven SOHP programs and connects matriculating students to alumni.

In the SOHP, we also have a tradition of acknowledging the different programs' celebratory months or weeks. Excitingly, we look forward to that time of the year when we graduate our students who have successfully completed their programs of study.

Allow us to take this opportunity to welcome the SOHP's new students, encourage continuing students, and salute alumni who are now working in their respective professions and making positive contributions to the community.



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Happy 50th Anniversary to the Diagnostic Medical Imaging (DMI) Program

The DMI program at SUNY Downstate, was established in 1972 and was the first program of its kind in the United States to offer a Bachelor of Science degree with a major in sonography. It has remained a leader in the profession, producing many clinicians, program directors, and educators who work across the U.S. The DMI program first received CAAHEP accreditation for general sonography in 1984, and cardiac sonography in 1990.

Sonographers are vital members of the healthcare team. They use their knowledge of anatomy, pathology, ultrasound, medicine, and physics to investigate patients' medical ailments. This happens by obtaining patient histories, performing sonograms, and providing evidence to support preliminary diagnoses. Using expert content knowledge, compassion, critical thinking, and psychomotor skills, sonographers are essential in the process of diagnosing health challenges.

This year we celebrate over 50 years of success in ultrasound education in the SOHP of SUNY Downstate!!The DMI program continues to produce excellent sonographers who score well above the national pass rate on the American Registry for Diagnostic Medical Sonography examinations and are heavily sought after by employers upon graduation. This year, we also pay homage to the great leaders and educators who have graduated from SUNY Downstate and continue to share their talents, knowledge, and skills with up and coming sonographers.

Many of our DMI graduates have become educators, clinical program supervisors, and true leaders in the field of sonography! Look out for future profiles of these talented alumni in upcoming editions of this newsletter and join us in celebrating this special half-century milestone! If you are a Downstate DMI graduate, you have much to be proud of.

Thank you Dr. Yosefa Joy Pesin, DHSc, Program Chair, and Associate Professor of the DMI for your dedicated leadership.



SOHP's Career and Networking Event

Mid-spring the SOHP offers its graduates and students the chance to network with current employers in the sectors in which they have studied and aspire to work. This past March, we had our third annual SOHP virtual Student Career Alumni and Networking (SCAN) event that involved community-based healthcare professionals, students, and alumni. The SOHP has six degree programs (plus one non-degree certificate program in Medical Coding and Billing), including diagnostic medical imaging, health informatics, midwifery, occupational therapy, physical therapy, and physician assistant.

Students and graduates had the chance to speak with each other as well as with representatives from community-based clinical organizations, including, but not limited to, Northwell Health, Volunteers of America, STARS - Sports Therapy and Rehabilitation Services, Jag-One Physical Therapy, our neighbor - Kings County Hospital, and our very own Downstate Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation department. Students and alumni had the opportunity to network with each other and potential employers. All participants viewed the event as worthwhile. Please be on the lookout for the spring 2024 SOHP Student Career Alumni and Networking (SCAN) event.

Health Informatics and Artificial Intelligence

As was already noted, the Health Informatics Program emphasizes the intersection of technology applications and healthcare. Artificial intelligence (AI) is one of those areas that is very popular these days. While students may not necessarily pursue careers as AI scientists, basic literacy in AI is becoming increasingly important for informaticists. As a result, the program is constantly looking for new opportunities to give students the knowledge and skills needed in a rapidly changing world and ever-evolving healthcare landscape.

To this end, the SOHP hosted a virtual seminar on the potential of AI to transform medicine, titled "*Artificial Intelligence in Healthcare*," with Downstate faculty and featuring top national experts. The panelists discussed the development of AI, from the time the concept first appeared in literature in 1956 to the explosive, quick-moving impact AI has on healthcare clinical decision-making today.



Interprofessional Collaborative Learning

This past Spring, SOHP hosted an Interprofessional Clinical Case Study event with over 100 students from the SOHP, the College of Nursing, and the School of Public Health along with nine faculty members to decide on an interprofessional approach to a selected challenging case study. The case study focus was a woman who presented several health issues and who also had osteoporosis linked with her pregnancy. The presentation highlighted the benefits of multidisciplinary healthcare and showed how fusing knowledge from several specialties could help patients.

This event is in line with the interprofessional education objective for academic achievement set forth by Downstate's strategic plan, IMPACT 2030, and is required by all of the SOHP program accrediting bodies. We are looking forward to the next Interprofessional Clinical Case Study event in the spring of 2024.

SOHP's Inaugural Research Day

On May 3, 2023, the School of Health Professions held its first Annual Research Day, with over 100 students in attendance. Students showcased their cutting-edge research in the Diagnostic Medical Imaging, Health Informatics, Occupational Therapy, Physician Assistant, and Physical Therapy programs.

The program included several oral and poster presentations and a keynote speech delivered by Dr. Mark Stewart, School of Graduate Studies Dean Emeritus, that provided insightful information on research in the health professions: "How it Changes You and How You Can Change the Lives of Others."



The poster presentations covered a wide range of topics and provided attendees with a wealth of information on the latest research in the health professions. Overall, the Research Day was a resounding success, highlighting the exciting and important work being done by the students in the SOHP. Please click [here](#) for Research Pulse.

Accreditation Site Visits for Midwifery and Physical Therapy Programs

The ACME midwifery accreditation reviewers scrutinized the Midwifery Program thoroughly over two days in April to determine if all the criteria for reaccreditation were met. Overall, it was an extremely successful onsite visit.

The PT Program had a successful onsite accreditation visit by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE) on June 11-14, 2023. The CAPTE Commission will discuss the outcome of the Downstate program's self-study report and onsite visit at its fall 2023 meeting in October. Thank you to the alumni and students who participated in the onsite visit, and answered surveys that were sent to them.

Dr. Dhaliwal lectures in Nepal



Due to Dr. Dhaliwal's expertise and contributions in the field of neurologic physical therapy, she was invited to provide a guest lecture and workshop on Assessment and Treatment of Vestibular Disorders at Meridian Polyclinics and Diagnostic Centre in Kathmandu, Nepal in July 2023. Attendees included physiotherapy students and physiotherapists, some of whom are in the National Army of India. Dr. Dhaliwal also had an opportunity to visit the Physiotherapy departments in two army hospitals along with two private physiotherapy clinics in Kathmandu.

Convocation and Commencement

On May 10th and 11th SOHP had its Convocation and Commencement Ceremonies, respectively. At Convocation, SOHP presented special achievement awards to graduating students in all six degree programs. Also, faculty and members from the Downstate campus who made noteworthy contributions to the SOHP were honored.

Commencement followed the next day at the Coney Island Amphitheater.



Diagnostic Medical Imaging



Health Informatics



Physical Therapy



Occupational Therapy



Physician Assistant

Occupational Therapy and Physician Assistant Programs White Coat Ceremonies

The Physician Assistant and the Occupational Therapy graduates proudly display their White Coats at their respective White Coat ceremonies. Way to go PA and OT Class of 2023! Congratulations!



Occupational Therapy Students



Physician Assistant Students

Please click [here](#) to view our SOHP Faculty Shoutouts

SOHP Alumni: In Their Own Words

Hello, my name is **Eleanor Strehl**, and I graduated with the **Occupational Therapy** class of 2017. I work in Western, MA, as a home-based low-vision OT for the MA Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired. My advice to current students thinking about work after graduation is that there are a lot of niches out there and if you keep your eyes and ears open you will find a practice area and/or employer that supports the kind of OT you want to practice. I also recommend attending in-person events like presentations and conferences to socialize with other therapists and stay excited and curious about the field of OT. It is easy to feel isolated once you leave the close-knit school community, and contact with professionals outside of your workplace can help energize and inspire you.

My name is **Sherian Martin**. I graduated in 2011 from the **Medical Informatics Program**. My area of expertise is Quality Improvement/Assurance in the healthcare industry. I recently completed a Doctorate in Health Sciences with a concentration in Global Health from A. T. Still University in Missouri. My advice to future graduates is to do what makes you happy and know your worth.

My name is **Aida Davydova**. I graduated in 2014 from the **Diagnostic Medical Imaging Program**, currently working at NYU Langone in a general/vascular dept. My advice for all students is to continue working hard and pass your registries while you are still in the program. Best of luck to all!

My name is **Dr. Sean Thomas** and I graduated from the **Physical Therapy Program** in 2011. I currently am the Clinical Director for the Georgetown JAG-ONE Physical Therapy Office. I also serve as the Director of Community Engagement and Inclusion for the company. I host a podcast called the "Be More Today" show featuring ordinary people doing extraordinary things in the world of health and fitness. I am also the author of "Be More Today: A 40-Day Guide to a Better Version of You", and host free workouts in the South Brooklyn community on Mondays and Wednesdays. I have three pieces of advice I'd like to share: Stay humble. Stay hungry. Stay human. If you keep those three principles in place, everything that you have learned at Downstate will be sufficient to help you succeed as a clinician.

SUNY Chancellor visits SOHP

On July 13th SUNY Chancellor John B. King Jr. visited SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University to meet with mentors, mentees and faculty of the Pre-Medical Opportunity Program. This year's program funded by the chancellor's office allowed EOP students of various SUNY campuses to participate in a 4-week fully funded opportunity to explore careers in medicine and health professions offered at SUNY Downstate. Prof. Candida St. Hillaire of the Physician Assistant Program, served as liaison between SOHP and Pre-medical Opportunity Program. Prof. St. Hillaire and mentee Arielle Frederic a Stony Brook University senior and aspiring Emergency Medicine PA; had the opportunity to meet with Chancellor King as they discussed the impact and support the funding provided to students who would not have been able to participate due to structural drivers and financial limitations.



PA Program Assistant Professor and Senior Clinical Coordinator, Candida St. Hillaire with Chancellor King and Arielle Frederic, Stony Brook University Senior.



The Summer program was constructed by Prof. St. Hillaire, Ms. SHEMEIKA Bowman, Mrs. DIEDREANNA WELLINGTON, and Dr. CARLA BOUTIN-FOSTER. It allowed for a multicomponent and interprofessional learning experience as students attended workshops and lectures from faculty of the SOHP and COM. We would personally like to thank our SOHP faculty, Dr. EfeKona Nuwere of Occupational Therapy, Prof. Shakima Wiggins of Midwifery, Dr. Jonathan Silver of Physician Assistant, Dr. David Kaufman of Medical Informatics, Dr. Joanne Katz of Physical Therapy, Prof. Hellman of DMI, Dr. Lynette Hinds of Medical Billing & Coding, and student Carolyn MCGOWAN for their time presenting to the EOP students. Faculty provided engaging, informative lectures about their profession and shared personal testimonies. Students left Downstate having gained insights on careers they "never knew existed", expressed that the exposure has been vital to their professional development, and more driven to fulfill their professional aspirations.



SOHP faculty Dr. Loraine Antonie, DPT; Dr. Jasmin Thomas, OTD; Dr. Krystal Brewington, OTD; Dr. Puneet Dhaliwal, DPT will continue to mentor the students throughout tenure of the program. We applaud them for their time, efforts and encouragements in serving the EOP students.

Downstate Physicians 2nd Annual Community Healthy Lifestyle Fair



Students from the *Physical Therapy Program* performed fall risk assessments during the community health fair, providing a great opportunity for our students to interact with members of the community. They also distributed educational materials on reducing the risk of falls in the home and the benefits of walking. PT faculty, Dr. Dhaliwal, gave a lively talk about reducing fall risk. Ten students, and two faculty members participated in the event.

The *Occupational Therapy Program* brought fun and excitement to the fair. Students and staff set up games and activities for children, and those young at heart, encouraging attendees to play and be physically active. Helpful tips were shared with children and families to promote play routines that supported learning and development. The OT students also gave an engaging presentation on backpack awareness for school-age students to learn how to wear their bookbags properly and avoid back stress.

The 2023 SUNY Downstate Black and Latino Male Initiative Network Event

On September 15th, the Downstate Black and Latino Male Initiative (BLMI) held its inaugural networking event. SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University has for several years now hosted a Black and Latino Male Initiative (BLMI). The mission of the BLMI is twofold. (A) We wish to increase the number of Black and Latino men who apply and are accepted into the health profession education programs here at Downstate as well as supporting their successful completion of the programs. (B) We wish to increase the representation of Black and Latino men in the healthcare workforce. We know that increased representation in the healthcare workforce of providers from culturally diverse, underserved, and marginalized communities is a standard strategy to promote health equity and eliminate health disparities.

The BMLI is sponsored by the Office of Institutional Equity as well as the Office of Diversity Education and Research along with the Transport Grant of the Brooklyn Center for Health Disparities. Key faculty from each of the Downstate schools/colleges are also involved. The BLMI is open to anyone (students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community members) who supports its mission.



Dr. Allen Lewis, Dean of SOHP and Dr. Efekona Nuwere, OT Program Chair, are members of BLMI.

MEDICAL BILLING AND CODING CERTIFICATE PROGRAM

It is a great time to enroll in the *Medical Billing and Coding Certificate Program*. This is a very rewarding field with its potential for life-long employment opportunities. Medical Coding is used for reimbursement to healthcare providers and institutions. As a coding professional, accuracy in interpreting clinical documentation is critical to the accurate billing and reimbursement processes. These professionals play a pivotal role in ensuring that the funds needed to operate the healthcare services are in place.



DOWNSTATE
SCHOOL OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS



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For more information please view the School of Health Professions Medical Billing and Coding brochure:
<https://bit.ly/3V41uKg>

Contact The School of Health Professions (SOHP) at 718-270-7604

*Live-Virtual program session begins in the fall & fully online program begins in the spring annually

This is an exciting time in the healthcare revenue cycle, due to the advances in medical billing technology, and computer assisted coding (CAC). Use of electronic health records (EHR) is also expanding, and these improvements are reforming the management of health information. Technology, in the form of medical billing and coding software is revolutionizing how coding and billing are done, in so doing the burden of Coders having to memorize thousands of very complex codes is removed. Use of technology will lead to fewer errors, faster turn-around-time for reimbursement, and will significantly cut healthcare costs.

So welcome to the program and to the start of a rewarding health career!

Please click [here](#) for the link to our webpage.

Occupational Therapy Students in Action



SUNY Chancellor John King visited the Occupational Therapy classroom during Professor Richard Sabel's *Tri-Wall Workshop*. OT students learn how to fabricate adaptive sitting and side-lying furniture for children at Adapt (formerly known as United Cerebral Palsy of Brooklyn).



September 20th was National Backpack Awareness Day. This year Occupational Therapy students provided assemblies at P.S. 235K - The Janice Marie Knight School and I.S. 2 - Parkside Preparatory Academy. Professor Vikram Pagpatan, in conjunction with Alisha Goodridge, of SUNY Government Relations, are committed to ensuring that this program will continue to be offered in the public schools.



Welcome Breakfast

- Tuesday, September 26th

Dean's Lecture Series - 4th Edition

- Monthly - from September 27, 2023 to May 29, 2024

Diagnostic Medical Imaging Program

- October-Medical Ultrasound Awareness Month
- October 30th -Phantom Scantom

Midwifery Program

- October - National Midwifery Week

Physical Therapy Program

- October-Physical Therapy Month
- November 13th- White Coat Ceremony

Physician Assistant Program

- October - Physician Assistant Week