

LSU HEALTH NEW ORLEANS

SCHOOL OF

# MEDICINE

2021



**PG 2**

Going Beyond The Call

**PG 14**

The Cardiovascular Center of Excellence

**PG 38**

Diversity & Inclusion at  
LSU Health New Orleans

**LSU Health**  
NEW ORLEANS  
School of Medicine

# OUR Mission

Louisiana State University School of Medicine – New Orleans educates medical students, residents, and other learners in an environment that nurtures intellectual curiosity, and that reflects the diversity of its community. The School of Medicine, striving for excellence in medical education, clinically relevant research, and healthcare delivery, partners with other LSUHSC schools, local health care systems, and community organizations, to provide a strong and supportive environment for learners and their faculty.

## Medical Education Mission Objectives

The undergraduate medical curriculum enables our graduates to become knowledgeable, culturally competent, caring physicians, who can function in evolving healthcare systems, engage in life-long learning, and appreciate and evaluate medical research. Graduate Medical Education programs enable residents to become skilled and knowledgeable in their chosen discipline, and to respectfully assume the responsibilities of a practicing physician in an increasingly diverse community and nation. We prepare students and residents to prioritize patient safety, to value interprofessional teamwork, and to improve healthcare quality for all.

## Research Mission Objectives

As medical education and research are tightly inter-related, commitment to clinically relevant research within the School of Medicine heightens the intellectual atmosphere, develops new knowledge, and transmits current information for the benefit of all constituencies. The School of Medicine and the LSUHSC campus provides sophisticated infrastructure for scientific investigation undertaken by our faculty and learners, including state-of-the-art instrumentation, space, animal care facilities, and computer services. Vitality of the research enterprise is sustained by the vigorous pursuit of external research funding and supported by strategic long term planning.

## Service Mission Objectives

The School of Medicine promotes excellence in healthcare delivery through relationships with our clinical partners and our community. Clinical practice values and maintains the cultural competency and technical skills of faculty, and expands opportunities for undergraduate and graduate teaching and research. The school is responsive to rapidly evolving healthcare delivery models. Additionally, the school is committed to programs that enhance our relationships within the community, provide educational and service opportunities, and enhance the quality of life for constituents of our state and local communities.





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*These programs focus on serving underrepresented and underserved backgrounds to increase diversity in the medical field. It's all part of LSU Health's mission.*



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### LSU HEALTH NEW ORLEANS SCHOOL OF MEDICINE MAGAZINE, 2021 EDITION

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*To share story ideas for the next issue, update contact information, or provide general feedback, email [SOMMagazine@LSUHealthFoundation.org](mailto:SOMMagazine@LSUHealthFoundation.org).*

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# BY THE Numbers

## FALL 2021 ENTERING CLASS STATS



174 Louisiana  
Residents



119  
Identify  
as Female



71  
Identify  
as Male

18 Out-of-State  
Members



Oldest  
Member

42



Youngest  
Member

20

Average GPA 3.67



510 Average MCAT

LSU Med School  
Tuition 2020-2021  
(Louisiana Resident)



\$32,936.95



4,698  
2021-2022  
Applications  
Received



Awards &  
Scholarship  
Programs  
43





Once again, we find ourselves in the midst of another COVID surge. And, once again, our learners and faculty are serving throughout Louisiana to address whatever challenge confronts them with calm resolve and utmost confidence. They know that the education and training that they have received at our school has prepared them well. Furthermore, they abide by the premise that there is no higher calling than to lose yourself in the service of others. We applaud their actions and their service.

Despite the many challenges that surround us, we continue to find opportunities to develop our programs and strengthen our commitment to train the next generation of skilled physicians for Louisiana. We received over 3,500 applications for admission to our school—the average core science GPA for the current first year class is 3.7 with an MCAT in the 80th percentile. We also had another very successful “Match Day” this year. Over 55% of our graduating students decided to continue their training in Louisiana and of those, 80% chose one of our programs, which underscores the quality of our training programs. Over 50% of our graduates decided to enter primary care - a critical need for Louisiana. Those students who decided to leave Louisiana for their residency matched in many of the most competitive programs in the country - Johns Hopkins, Stanford, Emory and Yale to name a few.

A primary strategic goal for our school is to secure National Cancer Institute designation. At the present time, there is no NCI-designated facility in Louisiana. This is a critical need for the citizens of our state, as Louisiana has an exceedingly high number of cancer cases and many of them with poor outcomes. We are aggressively growing our clinical and research programs in cancer to meet this goal. To that end, we have partnered with LCMC to hire Dr. John H. Stewart, IV who will serve as the LSU Health New Orleans/LCMC Health Cancer Center Director. Dr. Stewart is an accomplished surgical oncologist who was recruited from the University of Illinois College of Medicine in Chicago where he served as a University of Illinois Presidential Scholar and Deputy Director of the University of Illinois Cancer Center. Drs. Charles Wood and John West from the University of Nebraska are joining Dr. Ochoa's research team with a focus on viral oncology. Together they have over \$10 million in research funding. The Al Copeland Foundation has partnered with us to grow the Copeland Clinical Trials Network, which will focus on bringing groundbreaking therapies to patients throughout Louisiana.

I am profoundly grateful to our LSU family for all of your support throughout these many years. We all have much to be proud of.

*Steve Nelson*

Steve Nelson, MD, CM, FCCP  
Interim Chancellor of LSUHNO



# GOING BEYOND THE CALL

## COVID-19 AND THE FRONTLINES DR. JULIO FIGUEROA AND DR. CAROL MASON

After the initial cases of COVID-19 hit the United States, Dr. Julio Figueroa and his colleagues knew it was only a matter of time before it spread to Louisiana. “I worked with several LSU colleagues to develop guidelines and anticipate issues that were likely to emerge. We gave the first Grand Rounds on the novel coronavirus in New Orleans,” said Figueroa. Dr. Julio Figueroa is Chief of Infectious Diseases at LSU Health Sciences Center New Orleans, as well as an integral part of the university’s COVID-19 Advisory Group that included Richard DiCarlo, MD, Ben Springgate, MD, Fred Lopez, MD, Gordon Love, MD,

Judy Crabtree, PhD, Lucio Miele, MD, PhD, Chris Winters, MD, Jayne Weiss, MD, Ben Lousteau, Lauren Davis, MD, and Sarah Bautista, MD, from Campus Health, and many others who gave their expertise. With this group, he helped develop campus-wide guidelines to keep our campus safe and adjust them as new information emerged.

When COVID-19 hit New Orleans, Dr. Figueroa worked with our partners at LCMC to develop protocols for the prevention of infections, treatment of patients, and communication. Along with others at LSU Health, Dr. Figueroa was frequently tapped to discuss our

situation with local and national media outlets, as well as educating colleagues on the latest evidence of all aspects of COVID-19 including patient care and infection prevention.

Across the city, physicians were facing COVID for the first time and setting up protocols as they went. “I was working at Ochsner Kenner the first time a Covid patient popped up in the hospital,” recalls Dr. Carol Mason, Section Chief, Critical Care, who said the number of patients grew in a logarithmic fashion from that point. “We had two patients one day, ten patients the next day and ultimately both ICUs were filled with COVID patients.” At the time, there were no vaccinations and no known treatments specific to COVID. Dr. Mason said of herself and her team of fellows and attendings, “Everyone was scared to death.”

Dr. Mason, who works primarily in the ICUs at Ochsner Kenner and Ochsner Baptist and consults with critical care teams at UMC, says the ICU teams at area hospitals were staying all day, not leaving until 10 pm or midnight, because the patients “just kept coming.”



Dr. Mason remembers it as an “exhausting” time. “No one was prepared for this at all,” she says.

Nowadays, Dr. Mason and her team still see COVID patients in the three hospitals she rotates through. Most of the COVID-positive patients they see are unvaccinated. Dr. Mason urges everyone to get vaccinated, especially older men, who seem to be most vulnerable to severe infection.

When asked what he thought was the most significant thing to come out of the pandemic, Dr. Figueroa answered right away. “For me, the rapid development of effective vaccines is the signature achievement of the pandemic. A close second would be the rapid identification and characterization of the virus itself followed by the design, execution, evaluation, and implementation of evidence-based interventions to save lives,” said Figueroa. He also noted another important development was the acceleration of the use of telehealth. While some Telehealth services were available prior to the pandemic, we now have much more experience and technology at our disposal. “At the same

time,” he mentioned, “we re-discovered the importance of face-to-face human interactions in healthcare and in our daily lives.”

Dr. Mason agrees. “On a positive note,” she says, “we are much more familiar with COVID patients and have all the PPE needed to take care of them. As more do get vaccinated, we also have fewer COVID patients.”

Throughout all the trials and tribulations over the last two years, Dr. Figueroa remains thankful. “I am truly fortunate to have the generous support of family, friends, and colleagues, especially during the lockdown in 2020. It has been a privilege to work with such a dedicated group of professionals to help tackle one of the greatest challenges to face us. Despite all the pain and suffering, I was able to witness excellence, compassion, and commitment that so many people have manifested during this pandemic. I have been able to use what skills I have to help in this great struggle against a virus. What more can an infectious diseases physician ask?”



## INVESTING IN THE HEALTH OF LOUISIANA; THE CRUSADERS OF PUBLIC HEALTH

### DR. JENNIFER AVEGNO AND DR. JOSEPH KANTER

March 9, 2022 marked the 2nd anniversary of the first COVID case reported in Louisiana.

“Twenty-four months ago, to the day, Louisiana identified our first case of COVID. I remember the day well, and the ensuing few weeks were among the most challenging of my professional career. Since March 9, 2020, we have sacrificed large and small,” recalled Dr. Joseph Kanter, Clinical Assistant Professor of Medicine, Section of Emergency Medicine at LSU Health Sciences Center–New Orleans and Louisiana Department of Health (LDH) State Health Officer.

Under Dr. Kanter’s direction, Louisiana has implemented many initiatives credited with slowing the transmission of COVID-19. Of most significance are the mitigation measures put in place which have allowed the state to craft a path forward while preserving our sanctity of life. Additionally, availability and access to testing, vaccines, and therapeutics allowed the state to respond more rapidly than neighboring states.

“I am deeply grateful for the leadership of our Governor who has, throughout this crisis, matched fear and uncertainty with reason, courage, and a deep compassion for communities across Louisiana. He is the leader we needed for these times,” reflects Dr. Kanter.

“Joe Kanter has been stalwart in his service to our state, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. In fact, he became the state’s chief medical officer at a critical time, and my team and I have relied on his knowledge and counsel throughout,” said Gov. John Bel Edwards. “He has been relentless in his commitment to providing the latest information and recommendations for keeping our communities statewide safe and well protected. All this as he continues to work as an emergency room physician, which keeps him on the frontlines and in tune with the very people he serves. Personally, I’m proud to call him a friend and can say with confidence that we have all benefited from his kindness, compassion, and love for the people of Louisiana.”

Dr. Kanter says the state was able to leverage a strong sense of community in so many areas, especially in New Orleans, where we leveraged our experience and knowledge of emergency preparedness and response.

“When cases started coming in, we knew access was going to be critical,” notes Dr. Jennifer Avegno, New Orleans City Health Director and Associate Professor of Emergency Medicine at LSU Health Sciences Center – New Orleans. Dr. Avegno oversaw the mitigation efforts

“When cases started coming in, we knew access was going to be critical,” notes Dr. Jennifer Avegno.

for the City of New Orleans and worked to ensure everyone, including the city’s most vulnerable and marginalized, would have access to testing, treatment, and eventually vaccinations. “Leveraging much of what was learned from the Yellow Fever epidemic that had previously decimated the city, we were able to work together to put in place



Photo Credit: “The Advocate, 11/06/2020, Capital City Press/Georges Media Group, Baton Rouge, LA.”

mitigation measures on a local level that clearly saved lives,” recalled Dr. Avegno.

Dr. Avegno, reflecting on the last two years, says, “I’ve spent so many years in the emergency room treating immediate issues, things that were a direct threat to a patient’s well-being, it was rewarding for me to be able to become so deeply invested in the health of the community long term.”

“Dr. Jennifer Avegno has provided crucial and effective guidance through the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic,” said Mayor LaToya Cantrell. “Her proven medical expertise steered the launch of

get 50 percent of 5- to 17-year-olds fully vaccinated, allowing them to return to in-person learning. I completely trust in her leadership and expertise as she continues to lead COVID-19 mitigation awareness campaigns that provide real-time Center for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines and encourage and recommend the necessary steps and precautions that will keep our city as safe as possible.”

“I’ve never been more humbled to work with such a unique group of people. It was amazing to watch colleagues around the state rise to the occasion,” reflects Dr. Kanter.

Dr. Avegno acknowledges the work she and Dr. Kanter are doing will continue to be challenging and rewarding. “Each public health challenge we face over the next century will get harder and harder with a waning public health workforce, an issue that has been trending for the last few decades,” says Dr. Avegno. “LSU trained physicians are the lifeblood of the community in Louisiana. They have been voices to their communities and champions of the mitigation measures needed to allow the City of New Orleans to flourish.”



## A PARTNERSHIP WITH NEW ORLEANS SCHOOL BOARD

### DR. RYAN PASTERNAK AND DR. BENJAMIN SPRINGGATE

New Orleans Public Schools with roughly 45,000 students across 76 schools were staring into the abyss and seeking the help of medical experts at LSU Health New Orleans, with the ultimate goal of getting the kids back in school while following data that many times conflicted, noted Dr. Ryan Pasternak.

As Dr. Ryan Pasternak sat down for this interview, he looked back at some notes from July 2020. “Wow, it’s scary to look back on these,” he said. Dr. Pasternak is a Professor of Pediatrics and the Division Head of Ambulatory Pediatric & Adolescent Medicine here at the LSU Health Sciences Center – New Orleans. Dr. Pasternak serves as a Chief Medical Officer of the Orleans Parish School Board alongside Professor of Medicine Dr. Benjamin Springgate, who serves as Chief Health Officer.

Dr. Pasternak and Dr. Springgate had been asked by the School Board to assist them in crafting their guidance to get the students at New Orleans Public Schools back to in-person learning, a task that took teamwork, planning, and assurance they would be able to keep students and staff safe. “The only way this was going to work was through a multi-layer mitigation approach,” said Pasternak. “We needed the ability to manage and track close contacts, quarantines, and testing.” To assist with this lofty goal, they leaned into their partnership with Children’s Hospital New Orleans to assist with testing, vaccination, and

treatment for illness due to infection. With the support of Dr. Pasternak and Dr. Benjamin Springgate, LSU Health Sciences Center’s Chief of Community and Population Medicine and Medical Advisor to the Orleans Parish School Board, New Orleans Public Schools were the first major public school system in the country to require students to have COVID-19 vaccination.

“Our medical advisors have been instrumental to our mission at NOLA-PS to keep our staff and students safe and healthy,” said New Orleans Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Henderson Lewis, Jr. “Dr. Pasternak and Dr. Springgate delivered sound, data-driven public health surveillance that helped us keep schools open and our students learning in their classrooms

with their teachers and their friends. They gave us the confidence to make exceedingly difficult decisions based on science. Their efforts supported not only our staff, but our school nurses, who admirably stepped up to levels no one thought even necessary two years ago. We are forever grateful to Dr. Pasternak and Dr. Springgate for their vigilance and advice for the sake of our students and families.”

Dr. Pasternak added, “working with Dr. Springgate and the Orleans Parish Public School Board has been incredibly rewarding. We have shown that while you cannot use every mitigation measure at every moment of the day, a multi-layer approach fills the gaps to remain effective.”

*Photo Credit: “The Advocate, 8/28/2020, Capital City Press/Georges Media Group, Baton Rouge, LA.”*



## HERO SPOTLIGHT DR. DAVID JANZ

According to Dr. David Janz, when the COVID-19 Pandemic started in March 2020, it “changed everything about everything.” As the Director of Medical Critical Care Services at University Medical Center New Orleans, Dr. Janz was in the center. In a time when hospitals everywhere were dealing with unprecedented numbers of patients and sky rocketing mortality rates, Dr. Janz and his ICU team were reporting the best outcomes in the world.

In March and April of 2020, New Orleans experienced one of the earliest surges in the United States, and University Medical Center (UMC) was seeing as many patients as hospitals 2–3 times its size. Dr. Janz began to prioritize efficiency in his ICU, and it paid off. All the staff in the UMC ICU streamlined processes and worked hard to ensure each patient infected with COVID-19 was getting the same excellent care even when all the beds were full. While hospitals around the world were reporting mortality rates of 60–70%, UMC’s ICU mortality rate was only 31%.

It’s no mystery why the Louisiana Department of Health asked Dr. Janz and two of his colleagues at the LSU Health Baton Rouge Branch Campus, **Dr. Chris Thomas** and **Dr. Bud O’Neil**, to put on seminars to teach other hospitals to do the same. “We fielded calls every day from hospitals who just needed answers about what to do,” Dr. Janz remembers. These sessions were a success, helping smaller hospitals



around the state emulate the techniques which the ICU team at UMC had so much success with. It wasn’t long before the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services found out about their work and asked Dr. Janz to recreate the seminars for a national audience. “We taught hundreds of hospitals a framework for how to handle this problem.”

As a result of this success, Dr. Janz was invited to testify in front of the U.S. Senate Committee for Health, Education, Labor and Pensions. In a hearing entitled “The Path Forward: Building on Lessons Learned from the COVID-19 Pandemic,” he told U.S. Senators about four key lessons. The first of which he taught in his seminars—was of the key to streamlining and simplifying critical care medicine, and second the importance of the platforms created by LDH and HHS to share this information across the state and country. His third lesson learned was

the importance of clinical research. The COVID-19 pandemic and the rapid pace at which treatments and vaccines needed to be developed highlighted the amazing work that can come from hospitals where clinical research is highly integrated into everyday care. His fourth and likely most significant point was the need to take better care of our healthcare workers. “They are the key to the system and if they are not healthy, it doesn’t matter how good anything else is,” Dr. Janz emphasized.

At no time was the importance of this fourth point better seen than when Hurricane Ida came through South Louisiana amid yet another surge of the pandemic. They spent 18 months battling a deadly disease, and then many of them lost their homes and possessions. Now is the time to focus on how we can support their mental health and ensure they are given the resources they need to continue to fight. ■





# MUSICIANS' Clinic

In New Orleans, the birth city of jazz, the New Orleans Musicians' Clinic (NOMC) has found a novel way to give back to the performers that make this city special. The only clinic of its kind in the United States, the NOMC was founded by a coalition of music advocates in 1998 to serve the individual needs of performers. Open to all culture bearers, the Clinic serves anyone who contributes to the cultural economy, from musicians to Mardi Gras Indians. Every year they serve over 5,000 community members through comprehensive medical care and social services, regardless of their insurance status or ability to pay.

What makes the NOMC so exceptional is that these patients have access to care for



not only their occupational health care needs but also their primary care needs. A visit to the NOMC means personalized care by a Nurse Practitioner who deeply understands the gaps in care that these patients sometimes experience. A unique partnership with LSU Health New Orleans also provides Musicians' Clinic patients with referrals to specialists within the LSU Healthcare Network, outside specialty providers, discounted pharmacy benefits, patient assistance programs, lab work, and more. Access to these services is life changing for patients and allows them to take control of their own well-being.

The COVID-19 pandemic put an additional spotlight on the mental health crisis in the music community. Oftentimes, access to mental health services has been the privilege of few, but the NOMC is working to change that.

If you'd like to donate directly to helping the NOMC foster the health and wellness outcomes of the culture bearer community and giving them an opportunity to be on stage longer, please visit <https://neworleansmusiciansclinic.org/get-involved/donate/>. ■





## WE ARE LAFAYETTE STRONG

By Kristi Anderson, Director of Graduate Medical  
Education and Campus Ombudsman  
LSU Health Sciences Center, Lafayette Regional Campus

Lafayette, Louisiana has a rich history of culture, settlement, and migration. In the 1700s, the city was inhabited by the Atakapa Indians, but when the French Canadians refused to give homage to the British crown, their escape and exile, called the Le Grand Derangement, resulted in many French-speaking Canadians losing their lives, their families, and the place they called home. From that time on, many more people settled into the area due to land grants given by the French and Spanish governments. With the push and pull of significant historical figures and acquisitions, Lafayette Parish was eventually created in 1823. The city of Lafayette was named in 1884 in honor of the French Marquis de Lafayette. Lafayette has evolved into a great mix of Cajun/Creole French-speaking citizens that have a deep history. Food, music, culture, and good times are encouraged in Lafayette.

The business base of the parish includes energy services, manufacturing, healthcare, transportation and distribution, education, technology, finance, tourism, and other service-related industries. Acadiana's evolving medical workforce of more than 28,000 employees continues to expand. As the "Hub City" of the region, Lafayette is further cementing its role as a regional health center, attracting specialized treatment centers and preeminent physicians, researchers, and scientists.

We weren't always University Hospital and Clinics (UHC). We have survived many name changes, but our overall philosophy has always been the same: Quality healthcare for all our community. Lafayette Charity Hospital opened its doors in the late 1930s with 50 beds. A few years after its opening, it began teaching and training those that were interested in medical technology, nursing, radiology tech, and other services that benefit the community. In 1971, the hospital opened







its doors to the first medical residency program—Internal Medicine. The first class graduated in 1974, and some of those physicians are still practicing today. Almost a decade later, Dr. James Falterman, who currently serves as Associate Dean for Lafayette Affairs, Chief Medical Officer, and Designated Institutional Official for Graduate Medical Education, trained at University Hospital and Clinics and began his career within these walls. He sits in a different capacity today, but it was here that he was once an intern...he trained with physicians who believed in giving back. And he stayed in the community so that he could literally “see one, teach one.”

Today, the hospital sits on the corner of Bertrand and Congress and continues to take care of the indigent of the community while training a host of medical residents. The hospital, now called University Hospital and Clinics, is a safety-net hospital and has a partnership with Ochsner Lafayette General Health. It is home to two residency programs—Internal Medicine and Family Medicine.

The Internal Medicine Program began in 1971 and is now the home of a 32-resident complement. Several of the core faculty were members of the Internal Medicine Residency Program at some point in time and came back to dedicate their career to academic medicine. The Internal Medicine Program is led by Section Chief, Dr. Nicholas Sells, who began as part-time ID Faculty and then

was fueled by the desire to do more with the program and the challenge of the then 26-resident complement. Dr. Sells has been instrumental in recruiting subspecialists at UHC and in growing the Medicine program. The program works in OUHC and Ochsner-Lafayette General Medicine Center (OLGMC).



The Family Medicine Residency Program originally started in Lake Charles, but in 1999, it was decided that the program should relocate to Lafayette. The program is led by Dr. Linda Oge, who graduated from the program, practiced in the private setting, and then decided that academic medicine was calling her to return. She has also recruited a number of graduates back to the program to share their skills in academic medicine. The Family Medicine Program trains 25 residents each year, and it also supports two fellowships—Geriatrics and Sports Medicine. These fellowships provide residents and fellows with unique and critical opportunities to take care of our elderly as well as the numerous athletes that are affiliated with our Lafayette Parish school system and the University of Louisiana at Lafayette Collegiate System.

All our residency and fellowship programs continue to make us proud, and the hospital continues to understand the value that graduate medical education

We continue to give all individuals hope to have quality care and the space they need in being heard and helped.

brings to its community. LSU Lafayette offers our indigent, working poor, and anyone who walks in the doors, our best. We continue to give all individuals hope to have quality care and the space they need in being heard and helped.

In addition, our Lafayette campus supports New Orleans Residency rotations in the following areas: Surgery,



Ophthalmology, ENT, Cardiology, OB/GYN, Orthopedics, and Anesthesiology. These residents spend anywhere from 2–6 months with us at any given time. They rotate throughout our hospitals and receive autonomy, variety, and pathology of cases that are unique to the area and their training. While we are their home away from home, our rotational residents find a space and place that welcomes them to the area and gives them clinical opportunities to become better in their clinical skills.

Lafayette is also home to so many small, rural areas that are swimming with good people. The eight parish areas that surround the city of Lafayette

are filled with hometown names such as Broussard, Boudreaux, Fontenot, and Duhon. These rural areas need a physician that they can depend on. In 2003, the LSU School of Medicine, with the collaboration of the Lafayette Campus, had its first class of Rural Scholars, and the Rural Scholars Program was created. These scholars are medical students that have opted to spend their 3rd and 4th years of medical school on

the Lafayette Campus and work with our community physicians. In exchange, the School of Medicine waives their school tuition as they move on to a primary care residency after graduation and serve 5 years practicing in a rural community after residency. The program has been running for 17 years now, and this year, we have a total of 20 scholars—up by at least 40% within the last 2–3 years!

We are proud to be a part of the LSU community, but we are prouder to be the LSU community of healthcare in Lafayette, Louisiana. Providing health care for ALL is what we have been doing since the 70s, and this hospital has been a place of inclusivity since the 30s. Together, we have played a huge role in the care of our beautiful patients and our unique community.

## WE ARE LSU.

Training and educating our residents and students because that is who we are. We are the center of healthcare for our Acadians.

## WE ARE LAFAYETTE...

Lafayette proud and Lafayette strong.

## AND WE LOVE IT. ■



# Baton Rouge

## REGIONAL CAMPUS



Welcome to the LSU Health School of Medicine Baton Rouge Regional Campus!

As many of you know, Baton Rouge has a long history in both graduate and undergraduate medical education. This was provided primarily at Earl K. Long Hospital until its closure in 2013. In 2013, we began our partnerships with Our Lady of the Lake Regional Medical Center, Baton Rouge General Medical Center and Woman's Hospital to be primary training sites for our Baton Rouge-based programs, Emergency Medicine, Internal Medicine, Obstetrics/Gynecology, Pediatrics, and Psychiatry. In addition, various New Orleans-based programs receive vital training here in Baton Rouge.

Our Medical Education Innovation Center was completed shortly thereafter, allowing for a state-of-the art educational space to enhance training. These events have strengthened the education and training in Baton Rouge. Medical students can complete all required clinical rotations at our campus during their 3rd and 4th year, and residents continue to expand their experience. We are excited about our future growth and to share what our campus has to offer.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "K. Reed, M.D.", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Kevin D. Reed, M.D., F.C.C.P.  
Associate Dean, Baton Rouge Regional Campus  
LSU Health New Orleans - School of Medicine

## EMERGENCY MEDICINE RESIDENCY PROGRAM

The curriculum is designed to expose residents to the full range of topics, experiences, technical procedures, and concepts relevant to emergency medicine that will prepare them to meet our residency's educational goals. It's divided into clinical (on- and off-service rotations), didactic (conference, lecture, small groups, simulation), and literature-based curricula (required readings and scholarly activities).

Our residents also have set aside time to attend weekly conference and lecture series. Presentations are given by varied speakers, including emergency medicine faculty and residents, staff from other specialties, and local and national guest speakers. The last hour of each conference is dedicated to small group and simulation-based learning. Residents participate in diagnostics, oral boards, ultrasound, simulation, evidence-based medicine, and wellness.

### Emergency Medicine Training Sites:

Our Lady of the Lake Regional Medical Center (OLOLRMC), Our Lady of the Lake Children's Hospital (OLOLCH), Baton Rouge General Medical Center (BRG), and Woman's Hospital.

## PSYCHIATRY RESIDENCY PROGRAM

The Psychiatry residency was developed as a result of the LSU-LOL partnership, and we took our first class of residents in 2012. The growth in psychiatric services and our footprint on the campus has been exponential! Our graduates have gone on to be successful on their boards and to practice in various settings across the country. The Baton Rouge community has benefitted from retaining many of our graduates, helping to meet the mental health needs.

We currently have 29 residents, and over 35 full- and part-time faculty members, and our training focuses on educationally driven learning opportunities throughout OLOL and our community. We have been able to bring evidence-based treatments previously not widely available in the Baton Rouge area to the community, such as medication-assisted treatment and cognitive behavioral therapy for opiate use disorder, esketamine and now transcranial magnetic stimulation for treatment-resistant depression. Through our partnership with the LSU Department of Psychology, we also have a suicide treatment program and serve as one of three hubs nationally for the program.



## OBSTETRICS & GYNECOLOGY RESIDENCY PROGRAM

Our training in Obstetrics and Gynecology at LSU-Baton Rouge is based at Woman's Hospital, with two rotations at Our Lady of the Lake Regional Medical Center, and one rotation 3rd and 4th year at Baton Rouge General Hospital.

Obstetrics and Gynecology offers many opportunities to the practicing clinician due to the multiple sub-specialties included in this field. The majority of our graduates have chosen to pursue general OB/GYN positions in private practices. Rural areas are always looking for specialists in this field. Residents are also supported in their applications to fellowships in Urogynecology, Reproductive Endocrinology and Infertility, Oncology, Maternal Fetal Medicine, Minimally Invasive Surgery, and Family Planning. All of the recognized fellowships require 3–4 years of additional training. Academic medicine is also an available option for those physicians wanting to educate doctors.

Each year we receive 400+ applicants and interview about 50 to fill our four available House Officer I positions.





## INTERNAL MEDICINE RESIDENCY PROGRAM

Our program nurtures the development of critical thought in a manner that moves beyond the redundant acquisition and retention of information. We emphasize the understanding of disease from a pathophysiologic point of view. This facilitates the understanding of disease processes as entities with characteristics that are both solitary and universal in their origins and consequences.

Our program encourages the application of evidence-based medicine to enhance critical thinking, to provide a forum for evaluation of current medical philosophy and practice, and to stimulate interest in the foundation of the art of medicine.

We provide a relaxed educational atmosphere, understanding that in the promotion of the learning process there must be opportunity for humor, casual interactions, self-reflection, and constructive criticism. We are candid in our expectations of our residents, which



are reasonable and receptive to personal circumstances and characteristics.

We are centered around resident education allowing for hands-on experience. Under the guidance of experienced and respected faculty physicians, this provides house staff a foundation in internal medicine and subspecialty care.

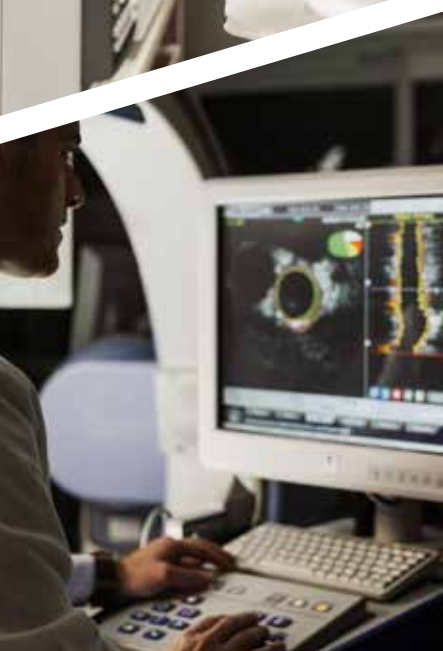
## LOL PEDIATRIC MEDICINE RESIDENCY PROGRAM

We meet with our residents to help guide their decisions along their individualized learning experience.

Residents can choose from a long list of subspecialty rotations and electives in a time frame that aligns with their personal learning needs and career goals. Whether it is choosing more time attending deliveries at Woman's Hospital (one of the largest delivery hospitals in the country), doing a maternity/paternity elective, completing an advocacy project during a global health elective, working at a rural FQHC clinic, or taking a deeper dive into medical education—our program boasts many unique elective opportunities and prides itself on working with each resident to accommodate their needs and goals. ■









# The Cardiovascular Center of Excellence

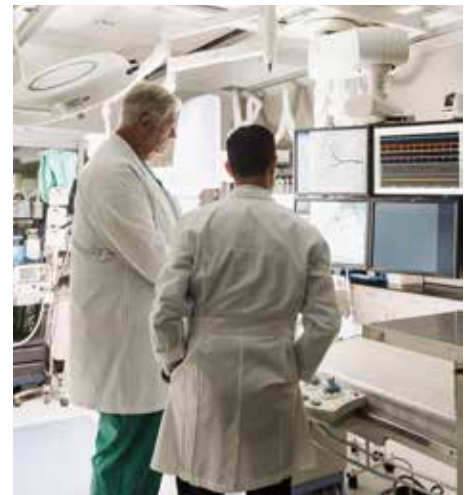


Cardiovascular research at LSU Health got its start in the 1950s with groundbreaking studies in the area of atherosclerosis led by former Head of Pathology, Dr. Jack P. Strong. Dr. Strong was among the first researchers in the world to describe the formation of atherosclerotic lesions in teenagers and young adults with his NIH-Funded Pathobiological Determinants of Atherosclerosis in Youth (PDAY) study. The study team collected autopsy material from over 3,000 15- to 34-year-olds and demonstrated that arterial injury and plaque formation occurs at a young age many years prior to the onset of overt cardiovascular diseases such as heart attack and stroke. These findings resulted in a paradigm shift in cardiovascular research and provided a foundation for the development of novel

strategies to prevent cardiovascular disease.

LSU Health is also recognized for the establishment of the Bogalusa Heart Study, one of the most significant studies of the development of heart disease, diabetes, and metabolic syndrome, in 1972 under the leadership of Dr. Gerald S. Berenson and colleagues. This initiative was one of the first longitudinal studies to follow children into their young adult years. The study team kept track of participants dietary habits, cholesterol, body weight, and many other risk factors for disease over time. The Bogalusa Heart Study, similarly to the PDAY study, changed our understanding about the onset of adult heart disease by revealing that the major causes of adult heart diseases begin in childhood.

Both landmark studies continue to provide key information related to our understanding, prevention, and treatment of cardiovascular diseases and have evolved to include a major component with human genetics and disease traits.





## Designation as a Cardiovascular Center of Excellence by the State of Louisiana

To provide additional infrastructure for expansion of the cardiovascular research effort, LSU Health, under the leadership of Drs. Mariyln Zimny, Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Perry G. Rigby, Chancellor, applied to become a formal Cardiovascular Center of Excellence on March 6, 1992.

Becoming a Center of Excellence is a prestigious recognition by the Board of Regents of the State of Louisiana. Centers of Research Excellence are campus or multi-campus hubs which develop new knowledge, enhance

## Expanding on Past Success and Growing the Program

In the early 2000s, the recruitment of Drs. Steven Lanier and William Chilian to head the Departments of Pharmacology and Physiology, respectively, made cardiovascular research an even larger priority at LSU Health. A major milestone in the evolution of the Cardiovascular Center was the success of an NIH Centers of Biomedical Research Excellence (COBRE) grant entitled “Mentoring in Cardiovascular Biology,” awarded to Drs. Lanier and Chilian for a period of 5 years from 2003 to 2008. Despite being recognized as a Center of Excellence, the Center lacked its own centralized space and needed additional faculty to sustain the program. The COBRE grant remedied this by allowing a major expansion of the faculty, laboratory space, and research infrastructure including the development of state-of-the-art core facilities for proteomics, cell culture, ultrasound imaging, histology, and cardiac and vascular function.

## Modern Day Leadership

Dr. Frank W. Smart was recruited to LSU Health to be the Chief of the Section of Cardiology and served as Director of the Cardiovascular Center of Excellence from 2011–2013. He remains the Clinical Director. Recognizing the upcoming renewal of the NIH Centers of Biomedical Research Excellence grant, which was crucial in sustaining the program, LSU Health recruited Dr. David J. Lefer from Emory University as the new Director of the Center of Excellence. Together with the Principal Investigator and Director, Dr. Daniel Kapusta, Professor of Pharmacology, the grant was renewed for an additional 5 years.

“Becoming a Center of Excellence is a prestigious recognition by the Board of Regents of the State of Louisiana.”



the research productivity of faculty, integrate education and research, and positively impact economic development in the state. They are structured around a highly specialized research effort, usually of a trans-disciplinary nature, which is unique in the State or which demonstrates unique assets and resources. Research Centers of Excellence attract significant investments for discovery and innovation which make possible sustained growth in the university itself, its surrounding communities, and the State's economy. The Board of Regents approved this request and established a statewide Cardiovascular Center of Excellence in 1996 under the direction of Dr. Strong.



Dr. Lefer has years of success studying new ways to protect the population from heart disease, the most common cause of death in the United States. Dr. Lefer's laboratory was the first to report on how naturally occurring nitric oxide in our cells can protect our hearts during small heart attacks and heart failure. This discovery has led to the development of several nitrite therapies in clinical trials in the United States and Europe. Dr. Lefer's laboratory was also among the first to show that hydrogen sulfide has a similar effect, which opens the doors to additional treatments.

Under Dr. Lefer's leadership, faculty at the Cardiovascular Center of Excellence have built capabilities in four key areas— myocardial infarction, vascular biology, hypertension, and a relatively new field called Heart Failure with preserved Ejection Fraction or "HFpEF."



DR. DAVID J. LEFER

### Developing New Therapies for Heart Disease

Renal sympathetic denervation devices, originally used as a treatment for high blood pressure, use radiofrequency energy or similar energy sources to reduce sympathetic nerve activity in the body. These devices interrupt pathological signals between the brain and kidney which are causing an unwanted increase in norepinephrine, the hormone which tells the brain a

stressful event has occurred. In 2017, Dr. Lefer, Dr. Frank Smart, Dr. Traci Goodchild, and Dr. Daniel Kapusta began to explore the possibilities of this device to treat heart failure. Like with most device development lifecycles, the researchers showed the efficacy first in small and then large animal models, proving that use of this device halted progression of heart failure. As a result of this research, many companies have begun clinical trials to approve this treatment for people with various forms of heart failure.

In the last 3–5 years, HFpEF has become a significant unmet medical need in cardiovascular medicine, as it is responsible for 60% of all new heart failure diagnoses. The increasing prevalence of this disease coupled with a complete lack of effective FDA-approved treatments further accentuates this critical public health problem. Dr. Traci Goodchild, Associate Professor in the Department of Pharmacology, has emerged as a top leader in this field with her creation of a new large animal model that allows researchers to perform translationally relevant experiments. In July 2021, she was awarded \$2.8 million by the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute to evaluate a brand-new HFpEF treatment by using this model. In her study, Dr. Goodchild alongside Dr. Thomas Sharp and Dr. Frank W. Smart will test the beneficial effects of renal denervation on HFpEF. Renal denervation has never been tested for use on HFpEF before. If this is a success, Dr. Goodchild will be one of the first to find a treatment for this deadly disease.

### Building Cutting Edge Laboratories

It comes as no surprise that Dr. Goodchild is discovering new treatments, as she is an expert in translational medicine. Originally recruited from Emory University, Dr.



Goodchild came to build and run the Cardiovascular Center Translational Core Laboratory. One of only five in the United States, this cutting-edge lab helps researchers across campus and even across the country take their ideas from the research bench to the bedside. The Translational Core Lab is truly what sets the Cardiovascular Center apart. The Lab provides state-of-the-art workspaces including physiology laboratories, surgical suites, biochemistry and molecular laboratories, and core laboratories, allowing researchers to complete a crucial step in potential clinical trials.

Along with the Translational Core Lab, the Center houses three other core laboratories aimed at helping researchers throughout the campus drive their research and become NIH funded. The Biomarker core lab gives LSU Health faculty access to advanced analysis of biomarkers, small molecules found in the body that can be used to see how well the body responds to a treatment for a disease or condition. The Small Animal Phenotyping Physiology Core Lab run by Dr. Andrew Li, PhD, provides researchers with heart disease models that imitate human hearts. The Biorepository Lab, run by Dr. Thomas Sharp, collects, catalogs, and stores samples of biological material which researchers can use to test their theories on a large number of human and animal tissues.

## CARDIOVASCULAR CENTER OF EXCELLENCE STATS



1

Postdoctoral  
Fellow

3

MD/PhD  
Students



6

Summer Research  
Program Students



Total Core  
Laboratories

4

Total Faculty

Primary  
Appointments 4



18 Secondary  
Appointments

Total Grant  
Funding



\$10,571,735

## The Future of the Cardiovascular Center of Excellence

For Center faculty, hand in hand with discovering the next cutting-edge treatment and publishing papers is mentorship and education for the next generation. Each year, the Center supports 3 MD/PhD students who spend their 2–3 research years at LSU Health focusing on cardiovascular research and completing a thesis. Following their thesis, these students return to clinical rotations to finish their MD degree. Each summer, the Center welcomes Summer Research program students who spend 3 months with a mentor on campus at LSU Health. Students obtain advanced knowledge required to succeed in a career in cardiovascular research, including laboratory techniques and writing manuscripts.

Equally as important as the next generation is helping doctors to think like scientists and encourage collaboration among researchers and clinicians. The Center sponsors a monthly Seminar Series where world-class speakers come to LSU to introduce participants to their research and findings.

Despite all their success, the Cardiovascular Center for Excellence leadership and faculty continue to look towards the future. Dr. Lefer is focused on increasing funding for research, hiring more faculty to bolster the program and continuing excellence in translational research. ■



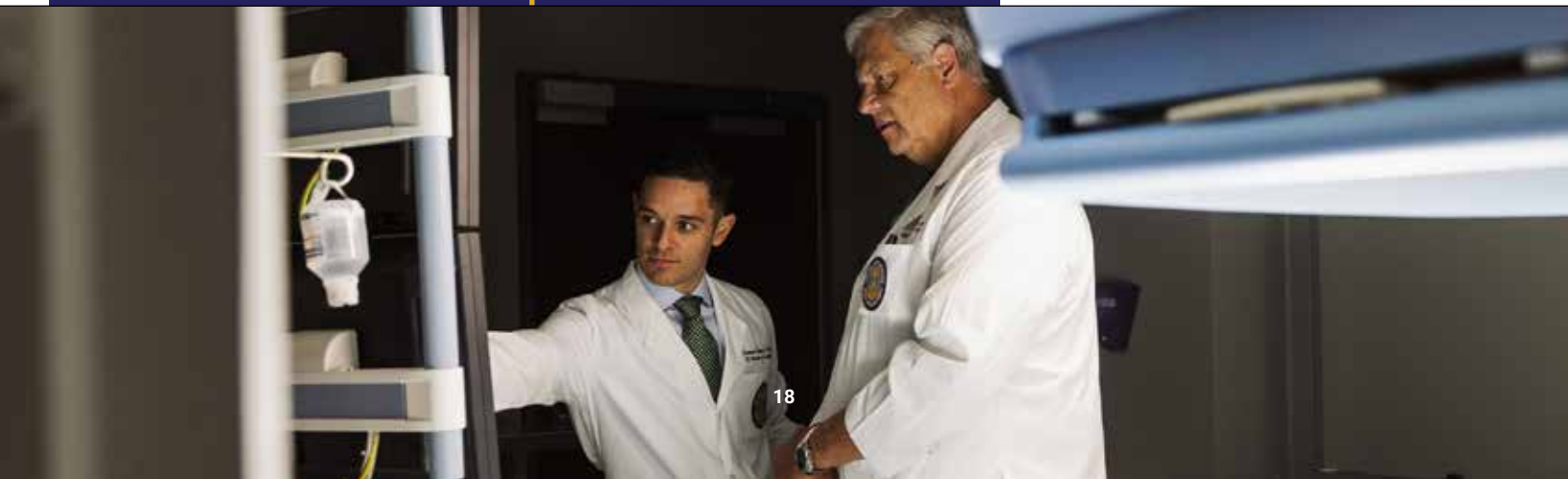
1

Postdoctoral  
Researcher



Total  
Grants

8





# Greetings from



The LSU School of Medicine has welcomed five new leaders to campus this year to head the Department for Cell Biology and Anatomy, the Department of Anesthesiology, the Department of Medicine, the Department of Psychiatry, and the newly created LSU Health New Orleans/LCMC Health Cancer Center. These new faculty take over from leadership who gave a combined 90 years to LSU Health and were responsible for countless achievements over the years.



## DR. RICHARD PINO

Dr. Pino first joined the faculty at LSU as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Cell Biology and Anatomy before enrolling in medical school. He received his MD degree from LSU and completed his internship at Charity Hospital before moving to Boston where he was an Associate Professor of Anesthesiology at Harvard Medical School and an Associate Anesthetist at Massachusetts General Hospital. “It’s interesting that in all these years I never gave up my Louisiana medical license,” said Dr. Richard Pino, the new Department Head for Anesthesiology.

“I was always proud of the fact that I went to LSU.” He remembers, “The education at LSU was absolutely phenomenal. When I was doing rounds at the ICU at Mass General people would say ‘Where did you learn that?’ And I

“I was always proud of the fact that I went to LSU. The education at LSU was absolutely phenomenal.”

said, I learned that at LSU. I learned that at Charity Hospital.” So, when Dr. Pino received a call from his former mentor and longtime LSU anesthesiologist, Dr. Mack Thomas, asking him to consider applying for the Chair position, it was hard to say no.

Dr. Pino will focus on strengthening the department’s academic activity and exploring the opportunity to develop a surgical ICU service at University Medical Center. He has also already taken steps to expand ICU training by partnering with the on-campus simulation center to help residents and attendings build competencies in

advanced procedures.

Despite his time-consuming leadership role, Dr. Pino makes it a point to remain active in the operating room. He appreciates the unpredictable nature—some days he has the opportunity to work with and train residents, and others he is working with CRNAs in four different operating rooms on four different corridors simultaneously.



## DR. CARMEN CANAVIER

Dr. Carmen Canavier was a natural pick for the new Chair of the Department of Cell Biology and Anatomy. Since joining LSU Health New Orleans in 2005, she has one of the most impressive track records for NIH funding amongst the faculty, having been awarded seven NIH R01 grants as PI that totaled twelve million dollars. In total, she has published 64 peer-reviewed publications and 19 book chapters. She has also served on over 80 NIH and NSF study sections, which positions her for incredible success in mentoring young faculty.

Originally trained in Electrical and Computer Engineering, Dr. Canavier became interested in Neuroscience while studying for her PhD at Rice University where she collaborated closely with neuroscientists. She then pursued postdoctoral training in neuroscience at the University of Texas Health Science Center - Houston. One of her main interests is dopamine neurons, which are spontaneous pacemakers and very important for our reward systems. Through computational modeling, she is working to get a better understanding

Parkinson's disease. Comprehending how these neurons work and their relationship to disease could lead to improved therapies for these disorders.

Not only is she studying individual neurons, Dr. Canavier is most known for her work on how multiple neurons “talk” to each other to produce the oscillators in our brains, quite literally our “brain waves.” She uses computational modeling to understand how these neurons coordinate with one another in the hippocampus, a portion of the brain thought to be responsible for important functions like memory storage and recall and spatial navigation.

Dr. Canavier is most known for her work on how multiple neurons “talk” to each other to produce the oscillators in our brains.

of the activity of these neurons, which are implicated in many disorders including addiction, schizophrenia, and

Future plans for the Department of Cell Biology and Anatomy include increased mentoring for junior faculty, encouraging collaboration internally and externally, and continuing the excellence in teaching the department is known for.



## DR. CYNTHIA BROWN

Dr. Cynthia Brown has had a storied career as a geriatrician and a long history of research funding from NIH, HRSA, and the VA. As our population ages, she becomes more and more in demand, but she chose LSU because for Dr. Brown, LSU has it all. “I came from a place that was collaborative and where people worked together but LSU is more than that and the way I would describe it is that it felt like family,” says Dr. Brown, the new Charles V. Sanders Endowed Chair in Medicine and Department Head for Internal Medicine.

As a geriatrician, Dr. Brown is an expert in older adult care or “intensive care medicine in slow motion,” as she calls it. She was drawn to the complex nature of geriatrics while in medical school because of the challenge of solving multifaceted problems every day.

She is also internationally recognized for her research in hospital mobility among older adults, where she has

shown that decreased mobility during hospitalization for older adults is associated with increased risk of death. “We’ve done an intervention study that demonstrated that when we get older adults up and walk with them a couple of times a day, that post discharge, they do significantly better.”

Growing LSU’s reputation as an authority in geriatrics is not only

important to Dr. Brown, it’s critical for the future of healthcare. “We are all going to have to know how to do a better

“We are all going to have to know how to do a better job taking care of older adults because there is just going to be so many of them and they’re the ones that utilize health care services.”

job taking care of older adults because there is just going to be so many of them and they’re the ones that utilize health care services,” says Dr. Brown. “I would like people in the Southeast to be very well aware of what we at LSU do and how well we’re doing it and ultimately, I would like us to have a national reputation for excellence in education which will lead to excellence in patient care.”







## DR. JOHN STEWART

In July 2020, LSU Health New Orleans and LCMC Health announced the commencement of a nationwide search to lead the new LSU Health New Orleans/LCMC Health Cancer Center. The Center was created to take cancer clinical care and research in Louisiana to the next level. The Director needed to be someone who could develop a robust cancer clinical trials program, leverage resources to build an innovative targeted cancer research enterprise, and create a comprehensive community outreach and engagement program to reduce cancer risk behaviors and cancer incidence. Following a months-long search, Dr. John Stewart stood out as the best for the job.

Dr. Stewart, a Shreveport native, was recruited from the University of Illinois College of Medicine in Chicago where he served as the Deputy Director of the

University of Illinois Cancer Center, and Physician Executive for Oncology Sciences at the University of Illinois Health. Dr. Stewart not only has the qualifications to succeed, but he also has a special connection to the mission of

“I believe we have a moral obligation to provide outstanding care to all of our patients.”

the Center after completing parts of his training at Charity Hospital. He deeply understands the needs and culture of New Orleans and his patients.

Dr. Stewart focuses his translational research on understanding how to leverage our immune system in the fight against cancer. He places a large emphasis on broadening the opportunity for clinical trials in the region and will bring LSU on as a site for two multi-center clinical trials he is

a part of. “I think that it is something that, as an academic institution, we’re morally bound to do,” said Dr. Stewart, “I believe we have a moral obligation to provide outstanding care to all of our patients.”

Another key piece for Dr. Stewart and his team will be community outreach. He operates on the belief that the community should inform the research approach of a Cancer Center. This means understanding the disparities and genetics of those in New Orleans and throughout Louisiana to create cancer treatments personalized to who we are.



"I found a faculty I can engage with, people who are passionate about our profession."

## DR. RAHN BAILEY

For Dr. Rahn Bailey, moving back to New Orleans to lead the Department of Psychiatry was "like coming home." Dr. Bailey began his career in academic medicine in 1995 when he was recruited to LSU Health by his predecessor, Dr. Howard Osofsky. Since then, Dr. Bailey has spent his career all around the country, but coming back to LSU was a natural next step. "I found a faculty that I can engage with, people who are passionate about our profession and their career and committed to providing the highest quality of professionalism, and that's heartwarming for me. I want to be in a place where we are all rowing our boats in the same direction and I think I found it at LSU," says Dr. Bailey.

Dr. Bailey replaces Dr. Osofsky as the new Chair of Psychiatry. Dr. Osofsky held that position for more than 30 years and built a large and successful department that serves the local community and the state. Dr. Bailey hopes to build on that success and expand the department's footprint in both infant mental health, an expertise built by Dr. Joy Osofsky, and forensic psychiatry, an area of particular interest for Dr. Bailey.

Dr. Bailey brings his vast experience in leadership roles across many universities to lead one of only 48 forensic psychiatry fellowship programs in the U.S. In this program, trainees learn to navigate between psychiatry and the law, with extensive training in

criminal, civil, and case law. Fellows become experts in communication with all aspects of the legal system.

Dr. Bailey's additional research interests are in advocacy and community outreach to address the funding inadequacies for mental health at the federal and state levels and health care disparities. Ultimately, Dr. Bailey hopes to expand on the Department's capacity to offer nationally to researchers and doctors at all levels of their career, from student to trainee, and from junior level faculty to mid and senior career. New Orleans already has many of the pieces of the puzzle, but Dr. Bailey hopes to bring them together to make LSU Health a destination for the best and brightest nationwide. ■



# Where Y'at?

## ALUMNI AROUND THE COUNTRY



The LSU Health New Orleans School of Medicine admitted our first students in 1931. Since that time, we have trained over 7,000 physicians, most of whom have practiced in Louisiana. The School of Medicine currently enrolls about 200 medical students per year, and all children of alumni, whether in state or out of state, are eligible to apply.

All alumni are entitled to receive Medicinews, the alumni news magazine, and the Honor Roll, our yearly publication acknowledging donors. If you are not receiving these publications, please send your contact information to [ROAR@lsuhsc.edu](mailto:ROAR@lsuhsc.edu) to be added to our mail list.

### ► 2022 Reunions

June 9, 2022 – Banquet for C-100 Members

June 10, 2022 – Alumni Cocktail Party

June 11, 2022 – Morning: Scientific Session

June 11, 2022 – Class Parties

# GENERATIONAL GIVING

THE THOMAS  
FAMILY





**D**r. Mack A. Thomas was born in Vicksburg, MS and raised in Tallulah, LA, the son of immigrant parents from Lebanon. His father had a knack with a specialized stitching machine that fixed shoes, helping him run his shoe store and thriving cobbler business at a time when not many were thriving.

When his father insisted that young Mack go to college, he was happy to comply. He earned his undergraduate degree from Louisiana Tech University and his medical degree from LSU School of Medicine in 1962. Always a trailblazer, Mack and his classmates were the first LSU School of Medicine graduates to insist they graduate in New Orleans instead of Baton Rouge.

Mack met his wife Victoria when he was working as a 3rd-year medical student at Hotel Dieu doing histories and physicals on patients admitted for surgical procedures. She was the evening nurse on the surgical floor. They dated off and on for several years until, Mack says, "Victoria took off to California when I was a 2nd-year surgical resident. She spent three months working at LA County Hospital, a place much like Charity. She returned and I decided it was time for us to get serious. We married while I was still in surgical training. She became the love of my life and we are now approaching almost 60 years of staying in a loving relationship."

Mack's career path included starting a multispecialty medical group with other physicians, developing a surgical practice, developing an ICU program in Houma, and pursuing surgical critical care. He did all of this before beginning an anesthesia training program at Charity Hospital before establishing a resident training program at the VA.

During all of his career moves, Mack has always advocated for better treatment of health care professionals. After finding out that his peers in internship and residency were making 50 percent less than in comparable hospitals, Dr. Thomas led a group that visited with then Governor John McKeithen who granted their request for a raise.

Mack has a deep compassion for LSU Health. He served on the board of the LSU Health Foundation for nearly 20 years and has made it a priority to support his students, residents, and fellows.

Three of Mack and Victoria's children became physicians and are graduates of LSU School of Medicine. Their oldest is a general surgeon, the middle child is an anesthesiologist, and his youngest is a neurosurgeon. Their fourth child graduated from LSU Law School. He is proud of his children's academic achievements but also of their skills in the kitchen. He and his family love to cook Lebanese dishes and have been known to offer cooking lessons to friends.

In 2016, Mack was honored for his compassion in teaching and his work with students with the Mack Thomas Endowed Lectureship, established by his students for their favorite teacher and advocate. The needed funds were raised quickly by his students and family for the Lectureship, held annually and featuring renowned anesthesiologists all over the country. To Mack, the rewards of teaching are far greater than any monetary value.

"I and my family are privileged to provide support to LSUHSC as graduates of the school and look forward to continuing such support," says Mack, whose children have all donated time and money to various programs at the LSU SOM. "I was blessed to have some of the greatest teachers when I was in medical school and residency training"

"My greatest contribution has been to educate and train physicians and students to become excellent physicians," Mack says. He loves when a student or resident calls him years later to report how something they learned from him taught them to deliver better care to a patient. He says, "In the end, that's what it's all about." ■

*From left: Dr. Charles Thomas, Dr. Leslie Chimento, Victoria Thomas, Dr. Mack Thomas, Dr. Najeeb Thomas*



# CONTINUING THE LEGACY

NAJEEB THOMAS, MD & SUMMER BLACK, MD



*Dr. Najeeb Thomas, Dr. Summer Black and their children*

The first memory that Najeeb Thomas, MD, Mack's son, has of his dad is his father giving Najeeb stitches when he was just four years old. He was wrestling with his sister and cut his head on the fish tank. "Getting sewn up when I was four years old; that's what I remember about my dad," he jokes.

Najeeb is a practicing neurosurgeon, graduate of LSU School of Medicine, and a 2003 graduate of the Department of Neurosurgery residency. He and his wife show their passion in their continued support of the David G. Kline Endowed Chair in Peripheral Nerve Repair and Regeneration, as well as the endowed

lectureship in his father's name.

Like Mack, Najeeb was invited to serve on the LSU Health Foundation, New Orleans board, and he welcomed the opportunity to give back to the medical school and support others and lower the cost of others' schooling. He realized that better funding could make a difference when he went to school here. The dorms were old then, and there was a high demand for them. And he wants to create a good experience for the faculty and staff that trained him.

Najeeb aims to teach his children that philanthropy is important. He wants his

children to give back to the institutions where he and his family have walked. He also wants them to do everything better than he did—be better doctors; be better parents.

What does he want for the Foundation? He wants an endowment that commiserates with our mission. "We need more doctors." With our aging population, there will be doctor shortages.

"LSU has been very good to me and very good to my family. There's not been a time that LSU HSC was not part of my life," says Najeeb.



The Thomas family carries on a legacy at LSU Health that is truly inspiring, working to ensure that LSU Health doctors provide the best care to patients and are truly cared for themselves.

Najeeb not only hails from a family of philanthropists, but also married into one. He and his wife, plastic surgeon Summer Black, prioritize giving to LSU Health and share these ideals with their children.

Summer's mother, Dr. Shelia B. Gottschalk, a former Associate Professor of Pediatrics at LSU Health, was honored with the Shelia B. Gottschalk Professorship in Excellence in Teaching in 2003.

Dr. Gottschalk graduated from LSU Health Sciences Center - New Orleans in 1969 as one of only 12 women in her class. She became a neonatologist when the field was just being established and subsequently pioneered the medical advances that have allowed so many babies born early or with complex illness to survive. She served as Director of the NICU at Charity and then University Hospital for much of her career.

Summer says that an interesting tidbit about her mother is that she was one of three female physicians that fought to change the law so that all women in Louisiana were paid equally. Her actions impacted everyone at LSU Health, from janitors and administrators to physicians.

Summer says the motivation for her and her family to give has always been, "Support the education of young physicians. Our state needs this – especially those willing to stay here. And the best way to do this is through education." ■



*Dr. Mack Thomas and Dr. Najeeb Thomas*

*Dr. Elliott Black, Dr. Summer Black, and Dr. Shelia Gottschalk*



# WONDER WOMEN OF LSU HEALTH

VIRTUAL PANEL  
MARCH 2021



“The story of women being discouraged from attending medical school carries through all the way to modern times.”

On March 31, 2021, the LSU Health Foundation hosted their first annual panel featuring trailblazing women leaders of LSU Health. The virtual panel brought together seven women with unique perspectives and varied career paths but with one thing in common: they all either attended school or trained at LSU Health Sciences Center. Four of the women earned their medical degrees from LSU Health Sciences Center.

The panel featured Moderator Jennifer Avegno, MD, Director of the New Orleans Department of Health and the voice of our community’s health news during the COVID-19 pandemic. Dr. Avegno said that moderating the panel struck a chord with her because of her grandmother, who was born in 1924 and was denied her chance to go



The Wonder Women of  
**LSU Health**  
NEW ORLEANS

to medical school by her father, who thought it “wasn’t fitting for a lady to be a doctor.”

That denial inspired Dr. Avegno’s grandmother to then pass on the love of academics, service, medicine, and what she called, “the transformative power of healing as a profession” to both Dr. Avegno and her aunt, who runs an Intensive Care Unit. That same love now runs in their family, according to Dr. Avegno, who dedicated her performance in the panel to her grandmother.

The story of women being discouraged from attending medical school carries through all the way to modern times. Dr. Kila Dabney-Smith, a 2000 graduate of LSU Health New Orleans School of Medicine, says that when it came to





*From top left: Moderator Jennifer Avegno, MD, Brenda Kinard, MD, Allison C. Augustus-Wallace, PhD, MS, MNS, DEIC, Elizabeth Fontham, DrPH, MPH, A. Joanne Gates, MD, MBA, BSN, Kristi Soileau, DDS, MEd, MSHCE, Kila Dabney-Smith, MD, FACP*

navigating entrance to medical school as an African American woman, “I can’t say I had many role models.” When she visited the Pre-Med counselor to talk about applying to medical school at LSU Health, she says the counselor slammed the door in her face. “Twice.” The panel ended on a positive note. “You know life is full of hard knocks and I think looking back a lot of us probably realized all that we can learn from the hard knocks,” said Kristi Soileau, DDS, MEd, MSHCE. “So some of [these hard knocks] are blessings in my opinion.”

Moving forward, the LSU Health Foundation plans to hold the panel in person on an annual basis. More panelists will become “members” of the LSU Health Wonder Women group that will create opportunities for not only networking and career enhancement, but also for friendship.

“We’ve been wanting to honor the women leaders from our institution in this way since I started,” says LSU Health Foundation Chief Development Officer Krystal Oliveira. “We hope that everyone who watched our digital panel walked away feeling inspired and empowered. Our plans for 2022 will be an even bigger and better event to honor these amazing women from LSU Health.”

The Foundation is openly accepting nominations for future Wonder Women of LSU Health. To be eligible, women must be leaders in their field and must have graduated from LSU Health Sciences Center, completed training there, or worked there. Send all nominations to Sam Cusimano at [scusimano@lsuhealthfoundation.org](mailto:scusimano@lsuhealthfoundation.org). ■

**SAVE  
THE DATE  
JULY 14, 2022**

The Wonder Women of LSU Health will be an annual event and will be in person on July 14, 2022 at University Medical Center.

REGISTER ONLINE:  
[give.lsuhealthfoundation.org/  
wonderwomen](https://give.lsuhealthfoundation.org/wonderwomen)

# Krewe de Flu



Phaethon Philbrook, an MD/PhD student with a focus on immunology, was inspired to create Krewe de Flu when he read about a group of medical students at Stanford who administered 5,000 flu vaccines every year in their community. Phaethon saw an opportunity for LSU School of Medicine students to do the same in New Orleans. “Advocating for healthy lifestyles and preventative health is important not only in New Orleans but globally,” said Phaethon, “and helping students become active members in our community is crucial.”

After a conversation with the leaders of the Stanford “Flu Crew,” Phaethon knew he couldn’t accomplish this alone. He recruited William Boles, a 3rd year

medical student, to get the Krewe de Flu started. A multidisciplinary organization, the Krewe de Flu has 193 members with representation from the School of Nursing, the School of Allied Health, the School of Medicine, and the School of Dentistry. The Krewe uses social media to address misinformation in the community and speak about the importance of preventative health. Partnering with the School of Public Health, they have pinpointed Community Clinics and Community Centers in New Orleans where students can help disseminate the message.

Although originally created with a focus on the flu, the Krewe de Flu saw an opportunity to help their community

in another way when the COVID-19 vaccine was approved for Emergency Use Authorization. In March of 2021, the Krewe de Flu, in partnership with the School of Nursing and the School of Allied Health, trained almost 200 students to administer the COVID-19 vaccine and have since administered over 600 vaccines.

Phaethon and William have since passed the baton to new leadership within Krewe de Flu who have their focus on increasing community outreach. “We want to be out in the community teaching people that vaccines are important, they’re important for not only your own health, but for the health of others as well.” ■



# Camp Tiger



Founded in 1985, Camp Tiger is an annual week-long summer camp for children with disabilities hosted and organized by the first-year class of medical students. Camp Tiger celebrates children who are often overlooked by the community and prioritizes their experience completely free of charge.



Thomas Luke, a Class of 2024 MD/MPH Candidate, was this year's Camp Tiger Director – a job made even more complicated during a global pandemic. Thomas and his team not only organize camp but also the Camp Tiger Auction and Benefit, both of which they redesigned as virtual experiences. When

Camp Tiger was cancelled last summer, Thomas and his class were determined to bring camp back this year in some shape or form. “I am beyond proud of what my committee and I put on this summer,” said Luke. “It was 100% our own camp, uninfluenced by what Camp Tiger looked like in the past.”

The students still managed to make the week special. Starting with a “Camper Car Parade.” Campers were greeted with balloons, posters, music, and a personalized “Activity Kit” filled with their supplies for the entire week: toys, crafts, games, snacks, t-shirts, and more. For the rest of the week, the kids had a large group and a small group activity each day via Zoom. Campers explored what it takes to be an astronaut with Infinity Science Center, met several zoo animals through the Audubon Zoo, and learned a dance with NFL cheerleaders.

Small group activities allowed campers to have the opportunity to play and interact with kids their age and for the student counselors to have more personalized time to get to know their campers. The virtual format also meant that Camp Tiger was accessible to more campers across the state, rather than just New Orleans – an option they hope to keep.

“This camp has meant so much to me personally over the last year, and it was incredibly rewarding to bring it back to the kids that have been waiting for almost two years to have camp again.” ■





## PAYING IT FORWARD

HANNELORE H. GILES, MD

A 1963 graduate of LSU Health New Orleans School of Medicine, Dr. Hannelore Giles was looking for a way to create opportunities for exceptional students to access the educational experience that she and her late husband, Dr. William Giles, had

"I can honestly say that our years at LSU were some of the greatest in our lives."

while in New Orleans. She found the establishment of the Drs. William G. '64 and Hannelore H. '63 Giles Scholarship was the ideal way to give gratitude for

all the blessings she and her husband received while they were medical students.

In the early 1960s, while Dr. William Giles was a helicopter pilot in the U.S. Marine Corps in the Eastern Pacific, Hannelore began her medical education at LSU. Followed shortly thereafter by her husband, they were no strangers to the expense of medical school. Hannelore and William worked jobs as medical technologists and researchers on the weekends, while juggling studying and raising their young children. Both Hannelore and William completed their internships in New Orleans, followed

by residencies at the New Orleans VA Hospital. They moved to Memphis to pursue fellowships, Hannelore in internal medicine and cardiology and William in orthopedics. Following their fellowships, they settled down in





Hattiesburg, MS to practice medicine and raise their children. Hannelore remains in Hattiesburg today.

“I can honestly say that our years at LSU were some of the greatest in our lives,” Hannelore remembers. The Drs. William G. '64 and Hannelore H. '63 Giles Scholarship will open unimaginable doors for countless students who receive this award. She hopes that Kiyoshi and each recipient of the scholarship will be called to pay it forward as she and William have.

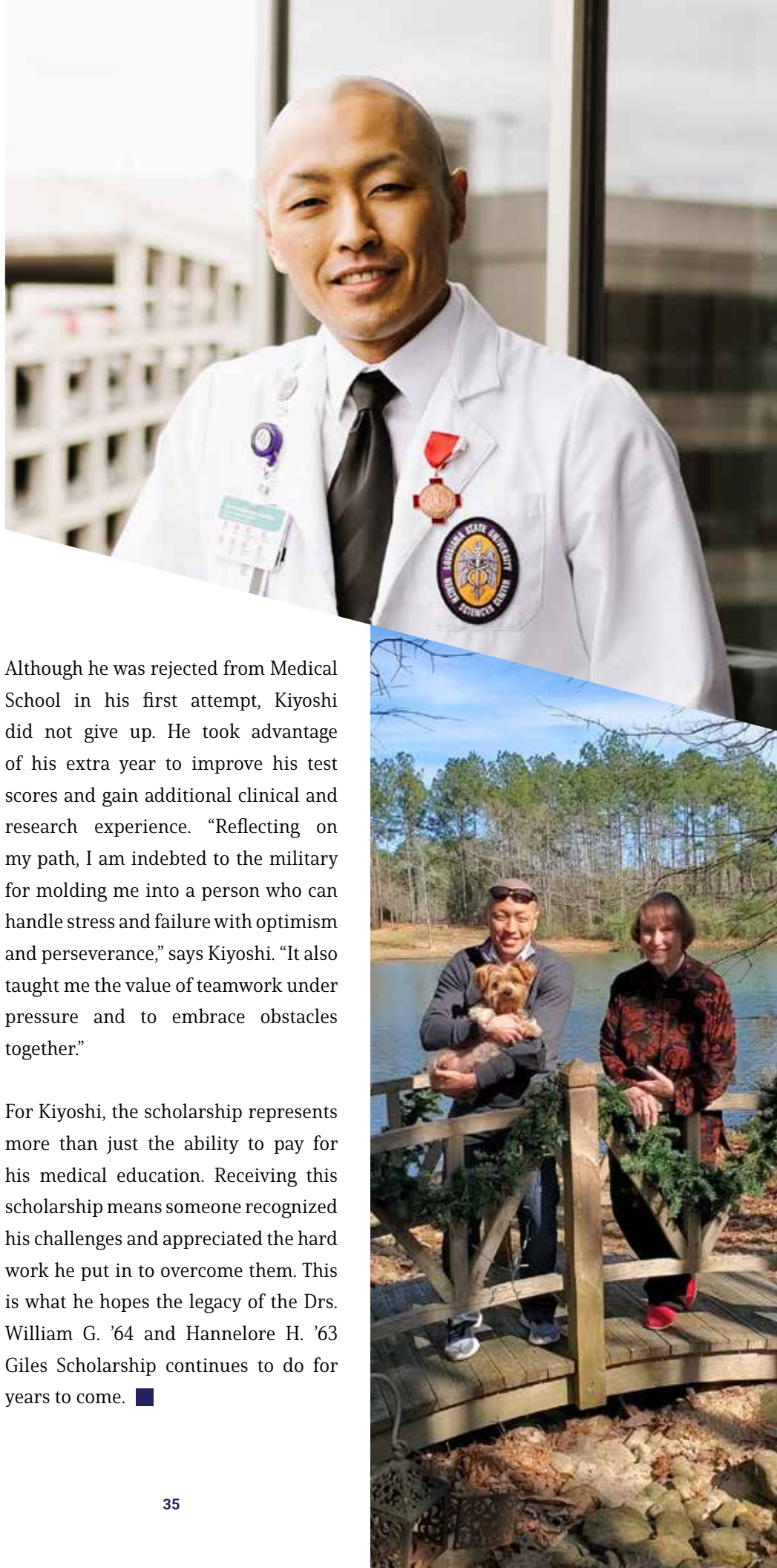
## KIYOSHI NAKAMURA

Kiyoshi Nakamura is a first-generation medical student and the first recipient of the Drs. William G. '64 and Hannelore H. '63 Giles Scholarship. Kiyoshi is not only a medical student at LSU Health New Orleans but also a member of the United States Air Force. He still serves at least 30 duty days a year alongside the demands of medical school.

Kiyoshi didn't always want to be a doctor. It was while serving in the Air Force in Iraq that he started realizing the value of giving back and helping others. In May 2015, he embarked on eight months of training to become an Air Force medic. Training exposed him to nursing skills and a wide variety of patients and settings. It was in interfacing with physicians that he began to admire their approach to behind-the-scenes course of care planning for patients. It was clear then that there was only one career path for him once leaving the military.

Although he was rejected from Medical School in his first attempt, Kiyoshi did not give up. He took advantage of his extra year to improve his test scores and gain additional clinical and research experience. “Reflecting on my path, I am indebted to the military for molding me into a person who can handle stress and failure with optimism and perseverance,” says Kiyoshi. “It also taught me the value of teamwork under pressure and to embrace obstacles together.”

For Kiyoshi, the scholarship represents more than just the ability to pay for his medical education. Receiving this scholarship means someone recognized his challenges and appreciated the hard work he put in to overcome them. This is what he hopes the legacy of the Drs. William G. '64 and Hannelore H. '63 Giles Scholarship continues to do for years to come. ■



# Research BRIEFS



FROM LEFT: DR. CHARLES WOOD, DR. LUCIO MIELE, DR. JOHN WEST, DR. KURT VARNER, DR. WAYNE BACKES

## Minimizing Environmental Health Effects Across the Nation

The first project, entitled “Environmentally Persistent Free Radicals Alter Pulmonary Immunologic Homeostasis,” is led by **Dr. Wayne Backes**, Assistant Dean for Research and **Dr. James Reed**, Assistant Professor in the Department of Pharmacology. This study addresses questions related to the pulmonary and metabolic effects of environmentally persistent free radicals (EPFRs), a recently realized pollutant species found at Superfund sites and

formed during thermal treatment processes. As there are currently no rules or regulations for limiting or monitoring EPFRs in the environment, these studies, in the context of the Center, will have important implications for guiding environmental and public health policy.

The second project, entitled “Combustion-Generated EPFRs - Assessing Cardiovascular Risks of Exposure,” involves **Dr. Kurt Varner**, Head of the Department of Pharmacology and Experimental Therapeutics. This project examines the mechanisms

underlying the cardiovascular responses and toxicities produced by inhalation of EPFRs. This study will provide important new data linking exposure to EPFRs with the development and progression of cardiovascular disease. This information is critical for assessing risks to those living in proximity to sites using thermal treatment technologies to remediate Superfund or other hazardous wastes.

Additionally, **Donald Mercante**, Professor of Biostatistics, leads the Data Management and Analysis Core. This core is crucial to give each Superfund



research project access to tools they need to analyze the large amounts of data they collect throughout these projects.

The Superfund Research Program was created by Congress to enable university-based scientists, engineers, and public health workers—along with community members—to lessen the environmental health effects of hazardous waste sites across the nation. One of 23 universities currently funded, the LSU Superfund Research Program is charged with coming up with practical and scientific solutions to limit human exposure to hazardous substances in contaminated water, soil, and air. LSU researchers have been working to protect communities from dangerous pollution from hazardous waste sites since 2009 through this program. Now, an interdisciplinary LSU team from across the state has received \$10.8 million from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to continue and expand their efforts over the next 5 years. The LSU Superfund Research Program is made up of five different projects that focus on environmentally persistent free radicals. Of them, LSU Health School of Medicine faculty collaborate on two.

### **Creating the Largest Health Research Database in U.S. History**

“Each individual is unique,” notes **Lucio Miele, MD, PhD**, Chairman of Genetics and Director of the Precision Medicine Program at LSU Health New Orleans School of Medicine.

LSU Health New Orleans’ Precision Medicine team is partnered with the NIH and hundreds of other sites nationwide to serve as a site for the All of Us Research Program. All of Us, which

seeks to gather information about the health of 1 million or more participants living in the U.S., aims to build the largest health research database in U.S. history. The database will be accessible to researchers throughout the country to drive studies on a variety of health conditions, which may help lead to more individualized approaches to the prevention and treatment of diseases.

“We respond differently to disease risk factors and treatments. Yet, this uniqueness is not yet used to individualize medical care on a broad scale. Precision medicine research will allow us to much more accurately design strategies to prevent disease, optimize treatment and avoid adverse events. Adequate reflection of the diversity of America will assure that ‘all of us’ can benefit from precision medicine. Louisiana, a state with a unique population and major health challenges, should be properly represented in precision medicine research. This is the first step in that direction.”

People who enroll in the program will answer survey questions about their health, environment, and lifestyle. Some participants may also be asked to have their physical measurements taken and/or give blood and urine samples. “Researchers will use this information to help understand disease and design prevention strategies and treatments as unique as we are,” adds Miele. Not a single health study, All of Us will be a resource that can be used by researchers to support thousands of studies investigating many diseases and conditions affecting a variety of populations.

### **Creating Access to Healthcare in African Countries**

Two cancer research scientists who recently joined the Department of Interdisciplinary Oncology and the Stanley S. Scott Cancer Center have a long history of collaborating overseas.

For the past two decades, **Charles Wood, PhD** and **John T. West, PhD**, have worked to address a lack of healthcare infrastructure in African countries. In Zambia, they have focused on Kaposi’s sarcoma (KS) and ocular surface squamous neoplasia (OSSN) – two of the most commonly occurring HIV/AIDS-associated malignancies in the country. In collaboration with Zambia’s Cancer Diseases Hospital (CDH) and University Teaching Hospital (UTH), their teams train biomedical researchers, oncologists, and support staff in the skills necessary to further the country’s research agenda in cancer biology and genomics, which will translate to better clinical care for cancer patients. In 2017, they began the Zambia AIDS Malignancies Diagnosis and Pathogenesis Program, which allows Zambian scientists to apply for grant money to conduct research in virology, biostatistics, and cancer diagnostics.

More recently, they have expanded their efforts to include Tanzania. In partnership with the Ocean Road Cancer Institute, they focus on building infrastructure around the Kaposi’s sarcoma-associated human herpes virus and human papilloma virus. They have worked with partners to enhance Tanzanian expertise in virology, epidemiology, and clinical care. ■



# Diversity & Inclusion at LSU Health New Orleans





## Xavier University Early Acceptance Program

LSU Health New Orleans School of Medicine got one step closer to fulfilling its mission to increase diversity in Louisiana's physician workforce by creating a clear pathway for undergraduate students to attend medical school. Through a partnership with Xavier University of Louisiana, the School of Medicine will grant early acceptance into medical school for students recommended by Xavier. Louisiana residents who are accepted through this program will also receive a full 4-year scholarship.

This unprecedented partnership will give many of Louisiana's best and brightest a clear path to pursue medical school in their home state. Xavier is a nationally recognized leader in STEM and health sciences, producing more African American students who graduate from medical schools each year than any other university in the United States. These students will be nominated by Xavier's Pre-Medical Committee in May of their sophomore year. Following interviews by members of the LSU Admissions Committee, chosen students will be granted official early acceptance into LSU Health New Orleans School of Medicine after being voted on by the committee by the end of their junior year.

## Creation of the Vice Chancellor of Diversity and Inclusion

At the end of 2020, leadership at LSU Health New Orleans took note of a key missing piece in their organization—someone to focus on the work of Diversity and Inclusion at a Health Sciences Center level. LSU Health prepares thousands of future professionals to go into an increasingly diverse world, and

having leadership in this area is key to their success. These discussions led to the creation of the new Vice Chancellor for Diversity and Inclusion.

The Vice Chancellor is at the helm of the initiative to operationalize what diversity is at LSU Health New Orleans, provide executive level leadership to diversity, and help people understand how they, regardless of what their role is across the organization, have a responsibility for the advancement of diversity and inclusion across campus.

The inaugural Vice Chancellor for Diversity and Inclusion, Dr. Timothy Fair, has moved on from LSU but leaves our organization more focused than ever on this topic. Dr. Fair focused on building an institutional and organizational framework that faculty, staff, and students could buy into. He worked towards centralizing the process to report matters of bias or harassment and increasing opportunities for sustained learning around diversity and inclusion. LSU Health is currently conducting a nationwide search for the next Vice Chancellor to continue his work. ■



# MARCH WITH OUR Second Line



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 Steven Zambrano, DDS  
**Guy P. Zeringue, Jr., MD and**  
**Jane G. Zeringue**

\* Deceased  
 SOM Alumni are in bold

# Join Today!

## THE SECOND LINE



## INVITATION TO ROYAL COURT WEEKEND

Our celebratory weekend commences with a ceremony where distinguished Second Line donors are officially inducted into the foundation's premier annual giving societies and presented with a beautiful medallion noting each level of giving. Endowment Donors are also invited to the LSU Health Foundation's Endowment dinner, honoring all scholarships, professorships, chairs, etc. The weekend concludes Callin' Baton Rouge style with a fully stocked LSU Football tailgate outside of Tiger Stadium, ending with an evening in Death Valley cheering on our Tigers vs. Ole Miss on October 22<sup>nd</sup>!

*\*General football tickets included*



# MARCH WITH OUR Second Line



## LSU HEALTH FOUNDATION'S PREMIER LEADERSHIP LIFETIME GIVING SOCIETIES

Lifetime Gifts Through April 30, 2021

Our lifetime giving societies honor and recognize the extraordinary acts of generosity our donors demonstrate throughout their lifetime. Each society below is tied to an exceptional act of generosity in our LSU Health New Orleans legacy. We honor and salute your induction into these elite societies meaningfully tied to our University.

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## THE JEAN LOUIS 1735 LEGACY SOCIETY

This society honors individuals who  
 have named LSU Health New Orleans a  
 beneficiary of their estate with planned gifts  
 of \$25,000+.

**Anonymous**  
 Carl Baldrige, DDS\* and  
   Beulah Landry Baldrige\*  
 L. Allen Barker, Ph.D.\*  
 Marcia H. Beer and Billy A. Beer\*  
 David E. Bordelon\*  
 Emajean J. Buechner\*  
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 Elsie E. Buff\*

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 Drs. Michael Carey and Betty Oseid\*  
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**Helen Key Van Fossen, MD\***  
 Catherine Corinne Vernice\* and  
   Vincent Charles Vernice\*  
 Melanie Cassou Vial\*  
 Alice M. Weber\*  
 Marilyn L. Zimny, MD\*

\* Deceased

SOM Alumni are in bold





# FACULTY Accolades

## AWARDS

**Dr. Elyse Stevens**, Assistant Professor of Clinical Medicine in the Section of Community and Population Medicine, was awarded “Attending Physician of the Quarter, 2nd Quarter, 2021” by University Medical Center, New Orleans.

**Dr. Daniel Nuss**, Professor and Chairman of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery, was named U.S. News & World Report “top 1% of otolaryngology physicians in the U.S..”

**Dr. Jennifer “Gala” True**, Associate Professor of Medicine in the Section of Community and Population Medicine, won the Excellence in Research Award from the Society for Social Work and Research and was named Mentor of the Year by the South Central MIRECC, Department of Veterans Affairs.

**Dr. Lisa Moreno-Walton**, Professor of Emergency Medicine, Director of Research, and Director of Diversity for the Section of Emergency Medicine, was awarded the National Medical Association’s Excellence in Service Award for her service in emergency medicine.

**Dr. Laurie Byerley**, Associate Professor of Research in the Department of Physiology, was inducted into the Purdue University Department of Nutrition Science Hall of Fame in May 2021.

**Dr. Lisa M. Harrison-Bernard**, Professor of Physiology and Director LSUHSC-NO Postbaccalaureate Research Education Program in the Biomedical Sciences, was named a 2020 Star Reviewer by the American Physiological Society.

**Dr. Ben Deboisblanc**, Professor of Medicine and Physiology, **Dr. Steve Kantrow**, Professor of Medicine, **Dr. Carol Mason**, Professor of Medicine & Section Chief, and **Dr. Judd Shellito**, Professor of Medicine, and Microbiology, Immunology and Parasitology, were all named 2021 Top Doctors in Louisiana Life and NOLA Magazine.

**Dr. Cody Roi**, Assistant Professor of Psychiatry, won first place in the poster competition for, “Addressing Disparities” category at the Association for Academic Psychiatry’s annual conference in 2021. His poster title was “Teaching Social Determinants of Health Using a ‘Race to the Top’ Board Game.” Dr. Roi will also be presenting at the 2021 annual meeting for the Society for the Study of Psychiatry

and Culture. His presentation will be focused on “Advancing Equitable Care: Taking Action to Address Sociocultural Influences on Pediatric Psychiatric Practices.”

**Dr. Joy Sturtevant**, Associate Professor of Microbiology, Immunology and Parasitology, was appointed to the Aquifer Science Curriculum Editorial Board as the lead for immunology. The Aquifer Educators Consortium brings together educators from across national healthcare education organizations and the International Society of Medical Science Educators to develop virtual teaching materials that correlate to national curriculum standards.

## LEADERSHIP

**Dr. Randy Roig**, Associate Dean for Veterans Affairs and Clinical Professor of Medicine, Neurology, and Anesthesiology, became a member of the Steering Committee for the Group on Resident Affairs (GRA) of the Association of American Medical Colleges and Treasurer of the Southern Pain Society.

**Dr. Ashley Wennerstrom**, Associate Professor of Medicine in the Section of Community and Population Medicine, was named Co-Chair of the Policy Committee National Association of Community Health Workers and Co-Chair of the Louisiana Medicaid Community Health Worker Workforce Study Committee.

**Dr. Marcus Bachhuber**, Assistant Professor of Clinical Medicine in the Section of Community and Population Medicine, was named the Medical Director for Louisiana Medicaid.

**Dr. Lisa Moreno-Walton**, Professor of Emergency Medicine, Director of Research, and Director of Diversity for the Section of Emergency Medicine, was the first female elected President of the American Academy of Emergency Medicine.

**Dr. Joseph Kanter**, Assistant Professor of Medicine, was appointed State Health Officer and Medical Director, the top medical official of the Louisiana Department of Health.

**Dr. Keith van Meter**, Chief of the Section of Emergency Medicine, and Dr. Heather Murphy-Lavoie, Associate Professor, Section of Emergency Medicine, have been appointed to the American Board of Emergency Medicine questions committee for the Undersea and Hyperbaric Medicine subspecialty board.

**Dr. Charles Coleman** was accepted into the Medical Justice in Advocacy Fellowship program, which is sponsored by American Medical Association (AMA) and Satcher Health Leadership Institute (SHLI) at Morehouse School of Medicine. Out of 300+ applications, only 12 individuals were selected to participate in this inaugural fellowship program, which aims to “generate and exchange solutions and implement health equity projects that inform policy to ensure optimal health for all.”

**Dr. Margaret Bishop-Baier** has organized a Department Day of Service in October for the Department of Psychiatry to volunteer with the St. Bernard Project and assist with disaster relief efforts in communities heavily impacted by Hurricane Ida.

**Dr. Daniel Nuss**, Professor and Chairman of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery became Co-Chair for the Education Committee of the North American Skull Base Society.

**Dr. Rinku Majumder**, Professor of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, was selected as a member of the Scientific Committee on Hemostasis for the American Society of Hematology for a 2-year term starting January 2022.



## DIVING IN *Headfirst*

### **BONNIE DESSELTE, MD**

*Professor of Clinical Pediatrics*

*Vice-Chair of the Department of Pediatrics*

Dr. Bonnie Desselte has received one of the highest honors for pediatricians in Louisiana. She was selected as a Master Pediatrician by the Louisiana Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). Each year, the Louisiana AAP honors two “exceptional pediatricians who over many years have contributed to the health and welfare of children in Louisiana through direct patient care and child advocacy, while educating and serving as an outstanding role model to students and young physicians.” Since 2011, only four other women have received this award.

Dr. Desselte has dedicated her life and career to the State of Louisiana and the advancement of pediatric excellence. She exemplifies the requirements of a Master Pediatrician especially in two arenas: as a pediatric critical care physician and a pediatric educator. Known for her excellence and efficiency in patient care in the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit, Dr. Desselte has been able to instill the essential tenets of critical medicine to a generation of pediatric residents in a calm and reassuring manner. In less than 10 years, she rose from new faculty to leader, building the Pediatric Critical Care Division from nothing at LSU Health and Children’s Hospital of New Orleans. She continues to take on new challenges— most recently named Chief Medical Education Officer and Director of the newly established Department of Medical Education at Children’s Hospital of New Orleans. In this new role, she is working to incorporate both LSU Health and components of the Tulane University Medical Education programs under one roof.



**Dr. Hari Koul**, Professor and Interim-Chair of the Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, will serve as Overall Chair of the NIH National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases U54 Scientific Review Panel.

**Dr. Suresh Alahari**, Professor of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, was selected as fellow of the American Society of Cell Biology for 2021.

**Dr. Cody Roi**, Assistant Professor of Psychiatry, was named President of the Mid-Gulf Council for Child and Adolescent Psychiatry.

## RESEARCH



**Dr. Traci Goodchild**, Associate Professor of Pharmacology and Director of the Cardiovascular Center Translational Core Laboratory, will be funded in the amount of \$2,846,836 from 2021–2024 to study the effects of renal denervation as a treatment for heart failure with preserved ejection fraction (HFpEF). The grant is titled: “Renal Denervation in Heart Failure with Preserved Ejection Fraction.” This grant will utilize the new porcine HFpEF model that was developed in the CV Center and published in JACC BTS recently.

**Hari Koul, PhD**, Professor and Interim Chairman of the Department of Biochemistry & Molecular Biology at LSU Health New Orleans School of Medicine, received \$1,056,317 in research funding over 4 years to help find new treatments for prostate cancer.

**Dr. Jennifer “Gala” True**, Associate Professor of Medicine in the Section of Community and Population Medicine, received two grants from the Veteran’s Administration: \$350,000 to perform a Randomized Control Trial of an Innovative In-home Rehabilitation Program for Persons with TBI and their families and \$1,150,000 to explore the use of Peer Navigators to Increase Access to VA and Community Resources for Veterans with Diabetes-related Distress.

**Dr. Nicholas Gilpin**, Vice Chair of Research in Physiology and the Associate Director Alcohol and Drug Abuse Center of Excellence, was awarded two grants. The first by the Department of Veterans Affairs to study the efficacy of targeting melanocortin-4 receptors to reduce pain in U.S. veterans and the second by the National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism to explore a new therapeutic approach to the prevention of alcohol abuse.

**Dr. Michelle Sedgwick**, Assistant Professor of Medicine, and **Dr. Nicole Lapinel**, Associate Professor of Medicine, received a grant from The Charles and Elizabeth Wetmore Fund of \$75,000 for the study “Determine the Prevalence of Nontuberculous Mycobacteria Isolation from Showerhead Biofilms in the Greater New Orleans Area and its Association with Human Pulmonary Disease.” Dr. Juzar Ali, Professor of Medicine, will

serve as mentor/consultant.

**Dr. Yussef Bennani, Dr. Annalisa Perez, Dr. Hira Hasan, and Dr. Lauren Richey** in the Department of Medicine presented their findings on the need for and effect of a multidisciplinary HIV/nephrology clinic on the progression of renal disease in patients with HIV within a Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program-funded clinic in New Orleans at the Infectious Disease Society of America. Their abstract entitled “A Multidisciplinary Approach to the Management of Patients with HIV and Chronic Kidney Disease” showed that aggressive co-management of HIV and CKD using a multidisciplinary model may limit progression of CKD and reduce mortality.

**Dr. Lauren E. Richey, Dr. Yussef Bennani, and Dr. Maria Frontini** in the Department of Medicine shared their work on Louisiana Medicaid’s program to expand hepatitis treatment to more Louisianans at the Infectious Disease Society of America. Their abstract, “Expansion of Hepatitis C Treatment with New Medicaid Subscription Model in Louisiana,” showed that the new hepatitis C treatment subscription model with resultant removal of previous barriers has dramatically expanded treatment for people with Medicaid in Louisiana. More than five times the number of Medicaid patients received treatment in 2020 in their academic medical clinic.



## PUBLICATIONS

**Maria D. Sanchez-Pino**, PhD, Assistant Professor in the Departments of Interdisciplinary Oncology and Genetics, advances knowledge about the connection between obesity-associated inflammation and cancer. The researchers suggest that inflammatory cells with immunosuppressive properties may act as a critical biological link between obesity and cancer risk, progression, and metastasis. The paper is published in the June 2021 issue of *Obesity*.



**Dr. Nicholas Gilpin**, Vice Chair of Research in Physiology and the Associate Director of the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Center of Excellence, published in *eLifeSciences* an article entitled “Racial inequity in grant funding from the U.S. National Institutes of Health” where the authors make recommendations on how the NIH can address racial disparities in grant funding and call on scientists to advocate for equity in federal grant funding.

**Dr. Christine Butts, Dr. Jason Wilson, Dr. Lindsay Lasseigne, Dr. Evrim Oral, and Dr. Nicole Kaban** in the Section of Emergency Medicine published an article in the *Journal of Intensive Care Medicine* entitled “Ultrasound of the Optic Nerve Does Not Appear to Be a Consistently Reliable or Generalizable Method to Monitor Changes in Intracranial Pressure” which outlined their important findings in traumatic brain injury.

**Dr. Daniel Raines**, Chief of Gastroenterology, and Dr. Lilia Stefaniwsky, Gastroenterology Fellow, showed the effectiveness of the use of video capsule endoscopy (VCE) as a safe alternative to the standard endoscopic evaluation of gastrointestinal bleeding. Their article entitled “A role for video capsule endoscopy in the management of acute gastrointestinal bleeding during the COVID-19 pandemic” was published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*.

**Dr. Daniel Raines**, Chief of Gastroenterology, published specific recommendations for evaluation of small intestinal bleeding in *Gastrointestinal Endoscopy Clinics of North America*. The article entitled “The Role of Provocative Testing and Localization of the Video Capsule Endoscope in the Management of Small Intestinal Bleeding” describes the current understanding of SIB regarding evaluation, with emphasis on the use of VCE as a diagnostic procedure.

**Dr. Michelle Moore**, Associate Professor of Clinical Psychiatry and former student Dr. David Yang, recently published an article in the *Journal of Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities* on the findings of their

survey aimed at understanding the mental health needs of Asian American medical students, entitled “Depression and Perceived Social Support in Asian American Medical Students”.

Three faculty members, **Drs. Mark Townsend, Michelle Moore, and Lindsey Poe**, from the Department of Psychiatry worked together to further understand how interprofessional education is beneficial to trainees from psychiatry and psychology. They recently published their findings in *Academic Psychiatry* entitled “Categorical Psychiatry and Predoctoral Psychology Interns’ Perceptions of Professional Identity and Practice: Results of a Survey at the Start and Completion of a Year of Interprofessional Education.”

**Dr. Xinping Yue**, Assistant Professor of Physiology, published her findings on nicotine and vascular dysfunction in *Acta Physiologica*. ■





# ROYAL COURT

## October 20–22, 2022

Recognizing the extraordinary acts of generosity our donors demonstrate throughout their lifetime to support LSU Health New Orleans.



The Royal Court Weekend brings together our top donors in annual giving, lifetime giving, and planned giving to induct them into the Foundation's prestigious giving societies. We invite you to join us October 20–22, 2022, for our Royal Court ceremonies including our recognition ceremonies, endowment dinner, and a rousing Saturday tailgate party and football game at Tiger Stadium vs. Ole Miss.

### Thursday October 20

Annual Giving  
Ceremony & Reception

Royal Court  
Kickoff

### Friday October 21

The Lifetime Giving Societies  
Ceremony & Reception

Endowment and Scholarship  
Donors and Recipients Dinner

### Saturday October 22

Second Line  
Tailgate Party

LSU Tiger Football  
Game at Tiger Stadium



NOW LEASING  
FOR  
JANUARY 2023

THE  
**RESIDENCES**  
AT LSU HEALTH



**BRAND NEW** MEDICAL CAMPUS LIVING  
FOR NEW ORLEANS

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**Outdoor Living Space, Resort Style Pool, 24-hour Fitness Center,  
Controlled Access, Study Pods, Upgraded Finishes**

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Serving LSU Health Students within the New Orleans Medical District including:  
Employees, Affiliates, Physicians and staff.



Opening January 2023 • [LiveAtTheResidencesLSU.com](https://LiveAtTheResidencesLSU.com)  
(504) 527-4100 • 615 S. Johnson St, New Orleans, LA 70112







# FOUNDATION Highlights

## Now Leasing

In partnership with LSUHNO, we are excited to announce that a new student housing option will be entering the LSUHSC neighborhood in January 2023. The Residences at LSU Health is a new development designed with the LSUHSC students in mind, featuring floor plans from studios to 3 bedroom, 3 bathrooms apartments. We have identified naming opportunities within the Residences at LSU Health, which will allow for meaningful philanthropy to directly support our students, faculty, and community. The Residences apartments are conveniently located to LSU Medical, within walking distance and a stop on the LSUHSC shuttle. From study areas, a 24-hour fitness center, pool courtyard, and luxury finishes, The Residences is the ideal housing option for any LSUHSC student searching for comfort and elevated living, without compromising their education.

### Principal Naming Opportunity



## Catch *these* throws!

The Foundation launched the **Second Line Bead Campaign** to recognize our premier leadership annual giving society. This initiative will honor our generous alumni and friends through a stunning, cascading bead centerpiece and digital recognition display in common areas of the Residences at LSU Health. Learn more by visiting [lsuhealthfoundation.org/the-second-line-bead-campaign](https://lsuhealthfoundation.org/the-second-line-bead-campaign).



## Education Empowers

With **70 percent of our students in financial need**, we are committed to growing scholarship opportunities for years to come. We hope to enroll more students with diverse perspectives, particularly from lower and middle-income families. We invite you to join us in embracing this mission to offer the best educational experience to our students by getting involved. Learn more by visiting [give.lsuhealthfoundation.org/educationempowers](https://give.lsuhealthfoundation.org/educationempowers).



To learn more about these keys initiatives, please reach out to Katherine O'Hagan,  
Senior Director of Development – School of Medicine at [KOHagan@LSUHealthFoundation.org](mailto:KOHagan@LSUHealthFoundation.org) or (504) 568-2430.



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[www.lsuhealthfoundation.org](http://www.lsuhealthfoundation.org)

