

RESIDENT EXCEPTIONAL MOMENTS IN TEACHING



Diane Mathew, MD, a PGY-3 resident in the Department of Psychiatry at Upstate Medical University, is the **December 2024** recipient of the **Resident Exceptional Moments in Teaching** recognition.

COMMENTS FROM DR. MATHEW'S STUDENTS:

"Despite her busy schedule, Dr. Mathew spent ample time getting to know her patients, trying to appreciate their perspectives, and giving them the confidence to carry on despite their deep emotional scars. On one occasion a patient presented with severe generalized anxiety disorder. Initially, the patient would not speak with any members of the healthcare team because of her anxiety. Dr. Mathew recognized that the patient's perspective was integral to determine whether the patient should be observed overnight or could be safely discharged. She created a safe space in which the patient felt comfortable sharing her personal story. By the end of the half-hour interview, the patient was able to share some of the triggers of her anxiety and tell us whether she felt safe returning home."

"As a former Upstate student, Dr. Mathew was forthcoming with advice and tips for students. She observed me perform intake interviews for psychiatric patients. Some interviews were more challenging than others. For example, some patients were emotional and found communication difficult. Other patients were very talkative. There were points during the interview where I felt lost or unsure of how to proceed. At first, Dr. Mathew interjected to help me get back on track. After a few days, she started giving me non-verbal cues with the clear message, "You're doing great! You have the tools you need to complete the interview." This gave me the opportunity to improve my communication skills with patients and allowed me to take ownership over my patients' care."

The Norton College of Medicine recognizes exceptional teachers with the monthly "Exceptional Moments in Teaching" program. Honorees are selected via student assessments from courses and clerkships. Recognized teachers—including medical faculty, residents, nurses and other educators—are those who challenge students and provide an exceptional learning experience.