

Vital Signs

Boonshoft
School of Medicine
WRIGHT STATE UNIVERSITY

4

COVID blueprint

James Augustine, M.D., '83, manages national COVID care guidelines.

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New dean

New dean ready to take a great school to new heights.

COVID-19

How COVID-19 has impacted the Boonshoft School of Medicine's community.

From the Dean

2020, I believe most will agree, was a year like no other. Not only did we face a pandemic, which caused dramatic changes to how we see patients, teach, learn, work and live, we witnessed tragedies of social injustice and a divisive presidential election. There are no words to describe the pace of change and the number of issues our world has faced.

The Wright State University Boonshoft School of Medicine (BSOM) community should be proud of all that has been accomplished during this turbulent period. Whether changing curricula and courses on a dime, creating new processes on the fly to continue research and other essential functions of the school, or providing outstanding, compassionate patient care, we have simply not missed a beat.

In this issue of *Vital Signs*, we focus our attention on COVID-19 and how the BSOM community is making significant contributions to fighting this disease, assisting the community around us and the world at large. Faculty, students and alumni from BSOM have been involved with COVID-19 from testing to vaccinating, and all points in between. We have collaborated with each other and those outside our community during this pandemic to provide solutions and support.

Wright State University students from all across campus, aided by BSOM students and the Department of Population and Public Health Sciences, provided contact tracing support to area public health departments. You will read about a resident who organized a virtual symposium, attended by over 150 Dayton-area medical professionals, which provided critical information about COVID-19 vaccines and ways to overcome vaccine hesitancy. We also share a story about our students who helped to get those vaccines in arms at local COVID-19 vaccine clinics.

While COVID-19 was altering day-to-day life, at BSOM, like all learning institutions, we were having to make adjustments. You will see how quickly switching to virtual instruction and trying to maintain personal connections with students were among some of the challenges created by the pandemic. I am impressed by the creativity of our dedicated faculty and staff who were able to successfully navigate the changes necessary to continue providing our students with quality learning experiences.

You will read about an alumnus whose expertise in dealing with disaster has put him in a position to assist the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and emergency medical services nationwide, with guidelines for COVID-19 care. Another alumnus has been labeled a hero and awarded for his dedication to COVID-19 care in the Dayton area.

Ask any parent of a school-aged child and they will agree their students' education has been affected by COVID-19. K-12 students have been challenged by not being in the classroom consistently for almost a year. You will learn about a study—made successful by collaboration between BSOM, Dayton Children's Hospital, and administrators from several southwest Ohio school districts—The results of which played a role in getting kids back in the classroom.

I was thrilled in November to begin my role as BSOM's dean. I am excited to have the opportunity in this issue to share my story, so you can learn more about me and what I will bring to BSOM.

As we continue into 2021 with the hopeful promise of better things to come, I am grateful for the strong and dedicated BSOM community and the support from the Wright State family and our many community partners. We are achieving great things and caring for patients and our community, all while educating the next generation of physicians.


Valerie D. Weber, M.D., M.S.



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Experience, Insight and Wisdom: A Blueprint for Handling COVID-19



Issue In Depth

James Augustine, M.D., '83, Emergency Medicine, is quite experienced at handling disasters. From train derailments to pandemics, the emergency medicine physician, who also completed his emergency medicine residency at Wright State University Boonshoft School of Medicine (BSOM), has assisted with disaster planning and creating best practices for many crisis care situations. He is now using this experience to assist with, and try to stay one step ahead of, COVID-19.

Augustine has been involved in helping emergency physicians, firefighters and emergency medical service (EMS) agencies across the nation plan, prepare and execute processes related to COVID-19 since before the first case in the United States was confirmed.

When the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) first began to hear about the virus, preparations began. Part of that preparation included reaching out to colleagues, including Augustine, to discuss how to plan for the disease, manage care and curtail the spread. Eventually this group would become the CDC COVID Health Systems and Worker Safety Task Force, which has been crucial to the CDC's efforts in battling the pandemic.

Augustine's working relationship with the CDC began in 2001 while he was living and working in Atlanta. During this time, he was assistant professor and vice chair of emergency medicine with Emory University and medical director for both the city of Atlanta Fire Rescue Department and Atlanta's Hartsfield Jackson International Airport.

As medical director for one of the busiest airports in the nation, Augustine worked with the CDC to establish guidelines for international flights and travelers,

especially during the SARS crisis in 2003 and Ebola in 2014. He also worked with the CDC in 2009 during the H1N1 flu outbreak. Augustine was able to build upon these past experiences with viral outbreaks and working with the CDC and use them as a blueprint for COVID-19.

Throughout Augustine's career, he has served as medical director for fire and EMS with nearly 20 agencies between Ohio and Florida. These roles facilitated Augustine's membership in 2009 with the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) and "the Eagles."

IAFC members are experts regarding policy for disaster response and public safety, and represent the leadership of firefighters and emergency responders worldwide. As the IAFC began planning for the virus, Augustine was asked to join their COVID-19 Task Force.

The Eagles, a de-facto coalition of the Metropolitan Municipalities EMS Medical Directors Alliance, is composed of most of the jurisdictional EMS medical directors for the 60 to 70 largest cities' 911 systems in the United States. This group also includes the chief medical officers for several pivotal federal agencies such as the FBI, United States Secret Service and the White House Medical Unit, as well as numerous global counterparts, from Paris to Auckland, and Berlin to Manila. This cohesive cadre of EMS specialists is responsible for stewarding the medical protocols and respective training for all aspects of day-to-day 911, 999, 112 and 000 type emergency responses within their respective jurisdictions, encompassing well over one-third of the population of the United States and more than 130 million citizens worldwide.

Augustine's primary role is to take

COVID-19 information and share it. "The CDC supplies the science, and I work with the IAFC, Eagles and fire and EMS agencies across the country to formulate best practices for patient care," said Augustine.

Augustine also shares the CDC's science he receives with the emergency physicians who are part of US Acute Care Solutions. US Acute Care Solutions is a national physician group based in Canton, Ohio. Augustine is the immediate past chair of the group's National Clinical Governance Board.

Equally important in this process is sharing with the CDC what is going on in the field. Augustine communicates what IAFC and Eagles members, emergency providers and the community are experiencing day-to-day, what processes are or are not working, and what needs to be addressed. For example, since the beginning of the outbreak, more emergency care has been happening in the home. People fear COVID-19 exposure and do not want to be transported to the hospital. Guidelines are needed for this change in emergency care. "Sharing of information is definitely a two-way street, and necessary," Augustine added.

This past fall, as COVID-19 cases began to ramp up, Augustine coordinated fire and EMS providers to assist with testing at public health clinics and high-risk sites, such as nursing homes. Now, with the rollout of the vaccines, he is organizing fire and EMS personnel to assist with administering vaccines at many community sites.

The IAFC and Eagles have been instrumental in providing insight and helping Augustine stay one step ahead of the virus in his planning. Before it was national news, the Seattle Fire

"Having options and a second dose is something that's never been part of the pandemic playbook."

Department medical director, also an Eagles member, shared the early experience of dealing with the first COVID-19 case in the country. Another Eagles member from Minneapolis, infectious disease expert Mike Osterholm, Ph.D., M.P.H., who would later appear with some regularity on the news broadcasts, provided early insight on how COVID-19 would affect people, and how systems would have to respond. Eagles members from Italy, Germany and France shared what was happening in their countries, enlightening him as to what to expect in the United States, so that preparations could be initiated in hard-hit areas like New York City.

Beneficial to Augustine in developing national COVID-19 guidelines is his experience in managing hospital operations and seeing the big picture. He served from 2004 to 2011 with The Joint Commission as a member and then chair

of the Hospital Professional Technical Advisory Committee. The Joint Commission is the accreditation group for hospitals and is responsible for improving hospital disaster plans and regulating care standards. He also served for six years on the Board of Directors of the American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP), a group involved with establishing clinical care standards within emergency medicine. He continues to serve with ACEP's epidemic expert panel.

Creating COVID-19 best practices, keeping providers safe and avoiding risk are also of the utmost importance. Augustine knows all too well how devastating this disease can be. In November of 2020, his son's father-in-law, a 52-year-old firefighter in Ohio, died from COVID-19. That same month, Augustine's son, a paramedic and battalion chief, also in Ohio, contracted COVID-19. Fortunately, his son recovered

and is doing well.

Augustine shared the initial focus of CDC communication, including disseminating information to the public, caring for the infected, limiting the spread and improving the effectiveness of diagnostic testing, has now shifted into the next steps. He is now working with the CDC on COVID-19 vaccine distribution and vaccine confidence. He recently presented via a webinar on the vaccines to fire chiefs and EMS medical directors across the nation. "There are many firefighters and EMS personnel who are unsure about the vaccines. It's important they understand that the vaccines are safe and that their families, co-workers and the community need them to be vaccinated," Augustine added.

The technical issues around COVID-19 vaccines themselves are a challenge. "Never before in the pandemic playbook have there been multiple vaccine options, or those that must be given in two

James Augustine, M.D., '83

Issue In Depth



doses,” said Augustine. These have resulted in major logistics challenges, such as coordinating where people go for the second shot and making a particular vaccine brand available upon request. It’s also about addressing issues after vaccinations, such as when will it be safe to stop wearing a mask.

Augustine sees vaccine confidence growing and vaccine availability improving. “This pandemic has been different than any other, and different from what we planned and prepared for,” Augustine added.

Augustine credits his success in dealing

with crisis care to experiences from his early years in Dayton. Working as an emergency physician at Miami Valley Hospital, Augustine was able to learn emergency preparedness procedures from physicians who, just a few years earlier, cared for victims of the 1974 tornado in Xenia, Ohio. “Dayton has great emergency preparedness and provides great emergency care because of this tragic event. I am so fortunate to have had an opportunity to learn emergency care in a Dayton area hospital.”

An event which further expanded

Augustine’s early learning in disaster responsiveness was the train derailment in Miamisburg, Ohio, in 1986. The train, carrying phosphorus and sulfur, ignited and released a toxic plume over the community, creating what was the largest evacuation in the nation’s history. Augustine was serving as medical director with the fire department in the Dayton suburb West Carrollton, in addition to working in the emergency department at Miami Valley Hospital. He worked around the clock for two days and nights at the fire station, functioning as command central, for emergency medical personnel. He assisted with

triage and coordinated medics from nearly 30 jurisdictions to assist police with evacuations and care for victims.

Augustine does not forget where it all began. “I credit everything I know about health care to Wright State,” said Augustine. He acknowledges the community hospital experience at BSOM provides instruction in a variety of clinical settings and allows first-hand learning about different approaches to care. He believes the diverse clinical settings allow students to gain maturity by learning agility and how to think on their feet. “I’m proud of my Wright State heritage.

Lessons learned there have allowed me to help so many.”

When Augustine isn’t wearing his “national hat,” as he calls it, he is teaching students at BSOM as a clinical professor in emergency medicine. Additionally, he serves as medical director for the Washington Township Fire Department near Dayton, Ohio, and with Forest Park Fire EMS, City of Morrow EMS, Hapeville Fire Department, South Fulton Fire Department and Riverdale Fire and Emergency Services all near Atlanta, Georgia. Augustine is also associate medical director with

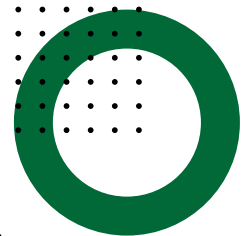
North Collier Fire EMS in Naples, Florida.

Throughout his career, Augustine has contributed his wisdom and crisis care experience to more than 250 publications and articles, including “Emergency Considerations in COVID-19 Vaccine Administration” and “Physician at the Scene of an Emergency.” He also has held editorial positions with a half dozen medical publications. Augustine has received many awards and honors, including most recently the Street Medicine Society and the John P. Pryor Award for exemplary service. He has received multiple service awards with Atlanta Fire and Rescue.

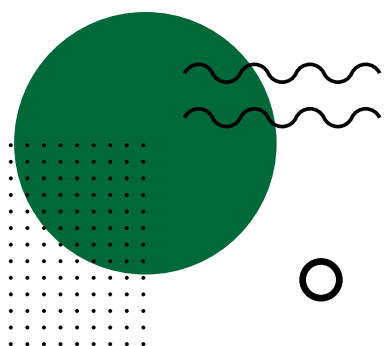
Augustine shared, “This past year has truly been overwhelming,” but emphasized that he is blessed to have the opportunity to help other people. He stated, “We will learn from this pandemic and the world will be better for it!”

Augustine lives in Naples, Florida, and Dayton, Ohio. His wife Linda is a 1981 Wright State University graduate with a degree in nursing. They have three grown children and four grandchildren.

—Lisa Coffey



Boonshoft Tackles Instructional Challenges Posed by COVID-19 Restrictions



Gregory J. Toussaint, M.D.

Quickly switching to virtual instruction, maintaining personal connections with students and shouldering an increased workload were among the challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic for the Wright State University Boonshoft School of Medicine (BSOM) faculty.

However, the restrictions posed by the pandemic enabled students, faculty and staff to adjust to and master virtual instruction in multiple locations at the same time, creating new educational possibilities for the future.

Dr. Brenda Roman, associate dean for medical education and chair of the Department of Medical Education, said, “The pandemic has been a reminder of the incredible dedication of our faculty and staff in having the flexibility to teach differently and spend many more hours in the day to accomplish the work as facilitators of the students’ education. While it has been a challenge to foster the close-knit environment that Boonshoft has been known for, I am grateful for the grace of our faculty, staff and students during these challenging times.”

Wright State moved to remote delivery for most courses in March 2020 to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. BSOM was forced to begin planning for virtual pre-clinical instruction for first- and second-year students, only one day prior to switching to virtual instruction.

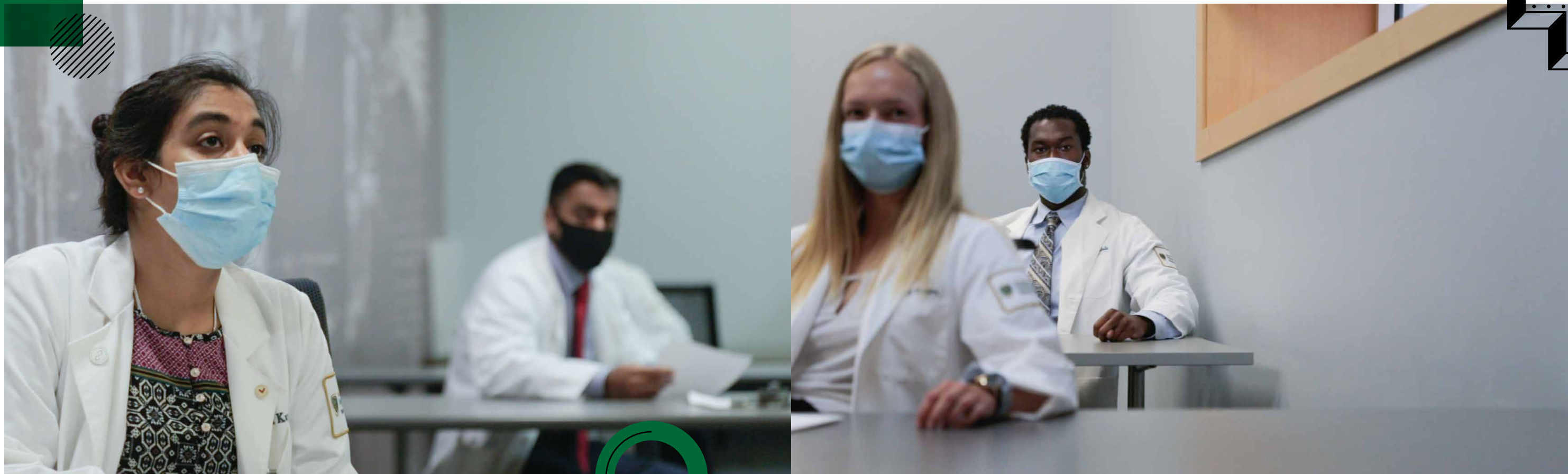
“Given that we have a lecture-free curriculum, this was a huge undertaking, as we could not simply put lectures online,” said Roman. “Our staff in the Department of Medical Education, MedOps instructional technology support team, faculty and students deserve so much credit in shifting to virtual instruction literally overnight and not missing any crucial information in their medical education.”

But while the students were having peer-instruction and team-based learning sessions online, they were missing some of the more subtle aspects of teamwork and the informal aspects of getting to know one another.

Roman said there were only minor changes in the curriculum. While the teaching styles have stayed the same with peer-instruction and team-based learning, faculty use multiple platforms to approximate in-person teaching.

“Students and faculty needed to have two to three platforms running at once on a computer, or computer and phone, in order to effectively move back and forth from large group sessions to small group sessions,” she said.

Roman said the greatest challenge by far has been getting to



know the first-year students and maintaining the personal connection with all of the other students.

Moving to a virtual learning format did have a different impact on some students. Roman said, “Our pre-clinical students did not feel that they were getting the same education, although content and engaged learning methods did not change; it was just all done virtually.” She added, “Our test averages have remained the same and we have been more transparent with showcasing the students’ and faculty’s efforts.”

Roman said having to remove third- and fourth-year students from clinical instruction for three months was one of the hardest decisions she had to make, but necessary as that was the guidance nationally for medical schools due to concerns about the shortage of personal protection equipment (PPE).

“Faculty, especially our clerkship directors, had to become very creative in their educational endeavors, such as quickly developing telemedicine rotations at the same time that they were pivoting to conducting medical appointments virtually themselves,” she said.

Roman said maintaining similar levels of education has been more challenging in the clinical settings. Not having clinical students involved in the care of COVID-19 patients

due to the PPE shortages meant fewer learning opportunities.

“As hospital systems prepared for an influx of COVID-19 patients, elective surgeries were cancelled or postponed, so students did not get as robust experiences as in the past,” she said.

“We continue to provide the best experiences possible during the pandemic, but know that some students feel more anxious, they do not feel as prepared to enter residency,” she said. “Our fourth-year students interviewed for residency positions virtually and matched to programs in cities where they never visited before.”

Roman said welcoming the Class of 2024 virtually was difficult for the students, faculty and staff.

“We do not get to interact with our students in face-to-face discussions that used to occur routinely in class,” she said. “We are more isolated from students than ever before and they are isolated from us. They are also isolated from each other; while discussions can occur in small break-out rooms virtually, it limits the spontaneous interactions and getting to know people on a deeper level.”

Roman said there has been a massive increase in the

frequency of meetings for faculty and staff given the ease of virtual meetings.

“Maintaining work-life balance has been even more challenging as more meeting times creep into the evenings, and parents of younger children do double duty in having to home-school and care for their children while trying to get their jobs done,” she said. “For most faculty and many staff, workload has increased since the pandemic began. Our students who are parents are especially challenged with the rigors of medical school and trying to balance their personal lives.”

Roman said faculty and staff in the school’s Skills Assessment Training Center (SATC) who lead clinical teaching programs in the pre-clinical phase have had an especially challenging time as they must prepare students in clinical skill development.

“In order to make the program work, significant adjustments have been made, which include wearing masks and face shields and having fewer people in the rooms together when assessing students,” she said. “Fewer people in rooms have meant that SATC faculty and staff must also utilize Saturdays for many of our skills training sessions to get all the students through each session.”

Roman said the most difficult thing has been having to hold a virtual graduation in 2020, and a small graduation ceremony with a few faculty and limited number of guests in 2021.

“The medical school graduation and hooding ceremony is such an intimate affair with family and friends—truly a highlight for both students and faculty, a culminating event after all the years of hard work,” she said.

The fourth-year students also missed out on the Match Day celebrations in 2020 and 2021, a time where they find out where they will go for residencies.

“It is definitely a major disappointment for our students to not have these traditional medical school milestone celebrations,” she said. “Both Match Day and graduation were times that students, faculty and staff could say goodbye to each other; not having those opportunities leaves an empty place in our hearts.”

—Jim Hannah

A Closer Look

*Dr. Valerie D. Weber,
M.D., M.S., FACP*

New Dean Ready to Take a Great School to New Heights

On November 1, 2020, the Wright State University Boonshoft School of Medicine (BSOM) welcomed a new dean, Valerie D. Weber, M.D., M.S., FACP, the eighth in school history. Dr. Weber was hired as dean following the June 2020 retirement of Margaret Dunn, M.D., M.B.A., FACS.

A Pennsylvania native, Dr. Weber grew up in the small town of Harborcreek, Pennsylvania. She is the youngest of three children and enjoyed spending time on the water during her childhood, especially with her dad, an avid boatsman.

Dr. Weber's interest in getting a good education and pursuing medicine goes back to her childhood. "My father, an engineer, made it very clear that education was the way out of poverty," shared Dr. Weber, whose parents were raised very close to poverty. Her mother, a homemaker, also volunteered in the community assisting the elderly, and Dr. Weber would often tag along with her. This led to her working as a candy striper in the local hospital. "I think my interest in science, along with a fascination with older people and their stories, made medicine a particularly

good fit for me, especially my chosen field of internal medicine," she added.

After finishing high school, Dr. Weber attended Washington and Jefferson College in Washington, Pennsylvania, and earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in psychology. She then attended the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine in Philadelphia, earning her Doctor of Medicine. She completed residency training, serving as chief resident, and completed an internship at the Graduate Hospital in Philadelphia, a facility that at the time was an affiliate of the University of Pennsylvania Health System. Her chosen specialty is internal medicine. "I often describe the choice of specialty as 'finding your tribe.' Internal medicine was always a natural fit for me; I didn't experience the angst of career choice that many of my classmates did," shared Dr. Weber. In 2008, she went back to the classroom to earn her Master of Science degree in health care management from the Harvard University Chan School of Public Health.

Dr. Weber began medical practice in Philadelphia as assistant medical director for the J. Edwin Wood Clinic, a teaching clinic for internal medicine residents and a provider of safety net care. She was

A Closer Look

promoted to the position of medical director at J. Edwin Wood Clinic after only a year. Other clinical activities throughout her career included internal medicine practice with Geisinger Internal Medicine, Pennsylvania Department of Health tuberculosis clinics, and physician volunteer with the Eliza Shirley Women's Clinic, part of the Health Outreach Program at Drexel University College of Medicine (DUCOM).

Along with being a practicing physician, Dr. Weber has also been heavily involved in educating future physicians. Her most recent positions include professor of medicine with DUCOM in Philadelphia and the Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine (GCSOM), formerly the Commonwealth Medical College, in Scranton, Pennsylvania.

Throughout her career, Dr. Weber has been involved in innovation and leadership. In 2000, Dr. Weber was department director for general internal medicine and geriatrics with Geisinger Health System in Danville, Pennsylvania. She later took on the duties of vice chair of the division of medicine. While with Geisinger, Dr. Weber led implementations of the advanced medical home model, as well as multiple other system performance improvements and patient safety initiatives. "As division chief of internal medicine, I was challenged to improve performance at many levels. We were one of the first groups to implement the EPIC electronic health record system, open access scheduling, group visits and medical home models," shared Dr. Weber. Following her work with Geisinger, Dr. Weber served as chair of the Department of Clinical Sciences, associate dean for clinical affairs, and professor of medicine with GCSOM. As a member of senior leadership, she played a major role in the development of the

new medical school, which awarded its first degrees in May 2013.

When asked about creating a new medical school Dr. Weber said, "It was by far the most challenging role I've had professionally, but it was also incredibly

"I saw the notice for the Boonshoft School of Medicine position, read the description of what the school was looking for in their next dean, and it sounded like a great fit. I had been at DUCOM for many years as a vice dean, and then as senior vice dean, so I was starting to think I might be ready to be a dean"

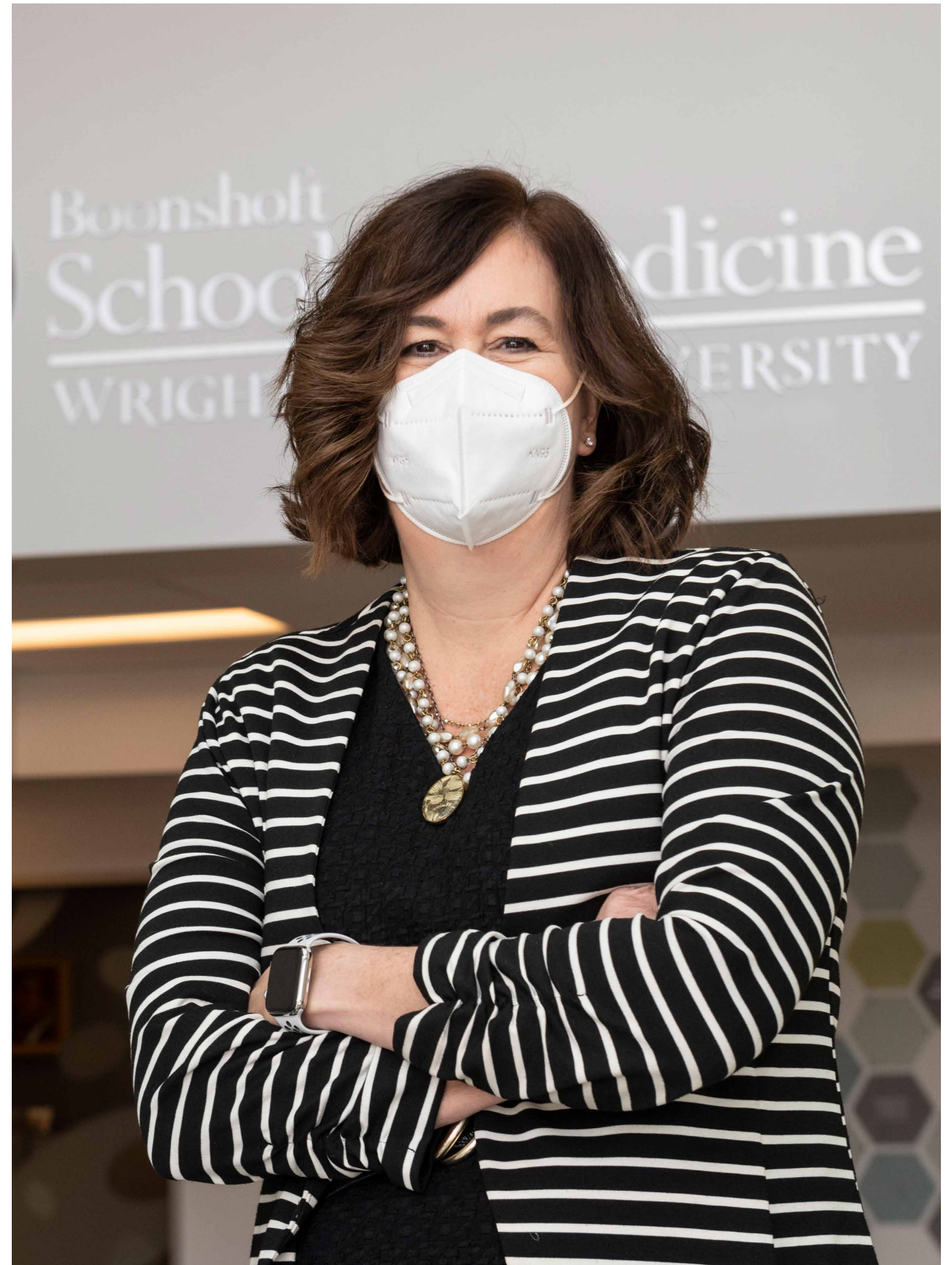
rewarding." Dr. Weber was part of the team responsible for recruiting and developing more than 400 faculty for the departments of medicine, surgery, and psychiatry, as well as faculty leaders to create and implement the curriculum. She also led the development of the school's innovative clinical curriculum, a highlight of which is a third-year longitudinal integrated clerkship, the largest implementation of that model in the world. This involved the development

of medical school faculty across a 16-county region, establishing academic affiliations with nearly 30 hospitals, dozens of physician groups, and crafting a robust assessment plan.

In 2014, Dr. Weber joined DUCOM, serving as professor of medicine and the Deborah J. Tuttle, M.D., and John P. Piper, M.D. senior vice dean for educational affairs. Other administrative roles at DUCOM included vice dean of educational affairs and the William Maul Measey Chair in medical education.

Throughout her career, Dr. Weber has been very active in community service. She has volunteered her time with various groups and programs, including Saint Francis of Assisi Soup Kitchen in Scranton, Pennsylvania, and the Visiting Nurse Association of Philadelphia. Weber has won numerous awards and honors. She is a member of nearly a dozen medical professional societies, and has held national leadership and institutional administrative committee positions. She has served as principal investigator on grant awards for work in areas including improving health outcomes in the rural elderly and establishment of an outcomes-based geriatrics assessment clinic.

"I saw the notice for the Boonshoft School of Medicine position, read the description of what the school was looking for in their next dean, and it sounded like a great fit. I had been at DUCOM for many years as a vice dean, and then as senior vice dean, so I was starting to think I might be ready to be a dean," said Dr. Weber. She has a brother in Dayton, another reason the opening caught her attention. Dr. Weber also considered the advice of a mentor, who encouraged her to take her career to the next level, and impressed upon her the



A Closer Look



need for more women medical school deans.

In July of 2020, Dr. Weber visited Wright State campus, and after seeing firsthand the quality of the people, BSOM's important organizational mission and values, and its strong clinical partners, it was an easy decision for her to make. "I saw how great BSOM is, and felt certain that I could help it become even better," Dr. Weber added.

She acknowledges that this last year has been difficult for everyone, "Interviewing for the dean's position and moving to Dayton took some creativity, but everything went smoothly. I miss live

music, traveling, and restaurants. I'm outdoorsy, so I've still been able to continue hiking and rowing. I joined the Greater Dayton Rowing Association soon after moving here," shared Dr. Weber. She has two young adult children, a daughter who is 24 and a computer engineer and a son who is 21 and a junior studying business at West Chester University. They remain in the Philadelphia region, so traveling to see them has been a bit more challenging than she would like.

Noting the difficulties of the past year and what students have been faced with, including the pandemic, changes to their

education and the tragedies affecting Black Americans, Dr. Weber wants to use her voice as dean to improve their medical school experience, and hopefully have a positive effect on their lives as well. How does BSOM create a welcoming, more inclusive environment for everybody? "I would like to see BSOM be a beacon of diversity, equity and inclusion, a place where differences are embraced, so that we can create a strong and diverse health care workforce, reflecting the needs of society," said Dr. Weber. She wants to also see BSOM have a greater impact on the health disparities facing the Dayton region,

especially in the areas of chronic disease, infant mortality and mental health.

Through its programs, Dr. Weber acknowledges BSOM has already made a tremendous impact on the community and the region, and would like to see these programs continue to grow and provide even greater impact. Particularly, she wants to see research funding increase. Dr. Weber added, "Discovery is a vital part of what a medical school can provide to a region."

Dr. Weber brings years of experience with community-based medical schools, serving in leadership roles, teaching students and, notably, helping to create a

medical school with a successful community-based medical education model. Her involvement in helping start a medical school exposed her to what is needed to begin to build a strong legacy for a new institution. Weber sees similarities with BSOM, which is still a relatively young medical school with so much opportunity ahead for building its legacy.

The beginning of her time as dean, Dr. Weber recognizes, will be spent learning and becoming a part of the BSOM and Wright State communities. "This initial period of time is really about listening and learning. You can't come into a place

with preconceived ideas. Of course, I do have ideas about things that I'd like to work on," said Dr. Weber.

Dr. Weber has big plans for BSOM. "In 2020, BSOM graduated its 40th class of medical students. It has evolved as a strong, community-focused medical school that provides an outstanding, state-of-the-art medical education, and retains many of its brightest students in the region and the state. At this juncture, we must ask what the next 10 years will hold?"

—Lisa Coffey

Giving Thanks

Scholarship Helps Students

Jack Gruber, M.D., former vice chair and professor with the department of obstetrics and gynecology with the Boonshoft School of Medicine (BSOM), passed away in January 2021 as a result of complications from COVID-19.

Gruber joined the faculty of BSOM in 1976 as a professor in the department of obstetrics and gynecology. He was serving as vice chair of the department when he retired as professor emeritus in 2006.

Along with his position as a member of the faculty at BSOM, Gruber was also chair of the institutional review board, division director of reproductive endocrinology and infertility, director of teaching associates and clerkship director. He also served as chair of the

internal review board for Miami Valley Hospital in Dayton, Ohio.

Gruber was born in Marion, Ohio, and earned his undergraduate degree from Otterbein College in Ohio. He attended medical school at The Ohio State University and completed residency training in obstetrics and gynecology at BSOM in Dayton. His fellowship training in gynecological endocrinology and infertility was completed at Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan.

Following his retirement, Gruber settled on a 35-acre farm in North Carolina, near the Smoky Mountains. He saw it as returning to his roots of self-sufficiency and living off the land.

The Gruber family encourages friends and family to honor Dr. Gruber's memory

by donating to the Jack Gruber Endowed Scholarship in Obstetrics and Gynecology. This scholarship is available to any fourth-year BSOM medical students who have expressed an interest in obstetrics and gynecology. For more information on this scholarship, or to contribute please visit medicine.wright.edu/giving.

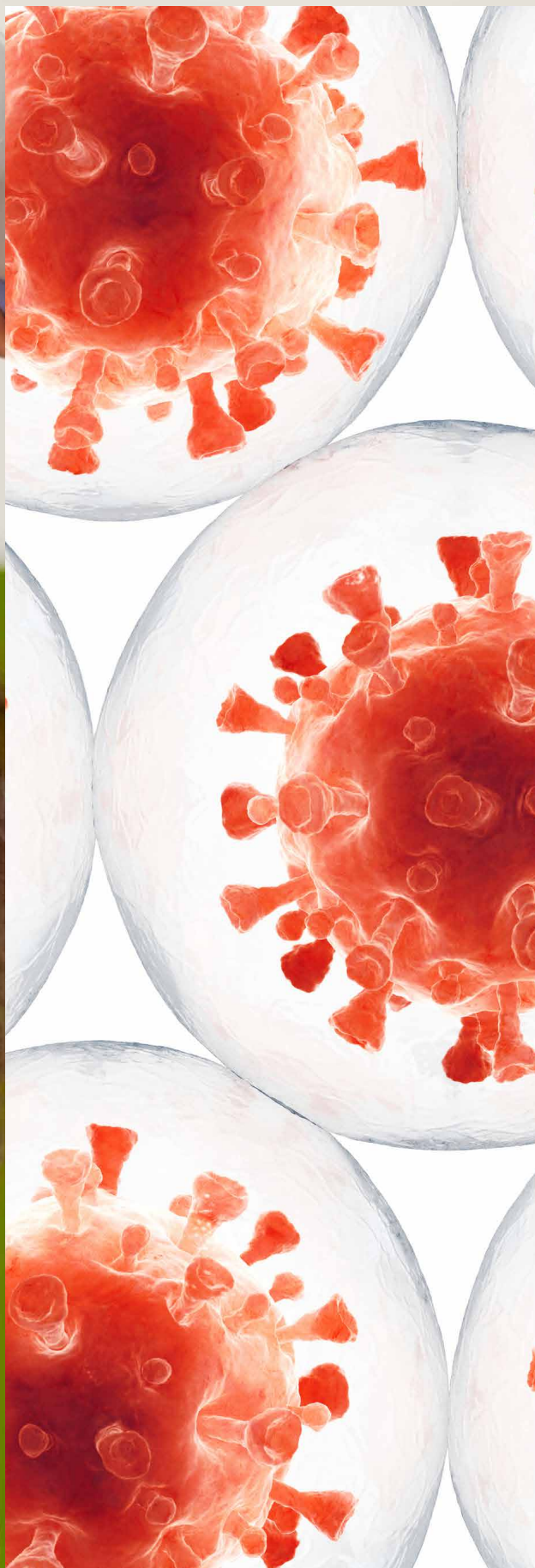
—Lisa Coffey



1,000 Words



The incoming class of 2020. Taken on July 13 2020, on Wright State University's campus. Before the students arrived, markings were measured and placed on the ground to ensure that each student could stand 6 feet apart, abiding by social distancing guidelines.



COVID-19 Protocols, Ohio Schools are Getting it Right

Quarantining students for close contact to a COVID-19-infected classmate, even if they don't become sick, is causing children to miss a substantial amount of in-person class. In a nine-week grading period, a 14-day quarantine, which health officials recommended for most of the school year, would result in a student missing nearly one-fourth of in-person class time.

The Ohio Schools COVID-19 Evaluation (OSCE) created a study in the fall of 2020 to answer the question: If a child in a supervised setting was in close contact to another child with COVID-19 and both children were wearing masks properly, did the close-contact child need to stay at home to quarantine?

The OSCE used The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) definition of close contact for their study purposes. The CDC defines close contact as being within 6 feet of an infected person, for a total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period. That applies to the two days before a person is symptomatic or tests positive.

Catherine MT Sherwin, Ph.D., FCP, Wright State University Boonshoft School of Medicine (BSOM) vice chair for pediatric research, professor of pediatrics and pharmacology and toxicology, and director of pediatric clinical pharmacology with Dayton Children's Hospital, along with several BSOM students, participated in the six-week study that took place in November and December of 2020.

Sherwin's role was field supervisor and

training lead for the southwest Ohio study site. She was involved in all visits to schools and in training the BSOM students who volunteered to be part of the study field team. Students were trained on procedures required to be research assistants, and how to administer the COVID-19 test. Staff from Dayton Children's Hospital assisted with their training for COVID-19 testing. Trainings were recorded and shared with the other study sites statewide.

The field team for the study site consisted of Sherwin and BSOM students who traveled weekly to designated schools within southwest Ohio to perform COVID-19 testing. "The students were great and contributed a lot of hours and dedication to this project; I couldn't have done it without them," said Sherwin. BSOM students participating in the project included Hilary Kleppel, Amber Prater, Cameron McGlone, Charu Gupta, Mirjana Grocic, Abigail Schmidt and Kyle Henneke.

The study also received support from school administrators. To encourage participation and build confidence in the safety of the process, the superintendent of Mason City Schools, near Cincinnati, was videoed being COVID-19 tested. The video was shared throughout the district for parents and students. "We also relied on good communication between the school superintendents and principals, and our team," said Sherwin. Every Monday, the field team received reports from the districts on the numbers of positive COVID-19 cases, along with

Schools are doing it right, the protocols in place are working.

Research Spotlight

confirmation on which students were allowed to be tested. This information dictated which schools the team visited that week.

COVID-19 rapid-tests were given to students, twice weekly for children who had been in close contact with an infected classmate, and once weekly for the comparison group of students of the same age and grade who had not been in close contact with an infected student. “I was surprised by how many students volunteered to be part of the comparison groups,” Sherwin added.

To be included in the project, close-contact children had to have been exposed to a COVID-19 case in school, been within 6 feet for more than 15 minutes, and both COVID-19 infected and close contact students were wearing masks appropriately. Students exposed to COVID-19 outside of school, for example, during extracurricular activities, were not eligible to participate.

Schools could choose whether to have close contact children quarantine at home or remain in school with regular testing. Close-contact children were identified by the schools, who worked with their local health departments. All children with a positive test were isolated, and the local health department was informed.

Surveys were also administered as part of the project. Children were asked about interactions with friends and exposure to people beyond school. Parent surveys

focused on information regarding prevention practices at home, and stressors related to the pandemic. Teachers were asked about school structure, class activities and mask usage, and district superintendents answered questions related to pandemic communications, equity challenges and paths forward.

OSCE included over 700 children in the study, with nine Ohio school districts participating in the survey portion, and seven of the nine participating in both the survey and COVID-19 testing. The participating schools and districts included Marysville Exempted Village and Whitehall City Schools, in the Columbus area; Lakota Local Schools, Mason City Schools and Princeton City Schools near Cincinnati; Ashland City Schools and Champion Local Schools near Cleveland; Athens City Schools; and Troy City Schools, near Dayton.

The schools were chosen intentionally by the state. Effort was made to ensure the schools had a reasonable representative sample with regard to characteristics that included number of recent COVID-19 cases, school size, location, instruction model (hybrid or in-person) and proportion of impoverished students and students enrolled in Medicaid.

Sherwin worked closely with other program participants, The Ohio State University and the Ohio Colleges of Medicine Government Resource Center (GRC). The GRC partners faculty at Ohio’s colleges of medicine with state health

policymakers for the purpose of improving the state’s health systems. Timothy R. Sahr, director of research with GRC, was principal investigator with the project. The GRC kept the teams amply stocked with testing kits and personal protective equipment (PPE). Sherwin chuckled as she recalled her dining room filled with boxes of test kits and PPE.

Jonathan Thackeray, M.D., served as the project’s medical advisor. Thackeray is vice-chair and professor of pediatrics with BSOM, and chief medical officer of population health with Dayton Children’s Hospital. Sherwin shared how much she appreciated his support during the project, including filling in for her on field testing when she was out.

OSCE was managed by several entities in the state of Ohio, including The Office of the Governor, the Ohio Department of Health, the Ohio Department of Medicaid, the Ohio Department of Insurance and the Ohio Pandemic Leadership Team. Funding was provided by two grants through Wright State and came via the Medicaid Technical Assistance and Policy Program (MEDTAPP), a federal program that provides funding solely to universities from the department of health, Medicare and Medicaid, for research purposes.

Overall, results from the study showed that children who were appropriately masked and in close contact to an infected student in school had rates of COVID-19 similar to children who had not



70%

Over 70 percent of students believe masking stops the spread of COVID-19.



97%

Administrators responded that masking was near 97 percent in the schools, and that nearly all schools had a mask policy.



Most COVID-19 transmission was happening in the community and away from the school setting.

been exposed to COVID-19. As long as students in the classroom wore masks and complied with social distancing, they had no increased risk of catching COVID-19 from a nearby student, as compared with students further away in the same classroom or in the same grade outside that classroom.

Survey findings showed over 70 percent of students believe masking stops the spread of COVID-19, and that student mask usage in school is high. Teachers also believe masks prevent the spread and reported high mask usage by students. Administrators responded that masking was near 97 percent in the schools, and that nearly all schools had a mask policy. They also found that exposure outside of school was substantial, with participation in out-of-school activities high and mask usage low. During exposure to other children outside of school in informal settings, mask usage was low.

Sherwin’s big take-away from the study is that schools are doing it right; the protocols in place are working. Most COVID-19 transmission was happening in the community and away from the school setting. “I was surprised and pleased by how good the students were at following safety protocols, mask wearing and social distancing, especially in the high schools,” said Sherwin.

“I loved engaging with the communities. Going into a school, I enjoyed seeing students following safety guidelines, but going to

school ‘like normal,” said first-year BSOM student Hilary Kleppel. “Participating in this study re-emphasized the importance of teamwork,” said fourth-year BSOM student Cameron McGlone. “I’ve never seen science move as fast as the OSCE study,” McGlone added.

“This was the fastest study I’ve ever seen; it went at lightning speed! I credit Wright State University and Dayton Children’s Hospital for pulling this off. They provided great volunteers and support throughout the project,” said Sherwin. She also specifically thanked John Duby, M.D., chair and professor of pediatrics with BSOM. “This project was a little out of my scope, but it’s because of Dr. Duby’s support I became involved.”

OSCE was a pilot evaluation and not intended to answer mask and quarantine questions definitively. The schools saw value in the data collected, and the results from this project are helping Ohio’s health officials modify school quarantining protocols to get more kids back in the classroom.

Educators agree it is important to have the kids in the classroom. Their social, emotional and academic well-being is more important now than ever.

—Lisa Coffey

Boonshoft School of Medicine Resident Creates Task Force Focused on COVID-19 Vaccines

This past December, a few medical colleagues, including We'am Hussain, M.D., '18, a third-year internal medicine resident at Wright State University Boonshoft School of Medicine (BSOM), were enjoying a cup of tea together. They were discussing how they could give back to the community.

During that same time, pharmaceutical companies Pfizer and Moderna began announcing the release of COVID-19 vaccines. Hussain, her sister Anam Hussain, M.B.A., a third-year medical student at BSOM, and others they knew in health care began fielding questions from friends and hearing a lot of misinformation concerning the vaccines. This situation helped Hussain and Anam realize that sharing what they learned about the COVID-19 vaccines with the community, was their opportunity to help.

Hussain and her colleagues recognized there was often a delay regarding accurate health care information getting to the general public. Hussain said, "By first getting information to health care

professionals, we believed that it would trickle down from provider to patient." With this realization, the idea of formally sharing information about the vaccines with the Dayton area health care community grew from concept to reality.

Hussain and Anam, with assistance from Glen Solomon, M.D., BSOM chair of internal medicine and neurology, began reaching out to others in the BSOM community and finding experts in other medical specialties who were interested in becoming involved, and formed a COVID-19 vaccine task force.

"We wanted to provide knowledge from a diverse group of medical experts," said Hussain. The COVID-19 vaccine task force included BSOM faculty, residents and students, representing various disciplines and specialties, and was supported by BSOM and the Department of Internal Medicine and Neurology.

Along with Hussain and Anam, the vaccine task force included the following BSOM clinicians: Glen Solomon, M.D.,

professor and chair of internal medicine and neurology; Cynthia Sheppard Solomon, B.S.Pharm, R.Ph., FASCP, registered pharmacist and clinical assistant professor of internal medicine; Steven Burdette, M.D., division director of infectious disease and professor of internal medicine; Jonathan Miller, M.D., resident physician in psychiatry; and H. Bradford Hawley, M.D., professor emeritus with the BSOM internal medicine department, and past president of the Infectious Diseases Society of Ohio.

The focus of the task force was to provide information about the vaccines and techniques to help providers talk to patients about them. "Often times the way we present information to patients is just as important as what we are saying," said Hussain. "We saw two aspects to communicating with patients, first, understanding their concerns, and second, having the appropriate knowledge to share," Hussain added.

When talking to patients about the



The Boonshoft School of Medicine COVID-19 Vaccine Task Force. From left to right, We'am Hussain, M.D., Anam Hussain, M.B.A., Glen Solomon, M.D., Cynthia Sheppard Solomon, B.S. Pharm, RPh, FASCP, Steven Burdette, M.D., Jonathan Miller, M.D., and H. Bradford Hawley, M.D.



COVID-19 vaccine, the task force recommended providers understand their patients, concerns and recognize that people may have been hearing contrasting information. The team suggested health care professionals educate themselves as much as possible about the vaccine, so they could better explain it to patients. The task force also recommended using motivational interviewing to discuss the vaccines. Motivational interviewing is a type of communication that involves collaboration and good listening. It requires engaging with patients as equal partners and empowering them to make decisions, while refraining from scare tactics, warnings or confrontation.

In an effort to share information with the Dayton-area medical community, the task force held a free virtual symposium in January of 2021. Nearly 150 people attended. Those invited to the event consisted of members of the BSOM community and providers at the hospital systems in the Dayton area, including Dayton Children's Hospital, Dayton VA Medical Center, Kettering Health Network, Premier Health and Wright-Patterson Medical Center.

The virtual event opened with Valerie Weber, M.D.,

BSOM dean, who spoke about addressing vaccine hesitancy as just one part of BSOM's goal of supporting the community. Ohio Governor Mike DeWine and Dayton Mayor Nan Whaley also spoke and provided information on vaccine roll-out plans and goals for the state and the Dayton area. Several physicians and medical professionals from BSOM and the Dayton area presented on topics including COVID-19 virology and management, COVID-19 vaccine misconceptions and unanswered questions, vaccine distribution, and how to communicate with patients about the vaccine. The event ended with a

panel discussion to answer questions.

The vaccine task force also compiled information, creating a library of resources to share with the Dayton area medical community, including recording the virtual symposium and making it available online. It can be viewed on the BSOM website, **medicine.wright.edu**, as well as on the Wright State University YouTube channel. Search for COVID-19 symposium.

The goal of this task force was to help the community by helping local clinicians partner with their patients, to inform them and instill confidence in the vaccines, and get vaccinated. Hussain added, "Ultimately vaccines are only beneficial when they are appropriately distributed and used. This is our vision for the Dayton community."

—Lisa Coffey

On The Move

Erica Taylor, M.D., named assistant dean for diversity and inclusion

Erica Taylor, M.D., '05, is the new assistant dean for diversity and inclusion at the Wright State University Boonshoft School of Medicine (BSOM). Taylor transitioned into the role in fall 2020 from her previous position as BSOM pediatrics clerkship director. She will continue to serve as a pediatric hospitalist at Dayton Children's Hospital.

In her new role, Taylor is supporting the development of future physicians who will provide excellent medical care with compassion and cultural humility, helping to maintain the BSOM commitment to a diverse student and faculty population reflective of today's multicultural society, and helping to provide a supportive, safe environment that allows students to develop their skills and discover their place in the medical community. Collaboration with faculty and staff is also a goal for Taylor, including working with BSOM in developing strategies that support curricular diversity, organizational needs assessments in the areas of diversity and inclusion, and coordination and support of longstanding pipeline programs for increasing diversity in medicine.

"We hope to serve as a safe space for students to discuss concerns, and to provide the supportive environment that is needed for success for BSOM students, as well as support of the development and retention of inspired and dedicated faculty," stated Taylor.

A 2005 graduate of BSOM, Taylor

completed her internship in internal medicine and pediatrics in 2007, and in 2010 completed residency training in internal medicine and pediatrics, both at BSOM.

"As an alumnus of BSOM, I am aware of the rich legacy of wonderful physicians this medical school has supported, with an understanding that even with the progress we have made as an institution, we have an obligation to continue to be an ally, advocate and voice for our patients and our community," said Taylor.

Taylor added, "I have directly benefited from a rich legacy of wonderful leaders in diversity and inclusion. From my first day on campus, leaders such as Alonzo Patterson, M.D., shared that BSOM's goal of not only recruitment, but matriculation of its students was important. In my class there were 17 minority students, which created an environment rich in support and encouragement. This is the reason that I stand here today. Students' journeys are challenging, and not just reflective of their academic performance, but of knowledge of self and knowledge of others (or the mature recognition of a lack thereof). BSOM has a longstanding vision of providing a medical community that is reflective of the national landscape and supports the need to demonstrate why diversity is important. Wright State University's celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Bolinga Black Cultural Resource Center is a testimony to our community's commitment to advocacy, activism and representation."

Taylor's academic appointments with BSOM go back to 2010, when she was chief resident with the BSOM integrated pediatric residency program. Taylor was the first African American to hold this

Erica Taylor, M.D.

position. She is currently assistant professor and clerkship director for the department of pediatrics at BSOM. Taylor is also community medicine residency elective director with the integrated pediatric residency program.

Taylor's past roles with BSOM have included clinical preceptor for internal medicine and pediatrics, clinical assistant professor and associate clerkship director for the department of pediatrics.

Taylor has served on nearly 20 local and national committees throughout her career. Her most recent roles include teaching and learning lead for the national nonprofit Aquifer Educators Consortium, chair of the BSOM student promotions committee, member of the BSOM doctoring committee, and member of the residency education committee at Dayton Children's Hospital.

Taylor has been published several times, and presented with multiple awards, including the Dr. Algernon B. Jackson Award of Distinction in Medical Education and the Leonard Tow Humanism in Medicine Award.

Taylor received her undergraduate degree from Xavier University of Louisiana in New Orleans in 1998, graduating cum laude.

Taylor said there is no more critical time than today to continue speaking up, and for understanding how policies that are rooted in systemic racism create health

disparities and are destructive, physically and spiritually.

—Lisa Coffey

Boonshoft School of Medicine grad to help students go from good to great

Miri Lader, M.D., FAAP, a 2014 graduate of the Wright State University Boonshoft School of Medicine (BSOM), is the new director of medical student education with the BSOM Department of Pediatrics. Lader comes into this role from Dayton Children's Hospital where she was a pediatric hospitalist and director of continuing medical education.

Lader, who began in this role in January 2021, shared, "I was drawn to the position because the education I received at BSOM needs to be carried on."

While completing rotations at Dayton Children's Hospital as a BSOM medical student, Lader fell in love with the field of pediatrics. "Kids are all little miracles, and I wanted to spend my days watching miracles take place," said Lader. She felt a strong sense of belonging while at Dayton Children's Hospital as a student and chose to stay on for her internship and residency training. Lader became chief resident, and remained on staff full-time after graduation. She added, "Professionally I grew up where my students will be completing rotations, offering me a unique opportunity to show them what I have learned."

As director of medical student education, Lader is responsible for designing, managing and evaluating the program, as well as communicating expectations of the pediatric clerkship to BSOM students, faculty, staff and administration. "I would be honored to be considered the link between students and faculty during the pediatric portion of their medical education," said Lader.

John Duby, M.D., FAAP, CPE, chair of the BSOM Department of Pediatrics, shared, "As a graduate of the Boonshoft School of Medicine, and the Integrated Pediatric Residency program, Miri brings a depth of understanding and experience that has prepared her well to continue our legacy of providing high-quality clerkships in our primary care specialties. I greatly appreciate her passion for and commitment to assuring that our students see pediatrics as a fulfilling, yet challenging profession. She is highly respected by her fellow faculty members and the entire team at Dayton Children's Hospital, and will represent our profession well to our future physicians."

When asked why she is a good fit for this position, Lader shared that she has been a leader and caregiver most of her life. Born in Brooklyn, New York, and the oldest of seven children, her mother passed away when she was young, thrusting her into a leadership role of caregiver to her siblings. Her family traveled extensively, due to her father's career with the U.S. Army, and she graduated from high school while living in Israel. Soon after graduation, she was recruited by the Israeli Army, and enlisted at age 17. She served as a

Miri Lader, M.D.

combat infantry drill sergeant and was with the Israeli Army for 30 months. Lader shared, "I believe that guiding soldiers to be the strongest warriors they can be is not unlike guiding future physicians to become the strongest warriors they can be." Following her military service, Lader attended Cornell University where she earned a Bachelor of Science in Biomedical Ethics.

According to Lader, "The classic model of education, where the teacher bestows knowledge onto young and curious pupils, does not necessarily fit the complexities of medical education." She believes that becoming a great physician requires more than memorizing facts and numbers from books. Learning the art of medicine, intertwined with the science, helps separate good from great. "I have been exceptionally lucky to have had mentors take the time to teach me their art," shared Lader. "I would be dishonoring my mentors if I kept their teachings to myself."

—Lisa Coffey

Students in Boonshoft School of Medicine's Master of Public Health Program Use Contact Tracing to Battle COVID-19 Crisis

They have quickly become detectives in the war against COVID-19.

Wright State University Boonshoft School of Medicine (BSOM) students say conducting contact tracing of people testing positive for the virus has been challenging but underscores its importance in limiting the spread of the pandemic.

"Being a part of a team actively trying to help our community has really shown me how crucial public health is and how it deserves a lot more government funding," said Leah Elliott. "Without the public health infrastructure and systems in place, this virus would have been much more deadly."

Elliott is one of BSOM Master of Public Health (M.P.H.) students serving as contact tracers and supervisors of student contact tracers for five Ohio counties.

Contact tracing is an effective disease control strategy that involves identifying

cases and their contacts, and then working with them to interrupt disease transmission.

The role of the M.P.H. program is to contact people in Warren, Butler, Preble, Miami and Champaign counties who are infected with COVID-19 or who have been in close contact with someone who was infected. Those contacted are asked who they have been around and if they can quarantine safely. Data and information collected on positive cases is entered into the Ohio Disease Reporting System and the Ohio Contact Tracing System.

Elliott is a graduate assistant in the M.P.H. program, and became involved with the contact tracing team in July. In early September, she began contact tracing in Butler County.

"It is an excellent experience and I truly believe I wouldn't get this anywhere else other than Wright State," she said. "I manage six to 10 contact tracers during

any given shift, and this experience has improved my management and organizational skills and has enabled me to work on an inter-professional team."

Kyle R. Henneke, an M.P.H. student and third-year medical student in BSOM's Physician Leadership Development Program, is responsible for recruiting, training and monitoring the medical students involved with the program. He also developed the COVID-19 informational part of the training and helps train incoming contact tracers in motivational interviewing.

The students received seven hours of training, using the Johns Hopkins University COVID-19 Contact Tracing Module, an online course that introduced students to the science behind the virus and how it spreads. An additional three hours of in-person training was required for navigating Microsoft Teams, workflow, expectations, COVID-19 facts, motivational interviewing skills and mock interviewing.

Henneke worked as a travel nurse in an emergency room in New Orleans during the first two months of the pandemic, helped with an Ohio State University field study for six weeks by testing K-12 students, and currently helps Greene County with its COVID-19 vaccinations.

"Contact tracing has been very different for me, as it requires a different skill set. It requires patience and providing lots of education to the public," he said.

Henneke said a big challenge with contact tracing is rumor control. They try to help people overcome the misconceptions and myths about the virus.

"When calling people to talk to them about symptoms and guide them through isolation and quarantining measures, there's a lot of push-back," he said. "Calming people down can be difficult. In addition, helping the contact

tracers work through these issues is challenging."

Henneke said some people who test positive for COVID-19 can be unpredictable when contacted, even when the contact tracers have done the necessary research and covered all the bases.

"I tell the contact tracers they should approach every shift ready for something new. Every situation is unique," he said.

Elliott said some people contacted after testing positive for COVID-19 refuse to isolate or quarantine because they believe the virus is a hoax, it is not that serious, or they don't believe they have COVID-19 because they are asymptomatic.

"I have also experienced people who are unable to isolate or quarantine because they need to work to support themselves or their family; therefore it is important to connect them with as many resources as possible," she said.

Natalie Hicks, a first-year M.P.H. student, jumped at the chance to be a supervising contact tracer because she wanted to be involved in helping local communities mitigate the effects of the pandemic.

"Our process changes daily and really requires a dynamic team willing to switch things up to make sure we meet the needs of local epidemiologists, health commissioners and other public health figures," Hicks said.

The M.P.H. program is part of the Department of Population and Public Health Sciences, which has a close relationship with many of the surrounding health districts and is directing the contact tracing support program.

The contact tracing program is directed by Camille Edwards, M.P.H., with support from faculty and department chair Marietta Orlowski, Ph.D., and Sara Paton, Ph.D., faculty and director of the M.P.H. program.

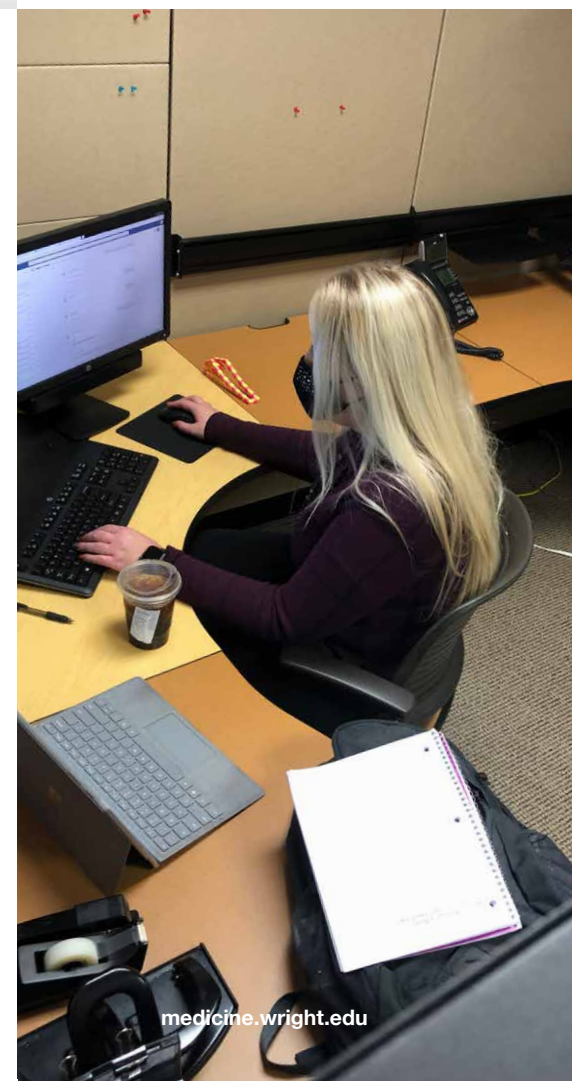


M.P.H. students also helped administer COVID-19 vaccines in Greene County, working with Dr. Gregory Toussaint, assistant dean for Clinical Skills Education, at a pop-up site that serves adult care centers run by the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD).

M.P.A. student Colleen Pennington, a second-year medical student and a medical technician in the Vermont Air National Guard, said she and the other vaccinators set up in a small room. As the individuals and their caregivers came in, they were able to talk with them and take the time each person needed to receive their vaccine. She said between 60 and 70 people were vaccinated during one session.

"We have the pleasure of vaccinating the DODD population in this area as well as staff and caregivers," added Henneke, who also ensures that those vaccinated understand the potential side effects and when to return for their second doses. "It has been extremely rewarding work. Working with Greene County Public Health to get our health care providers and those at higher risk vaccinated has been awesome."

—Jim Hannah



In Good Company

Class of 2000 Grad Recognized as COVID-19 Hero

The dictionary defines a hero as a person admired or idealized for courage, outstanding achievements or noble qualities. In mythology and folklore, it's a person of superhuman qualities.

Our world saw many heroes emerge throughout 2020, particularly when it came to issues surrounding the pandemic. One of those heroes is a graduate of the Wright State University Boonshoft School of Medicine (BSOM).

BSOM class of 2000 alum, **Steven Dale Burdette, M.D., FIDSA, FACP**, is chief of infectious diseases and professor of internal medicine at BSOM, and medical director of antimicrobial stewardship and infection with Premier Health Miami Valley Hospital. He has demonstrated to many around him his ability to be outstanding, possibly even superhuman, especially during the pandemic.

As an infectious disease expert in the Dayton area, Burdette has been extremely involved and sought-after in helping fight COVID-19 locally. In recognition of his efforts and hard work, Burdette was chosen as one of 11 physicians in the state of Ohio to receive the Ohio Chapter of the American College of Physicians (ACP) inaugural COVID-19 Warrior Hospital Hero Award for 2020. Burdette received the award this past December.

The award was created by Debra Leizman, M.D., FACP, chair of the Ohio awards committee for the Ohio chapter

of the ACP, and an internal medicine physician in Cleveland, Ohio. It was a way to recognize physicians in the state who have gone above and beyond during the pandemic. According to the call for nominees letter from Leizman to the Ohio ACP chapter, "The award seeks to honor an internist who contributed to their hospital or academic community by engaging, participating and/or



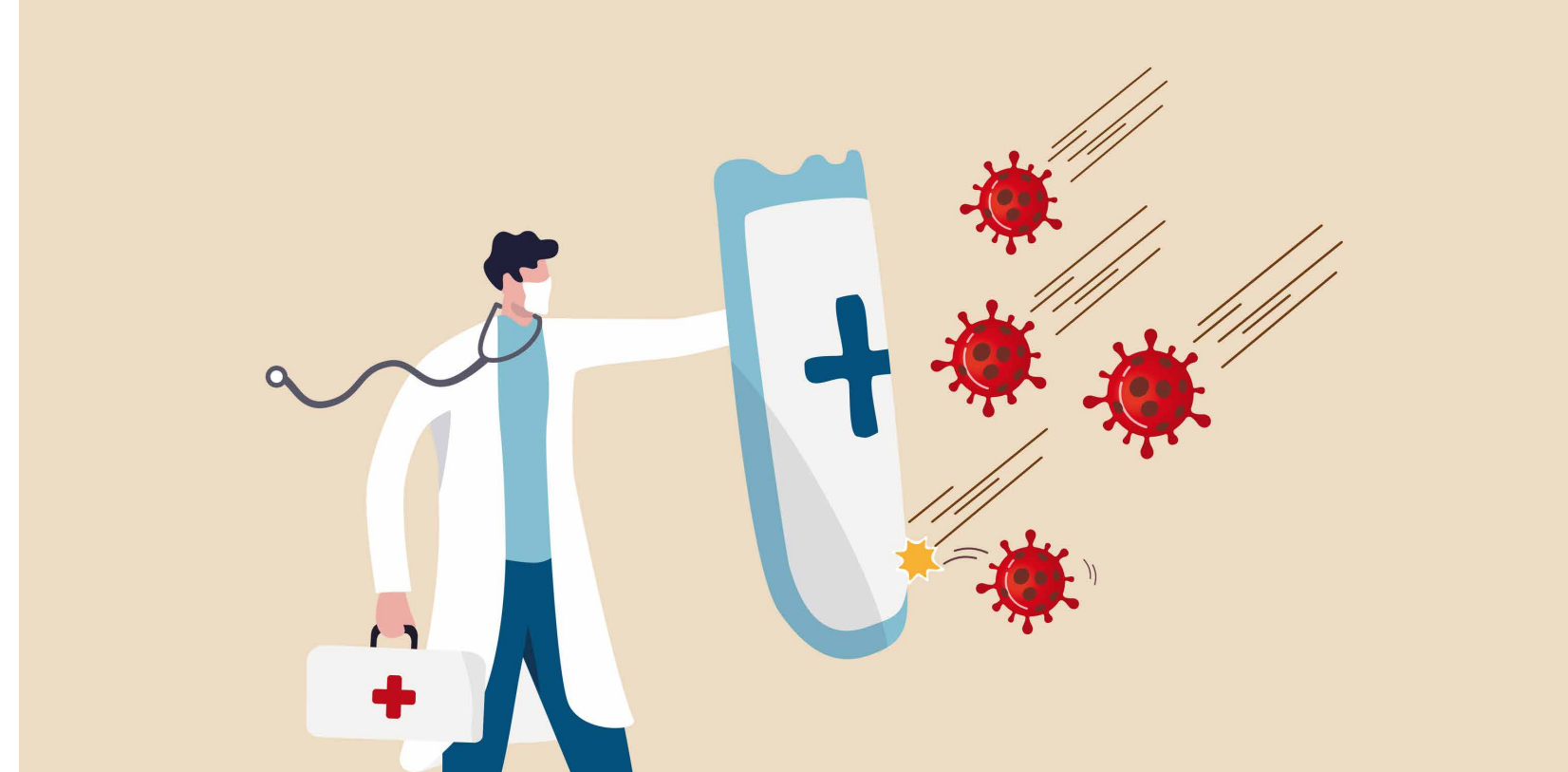
developing successful programs, which allowed them and others in their institution to care for COVID-19 patients."

Burdette was nominated for the award by Glen Solomon, M.D., chair and professor of the internal medicine and neurology department at BSOM. "During the past months, Steve has worked tirelessly to care for COVID-19 patients and establish policies and protocols for their management," shared Solomon from his nomination letter. "While working seven days a week on COVID-19 care,

Dr. Burdette has continued to teach, write and perform research."

Throughout his career, Burdette has been credited with developing nearly a half dozen major programs for many of the Dayton area hospitals. In response to COVID-19, he created a high-risk respiratory unit and established the infection control policies for COVID-19 for Miami Valley Hospital. He also established an antimicrobial stewardship program at each of the Premier Health sites in the Dayton region. In 2018, Miami Valley Hospital was recognized as an Infectious Diseases Society of America Center of Excellence. He also established an infectious diseases service for employees at Kettering Health's Greene Memorial Hospital, in Xenia, Ohio. Burdette was the chair of the infection control committee, which provided expertise for treatment and prevention to hospital employees in the case of occupational exposures to infectious diseases.

Burdette has held nearly 20 professional appointments during his career at BSOM and in the Dayton area hospital systems, including currently, medical director of infection prevention for Premier Health's Miami Valley Hospital. He also served as medical director of infectious diseases for Kettering Health's Greene Memorial Hospital, and medical director for the Greene County, Ohio, Tuberculosis Clinic.



Burdette is involved nationally, regionally and locally with many clinical groups and committees. On a national level, his involvement includes the Infectious Diseases Society of America, as a member of the editorial advisory board and chair of the centers of excellence subcommittee. At the state level, he has served the Ohio Department of Health and Ohio Chapter of the ACP. Locally he serves as a member of the board governance structure committee for Wright State Physicians and was chair of infection control for Kettering Health's Greene Memorial Hospital and Soin Medical Center.

Burdette has been very active with Life Connection of Ohio, serving this organization in several different capacities over the years; he is currently the board president. Life Connection of Ohio is a Dayton area nonprofit that promotes and facilitates organ donation in northwest and west central Ohio.

In 2020, along with the COVID-19 Warrior Hospital Hero Award, Burdette earned the BSOM Department of Internal Medicine Chair's Award for Excellence. This award recognized Burdette for everything he has done for BSOM, the

internal medicine department, and the community in the fight against COVID-19.

Even with his commitments to the COVID-19 fight, patient care, program development and multiple professional appointments, Burdette maintains his dedication to educating future physicians as a professor of medicine for BSOM. He credits his clinical experiences, including those he received as a medical student at BSOM, to helping him be a successful instructor. "To me, the best teachers many times are the doctors who are at the bedside, making clinical decisions on a daily basis. Nothing beats clinical experience," said Burdette. Due to COVID-19 and higher clinical volumes, teaching has been different this year. "You have to be creative, look for unique teaching opportunities and be efficient in the time you have with students and residents."

After earning his Doctor of Medicine from BSOM, Burdette remained with BSOM to complete his residency in internal medicine and a fellowship in infectious diseases. He credits BSOM for helping him get where he is today in his career. "BSOM trained me to provide excellent patient care, and provided me the leadership skills to take active roles in

guiding care at many facilities over the years."

When asked about the COVID-19 virus, Burdette says "Masking and social distancing work if people practice it 100 percent of the time. It only takes one time to put yourself in a social situation without a mask to get infected. Keep your guard up and stay vigilant."

"Though it will still be a few more months before we see our old way of life, I am excited and encouraged about the huge impact of the vaccines." He added, "None of the currently approved vaccines are live viral vaccines, so people cannot get COVID-19 from the vaccine."

Since COVID-19, Burdette says, "I went seven months without a day off, seven days a week reviewing charts and guiding patients, treatments. My normal day doubled in work load. It has been exhausting." Seeing patients, leading programs, teaching and volunteering, all while caring for COVID-19 patients and developing COVID-19 treatment programs is definitely admirable and outstanding, and defines a physician worthy of being labeled a hero.

—Lisa Coffey

Alumni Notes



We are proud of our alumni and the graduates of our residency programs and want to spread the word about your achievements. If you have professional news or personal updates to share—or simply want to stay in touch—please contact email Office of Advancement at som_adv@wright.edu or call 937-245-7634.

1986

John T. Hanna, M.D., FAAFP, family medicine, has recently joined Fisher-Titus Family Medicine in New London, Ohio. He will also be the supervising physician for Fisher-Titus senior services and occupational health.

1988

John Bleacher, M.D., has been appointed by the governor of Georgia to the Georgia Trauma Care Network Commission. Bleacher is a pediatric surgeon, director of trauma services and chief of general pediatric surgery with Children's Healthcare of Atlanta, Scottish Rite Hospital. He lives in Sandy Springs, Georgia, with his wife Angela.

John A. Panuto, M.D., internal medicine, is owner and operator of Allergy & Immunology Health Services, with offices in North Olmsted, Middleburg Heights and Elyria near Cleveland, Ohio. Panuto was awarded a "Best Doctor" by *Cleveland Magazine* in 2018.

1991

Roberto Darroca, M.D., obstetrics and gynecology, has been elected president of the Indiana State Medical Association.

Marcus L. Griffin, M.D., internal medicine, is an internist with Maui Wellness Medical Center, in Maui, Hawaii, and a clinical instructor at the University of Hawaii, John A. Burns School of Medicine.

1992

Sophia Apple, M.D., pathology, has written the novel, *COVID-19*, a diary written from the perspective of an Asian American female physician, where medicine, life and God intersect at real and fictional events. One hundred percent of the royalties from book sales will be donated to charity.

1995

Julian Althoff, M.D., has been appointed executive officer of the Navy Medical Research Unit at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio.

1997

Ahmad R. Saltagi, M.D., FCCP, FACP, internal medicine, is a pulmonologist with the Center for Respiratory & Sleep Medicine in Greenwood, Indiana.

1998

Carlos Estrada, M.D., urology, has been named urologist-in-chief at Boston Children's Hospital. Estrada has been with Boston Children's for nearly 20 years, and during that time has served in a number of key clinical roles, including establishing a tissue engineering lab, directing the Spina Bifida Center and serving as a member of the COVID-19 Telehealth SWAT Team. He has also served as an instructor, assistant and associate professor of surgery at Harvard Medical School.

1999

Melissa Clark, M.D., family medicine, has been appointed chief medical officer for CCI Health & Wellness Services in Silver Spring, Maryland. CCI is a nonprofit community health organization serving 33,000 patients in Montgomery and Prince George's counties in Maryland.

Jeffrey Kovacic, M.D., orthopedics, was named a 2020 Top Doctor for Pediatric Orthopedic Surgery by *Georgia Trend* magazine, and joined AdventHealth Medical Group Orthopedics and Sports Medicine in Calhoun and Chatsworth, Georgia.

2000

Sean Barnett, M.D., pediatric surgery, is with Northern Light Pediatric Surgery in Bangor, Maine.

Luciara de Souza M.D., pediatrics, has been appointed Vice President and Chief Medical Officer for Cerner Corporation in San Diego, California.

2003

Soo Jung Lee, M.D., has joined Concordia Lutheran Ministries, Concordia Physician Practice in Cabot, Pennsylvania.

2004

Heidi Gullett, M.D., M.P.H., family medicine, received the Ohio Academy of Family Physicians 2020 Family Physician of the Year award. Dr. Gullett is with the Neighborhood Family Practice Community Health Center and Cleveland Clinic Lutheran Hospital. She is also the medical director of the Cuyahoga County Board of Health.

2006

Caroline Castleforte, M.D., pediatrics, has joined South End Community Health Center in Boston, Massachusetts, as a pediatrician.



2010

Marlea Miano, M.D., emergency medicine, is medical director with University Hospitals Geauga Medical Center in Chardon, Ohio. Miano also completed residency training in emergency medicine at BSOM in 2013.

Jimisha Patel, M.D., pediatrics, has joined Licking Memorial Pediatrics-Tamarack, in Newark, Ohio.

2011

Heidi J. Abraham, M.D., emergency medicine, is medical director for New Braunfels, Texas, fire department, and associate medical director for Austin and Travis counties emergency medical services (EMS) in Texas. In 2017, she passed her EMS board certification, making her one of approximately 500 physicians nationally certified in EMS.

M. Brett Cooper, M.D., pediatrics, has been elected to the Texas Medical Association (TMA) board of trustees. He will represent TMA's Young Physician Section for physicians under the age of 40. Dr. Cooper is an adolescent medicine physician in Dallas, Texas. He serves as advocacy chair for the Texas Regional Chapter of the Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine. He is an assistant professor of pediatrics at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical School in Dallas.

Vamsi Koduri, M.D., oncology and hematology specialist, has joined Genesis Cancer Care Center, in Zanesville, Ohio.

2015

Jonathan Corbett, M.D., urology, has joined Central Urology Group in Columbus, Ohio.

Katie Flower, M.D., urology, has joined Thibodaux Regional Health System's active medical staff in Louisiana as a urologist.

2016

Allison Palumbo, M.D., general surgery, has joined Harris Regional Hospital, Sylva, North Carolina.

2018

Roman Trimba, M.D., orthopaedics, has joined OrthoCincy Orthopaedics & Sports Medicine, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Residency graduate denoted in green.

Mark Your Calendar

Academy of Medicine

April 28

6 p.m. | Virtual

Graduation

May 2

2 p.m. | Wright State University Nutter Center
(tickets required)

Convocation

July

To be determined.

In Memoriam

Mukul Chandra, M.D.

Mukul Chandra, M.D., former clinical assistant professor with the Boonshoft School of Medicine (BSOM) department of internal medicine, prominent Dayton-area cardiologist, and heart health advocate, passed away in October of 2020 due to complications from COVID-19.

Chandra came to BSOM in 2005, and was promoted to clinical associate professor in 2011. He was vital in the creation of the cardiovascular diseases fellowship program. While educating students at BSOM, he also served as medical director of Cardiac Preventive Care and Research, and vice chair of the Cardiovascular Service Line with Premier Health's Miami Valley Hospital in Dayton, Ohio.

Chandra lived on three continents, but Dayton truly felt like home. According to his son, Shubham Chandra, "He was always thinking of the people of Dayton." He was a strong supporter and advocate for the Dayton-area American Heart Association, and often shared heart health information on a local Dayton newscast. Mark Allen, a reporter with WDTN said of Chandra, "We connected right away, perhaps over our mutual love of cycling. He suggested we ride together someday."

He was a tireless advocate for his patients and their families, and was well respected by those at BSOM, as well as the clinical and support teams he worked with. Glen Solomon, M.D., chair of the BSOM department of internal medicine said "Dr. Mukul Chandra was a valued member of the Department of Internal Medicine. He was an enthusiastic

teacher of medical students, residents and fellows. Dr. Chandra was highly regarded as a clinician."

In 2008, Chandra was the recipient of the American Heart Association Distinguished Achievement Award and the *Dayton Business Journal's* Health Care Hero and Innovator of the Year Award.

Chandra graduated from the MP Shah Medical College at the University of Baroda in India, and completed further training in SGPGI Lucknow, India; Hadassah University Hospital Ein Kerem-Jerusalem, Israel; and Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia. He completed his fellowship in cardiology at the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston, Texas.

The BSOM Department of Internal Medicine plans to acknowledge Chandra's contributions by naming an award in his honor to be presented to an internal medicine resident who presents a scientific paper or poster at a resident presentation in cardiology.

Chandra is survived by his wife, Arti, and two children, Shubham and Aayushi.

—Lisa Coffey

Anthony Forsythe Titus, M.D., '85

The Boonshoft School of Medicine mourns the passing of alumnus Anthony Titus, M.D., who passed away unexpectedly in July of 2020.

Titus was an emergency medicine physician with Wilson Medical Center in Wilson, North Carolina.



Mukul Chandra, M.D.



Anthony Forsythe Titus, M.D.

Ayman El-Sheikh, M.D.



Part of a military family, Titus traveled the world. Most of his formative years were spent in Dayton, Ohio. Following high school, Titus earned his undergraduate degree from Purdue University.

At a young age, Titus demonstrated his tremendous work ethic at Rike's Department Store in Dayton, stocking shelves. This value of hard work continued as a physician, through the long hours he put in at the clinic and quality of care he provided to his patients. Titus was proof that a great doctor is defined by their personal values, effort and dedication to healing. He won awards for patient care, and often received thank-you notes from patients, which he carried with him throughout the day as a reminder of the impact and importance of his work.

Titus is survived by his wife Lisa, and three sons, Nicholas, Graham and Gabriel.

—Lisa Coffey

Ayman El-Sheikh, M.D.

Ayman El-Sheikh, M.D., passed away from COVID-19 complications in February, 2021. El-Sheikh was a preceptor with the Boonshoft School of Medicine (BSOM). He was also the elective director and fourth-year sub-internship director for the hematology and oncology unit, teaching and working with BSOM students, residents and other learners. He was a mentor to BSOM medical students interested in pediatrics and hematology.

Along with his work for BSOM, El-Sheikh

was chief of the hematology and oncology department at Dayton Children's Hospital. He was also involved with medical research at the hospital. He was drawn to the field of hematology and oncology after losing a friend to cancer while in medical school.

El-Sheikh led a team at Dayton Children's Hospital of pediatric specialists, nurses, social workers and other professionals, ensuring children with cancer or blood disorders received the appropriate clinical care to meet the needs of their unique medical conditions. Regarding his patients El-Sheikh stated, "When I see the smile on their face at the end of the treatment, that's the whole reward for me."

Along with his fight to provide the best instruction to future physicians, and help cancer patients, El-Sheikh used to fight in the ring. In his younger years he was a boxer, winning a heavyweight title three times.

—Lisa Coffey



Boonshoft
School of Medicine
WRIGHT STATE UNIVERSITY

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**Thank you to the
essential workers,
volunteers
and health care
providers.**

