13 Minority Scholars Honored at the AMA Annual Meeting

Medical Students Provide Inspiration at Local High School

The AMA Foundation awarded $10,000 scholarships to 13 outstanding medical students from across the country through a program designed to promote diversity within the medical profession, and reduce health care disparities. The 2012 Minority Scholars Award scholarship recipients were honored at an awards dinner in Chicago held during the AMA Annual Meeting.

The Minority Scholars Award program recognizes medical students from historically underrepresented groups that demonstrate outstanding scholastic achievement and a commitment to improving minority health. The Awards are presented each year in conjunction with the AMA Minority Affairs Section (MAS), and with support from Pitzer Inc. This year, the MAS Governing Council generously provided a $5,000 match to help the AMA Foundation raise enough funds to award an additional scholarship in 2012.

“The funding the Foundation provided helped us continue and expand these valuable services,” said Dr. Soto. “Since receiving the grant we have been able to manage over 150 patients with diabetes yearly. Our education program has also reached their families and the community in general.”

Grants from the AMA Foundation also provide free clinics with a boost in national recognition and public visibility. Dr. Soto said, “Having the AMA Foundation as one of our supporters has been a blessing. We added the name to our letterhead, to our website and mention it in our outreach activities.”

Grant Recipient Gives Back

Dr. Soto went on to volunteer as a selection committee member for the Healthy Communities / Healthy America program in 2010. She also showed her support by making several personal donations to the AMA Foundation.

“I wanted to empower the students to pursue their dreams in medicine. You could see that they were becoming excited and hopeful, like they knew that their dreams were possible now. The experience was just as encouraging for me as it was for them.”

Shermeeka Hagens-Mathews, a Minority Scholarship Award recipient studying at Florida State University College of Medicine, called the Doctors Back to School outreach event “the highlight of the AMA Meeting for me.” Shermeeka said, “I want to give encouragement to other nontraditional medical students, to tell them to stick with their dreams and goals. As a married mother of three, I am not the typical medical student, but I had faith that I could make it. I want to tell others that it is possible to become a physician.”

Marcus Rushing, University of Kansas School of Medicine, with MAS Chair Dionne Hart, MD

Today, only about 9% of U.S. physicians are Hispanic, American Indian, African-American, Alaska Native or Native Hawaiian. If you would like to support medical scholarships for underrepresented students, please visit www.amafoundation.org.

Free Clinic Director Thanks AMA Foundation For Boosting Diabetes Program

Nilda Soto, MD has dedicated herself full-time to proving that “medicine for the poor does not have to be poor medicine” since she founded the Open Door Health Center (ODHC) in Homestead, Florida in 2001. ODHC provides free comprehensive medical services to the uninsured in Miami-Dade County who fall below 200% of the federal poverty guidelines.

In 2008, the AMA Foundation awarded a $25,000 grant to ODHC through the Healthy Communities / Healthy America program to add 50 patients to the ODHC’s Prescription for Health Diabetes Program.

“The funding the Foundation provided helped us continue and expand these valuable services,” said Dr. Soto, ODHC’s CEO and Medical Director. “Since receiving the grant we have been able to manage over 150 patients with diabetes yearly. Our education program has also reached their families and the community in general.”

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Grant Recipient Gives Back

Dr. Soto went on to volunteer as a selection committee member for the Healthy Communities / Healthy America program in 2010. She also showed her support by making several personal donations to the AMA Foundation.

“I have personally been a member of the AMA for many years, and helping with the selection committee is a way of giving back after receiving so much through the years,” said Dr. Soto. “I continue to be available to assist in any way I can.”

“Having the AMA Foundation as one of our supporters has been a blessing.”

Nilda Soto, MD, CEO and Medical Director of the Open Door Health Center

If you are interested in supporting free clinics by volunteering with the Healthy Communities / Healthy America program, please visit www.amafoundation.org.
Our Foundation in Action at the AMA Annual Meeting

New AMA Foundation President Addresses the House of Delegates

“New AMA Foundation President Addresses the House of Delegates”

Clarence Chou, MD
AMA Foundation President

“New AMA Foundation President Addresses the House of Delegates”

Jennifer Day
Director of the Massachusetts Medical Society & Alliance Charitable Foundation

“I would certainly encourage other medical societies and foundations to attend next year.”

William Kobler, MD
AMA Foundation Board Member, pictured with his wife Carolyn Kobler

“I look forward to working with colleagues from around the nation to ensure we have the best possible health care system.”

First Meeting of the AMA Foundation Ambassadors

“First Meeting of the AMA Foundation Ambassadors”

Clarence Chou, MD
AMA Foundation President

“I have been in the HOD for 15 years. As current Chair of the Wisconsin Delegation, I hope to strengthen the connection between the House of Delegates, state and specialty foundations, and our philanthropic affiliate - the AMA Foundation.”

Jennifer Day
Director of the Massachusetts Medical Society & Alliance Charitable Foundation

“I would certainly encourage other medical societies and foundations to attend next year.”

Student Ambassadors Thank Foundation Supporters

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Peter Carmel, MD
AMA Immediate Past President

AMA Alliance Celebrates 90 Years

“I look forward to working with colleagues from around the nation to ensure we have the best possible health care system.”

William Kobler, MD
AMA Foundation Board Member, pictured with his wife Carolyn Kobler

Peter Carmel, MD
AMA Immediate Past President

AMA Alliance Celebrates 90 Years

“Please accept my sincere thanks for all you do and my heartfelt congratulations on 90 wonderful years.”

Charles F. Willson, MD, J. James Rohack, MD, David Barbe, MD, Susan Goold, MD and David Tayloe, MD (left to right).

AMA Foundation Board Member Stephen Permut, MD, Nita Kulkarni, MD and S. Bobby Mukkamala, MD (left to right).

“AMA Foundation Board Member Stephen Permut, MD, Nita Kulkarni, MD and S. Bobby Mukkamala, MD (left to right).”

AMA President Jeremy Lazarus, MD and his wife Debbie Lazarus receive their recognition boutonnieres.

“AMA President Jeremy Lazarus, MD and his wife Debbie Lazarus receive their recognition boutonnieres.”

Charles F. Willson, MD, J. James Rohack, MD, David Barbe, MD, Susan Goold, MD and David Tayloe, MD (left to right).

“Charles F. Willson, MD, J. James Rohack, MD, David Barbe, MD, Susan Goold, MD and David Tayloe, MD (left to right).”

AMA Foundation Board Member Stephen Permut, MD, Nita Kulkarni, MD and S. Bobby Mukkamala, MD (left to right).
Seed Grant Research Published in Medical Journal

Research supported by the Seed Grant Research Program was recently published in a medical journal, achieving one of the initiative’s main goals of advancing the academic and career pursuits of junior investigators. Noah Rodriguez, MD, was featured in the June 2012 issue of EMBO Molecular Medicine Journal.

Dr. Rodriguez is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at Loma Linda University School of Medicine who specializes in minimally-invasive gynecologic cancer surgery. In 2009, Dr. Rodriguez received a $2,500 grant from the AMA Foundation to purchase lab supplies to conduct research on the early detection of ovarian cancer.

“No seed grant clearly helped to fund some of my research, but it also had a profound psychological and emotional impact,” said Dr. Rodriguez. “As a young investigator, one has to convince funding agencies of the importance of one’s work. To be awarded a grant is more than just convincing funding agencies of the importance of one’s work. To be awarded a grant is more than just funding - it’s a clear message that someone believes in the importance of your work.”

The Seed Grant Research Program provides funds to medical students, resident and fellows to help junior investigators gain experience managing research projects, and to encourage young people to pursue careers in research.

“The task of applying for grants is daunting, particularly in today’s climate of budget cuts,” said Dr. Rodriguez. “Grants like the Seed Grant are more efficient than federal grants and significantly contribute to a young investigator’s confidence to apply for more sizable funding.”

Additional Funding Needed to Continue Grants for Cancer Research

Without additional financial support, the AMA Foundation will not be able to offer Seed Grants in the neoplasics diseases category next year, which is the grant category that supported Dr. Rodriguez in 2009.

“It is of paramount importance that funding for cancer research be expanded,” said Dr. Rodriguez. “Cancer is the second-leading cause of death among Americans. With the aging American population, there will be a greater number of people affected by solid tumors in the years to come.”

If you are interested in the Seed Grant Research Program, please visit www.amafoundation.org to learn more.

Alliance Grassroots Honor Fund Continues 60 Years of Support

For the past six decades, the AMA Alliance has been one of the most significant sources of support for the AMA Foundation’s medical scholarships, benefiting countless physicians-in-training. The Alliance has raised more than $60 million for the Scholar Fund, which provides scholarships to the best and brightest medical students.

Next year, the Scholars Fund program will sunset and the Alliance Grassroots Honor Fund will become the new vehicle for the Alliance’s fundraising efforts. The Alliance aims to continue their legacy of support for medical students by raising $250,000 for the Honor Fund, which will provide $10,000 scholarships to students with a commitment to addressing the needs of women and children.

Beth Irish, a member of the Alliance Legislation Committee, recently made a generous gift to the Alliance Grassroots Honor Fund. “It is so very important that we, as a medical family, help support this fund,” said Ms. Irish. “Today it is impossible for medical students to graduate without an albatross of debt around their neck.” Ms. Irish encouraged others to join her in supporting the Alliance Honor Fund in saying, “Consider the need and consider giving back.”

For more information on the Alliance Grassroots Honor Fund, please contact Anne Smith, Development and Planned Giving Director for the AMA Foundation, at (312) 464-5952 or anne.smith@ama-assn.org.

AMA Foundation Quarterly Newsletter

We hope that you enjoy this issue of the AMA Foundation Quarterly Newsletter. It is our way of sharing the AMA Foundation’s accomplishments with our donors and stakeholders. If you have questions or comments about the newsletter, please contact Nicole Gillespie, communications and events manager, at nicole.gillespie@ama-assn.org or (312) 464-5864.

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When Mark Newton, MD was honored with an Excellence in Medicine Award from the AMA Foundation this February, he had immediate plans for his $2,500 award grant. Dr. Newton said, “We can directly save lives with a mere $250 pulse oximeter which is designed for the rugged environment of Africa.”

The Lifebox Foundation, which is affiliated with the World Federation of Societies of Anaesthesiologists, provides pulse oximeters, as well as education, training and peer support to improve surgical standards around the globe. “To date, ten Lifebox pulse oximeters have been purchased through the AMA Foundation honorarium and Vanderbilt International Anesthesia, to be sent to areas of need in rural Africa,” said Dr. Newton. “Our Vanderbilt residents who come to Kijabe, Kenya to train physician and non-physician anesthesia care providers can put these valuable tools directly in the hands of individuals who need these devices.”

Dr. Newton has lived and worked in Kenya with his wife and children since 1997, where he is extensively involved in building health care capacity within his adopted country. In 2007, Dr. Newton was instrumental in founding Vanderbilt International Anesthesia, a global service, education and research division that focuses on anesthesia and intensive care unit issues in low-income countries.

In support of Dr. Newton, the Vanderbilt University School of Medicine’s Department of Anesthesiology, where he works a portion of each year as a pediatric anesthesiologist, will soon begin a fundraising drive to purchase additional Lifebox pulse oximeters to be used as part of the Vanderbilt International Anesthesia program.

“One goal of the fundraising effort at Vanderbilt is to challenge fellow medical schools, other anesthesia academic departments, and private practice groups to begin their own initiatives to provide pulse oximeters to meet the overwhelming need for these lifesaving devices in underserved areas,” said Dr. Newton. “Our target for the 2012-2013 academic year is to purchase a minimum of 200 pulse oximeters.”

“Some of the most incredible and caring people I have ever met are members of the medical community…”

I think it’s great that many people contribute to programs like the AMA Foundation scholarships to aid in the training of young medical professionals. Maybe some contributors were in a similar financial situation at one point. Others may just be able to empathize with the students’ situation. Whatever the reason…

… Generosity like this does not go unnoticed and isn’t forgotten. I am very grateful for the opportunity to receive this aid.”

Adam Luka
Louisiana State University School of Medicine
AMA Foundation Scholarship Recipient

Lifebox pulse oximeters funded by the AMA Foundation grant are now in use in Kenya through the efforts of Vanderbilt International Anesthesia.