

Upstate Medical University Undergraduate Medical Education Office NEWSLETTER



*Improve the health of the communities we serve
through education, biomedical research and health care*

Letter from the UME Office

The UME Office is responsible for managing, coordinating and evaluating the medical School curriculum. In addition, we provide support to the students, faculty, and administra-



Dear Students & Faculty:

Greetings from the UME Office!

It is hard to believe that more than a year has passed since the onset of the coronavirus pandemic. But scientists, physicians, epidemiologists, and myriad others, including many at Upstate (YAY!!), have worked tirelessly to manage this crisis and today there is much hope on the horizon! Effective vaccines are available, testing and treatment options have improved, and schools are making plans for students to return in the fall! Those of you with young children at home are doing the “happy dance” about that for sure!

Efforts continue to renew our curriculum, guided by Dean Chin’s vision: *The COM and its graduates will transform and improve healthcare for all by combining medical science inquiry, research and innovation, dedication to social justice, and compassionate care.* COVID-related challenges have slowed progress a bit but a small team is helping me guide the process which will involve numerous working groups building the curriculum on the three pillars of medical education: the foundational, clinical, and health systems sciences.

As the COM explores new directions for our curriculum, we are considering the implications of Step 1 changing to Pass/Fail in January 2022. Last month the Weiskotten LC invited Dr. Bryan Carmody to share his thoughts on this topic.



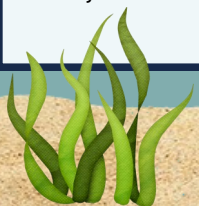
He is a pediatric nephrologist, author of The Sheriff of Sodium blog, and “salty about medical education.” His presentation was fascinating. You can find a similar talk by him on YouTube. Search “The Rise and Fall of USMLE Step 1.”

We invite all students, faculty, and staff, to share thoughts about Step 1 and other curricular concerns, through open forums, the UME website, email, or other means.

We also welcome faculty who want to be more involved in medical education. Would you like to lead a small discussion group? Have a student in your office? Help students learn physical exam and history-taking skills? Please email Tom Poole, PhD, Assistant Dean of Foundational Sciences, Matt Mason, MD, Assistant Dean of Clinical Sciences, or me, for more information.

Best wishes! Enjoy your summer!

Sincerely,
Leann Lesperance, MD PhD FAAP
Associate Dean for Undergraduate Medical Education



www.upstate.edu/ume

For questions regarding this publication, please contact:
Susan (Anderssu@upstate.edu)



Phase 1

Dear Students, Faculty, and Staff,

The academic year is wrapping up and it has been a year unlike any other. Faculty, staff and students all came together to overcome the challenges that the pandemic threw our way. Congratulations to all of you for your perseverance and ingenuity in finding new ways to teach, to learn, and to study in the new landscape.

The MS2 students are finishing their dedicated period of studying for the Step 1 exam. We wish them the best of luck with Step 1 and are eager to see them enter the clinical world of clerkships in May. Step 1 this spring is unique in that it will be the last year that the exam will be graded with a score. In February 2022 Step 1 will shift to be reported as Pass/Fail only. The implications of this shift still remain unclear as to what it means for our students and residency applications. The emphasis will be shifted away from Step 1 and we are working hard to understand what the emphasis will be on and how we can best prepare our students to meet whatever challenge that may bring.

The MS1 students are in their last systems-based unit (Endocrine and Reproductive) and will finish on May 19th with the Gateway exam. The Gateway exam is a selection of 100 questions from the NBME Custom Assessment Service. Course directors have chosen questions that align with content that was covered in the MS1 year. The exam serves as a point in time assessment of retention of content that was taught, providing our students with practice with Step 1 style questions, and as a way to identify students that may need help with this style of question.

Preparations continue for the start of the new school year on August 9, 2021. With the end of the pandemic within reach due to vaccination efforts, we are planning on many more in-person classes and look forward to seeing our students again. We hope everyone has a healthy and more social summer!

Thomas J. Poole, PhD
Assistant Dean for the Foundational Sciences

Phase 2

Dear students, faculty, and staff,

Congratulations to our new graduates! We welcome them as colleagues and wish them the best of luck in their residency programs.

Our third-year students transition to the start of their fourth-year this month. Many are preparing to take their USMLE Step 2 exam and start fourth-year electives and acting internships. We are very pleased that the COVID vaccine is now readily available to all our students, faculty, and staff. National guidance allows students across the country to do one away rotation per specialty, and some of our fourth-year students will be doing visiting rotations at other schools and we anticipate visiting students from other schools coming to visit our programs at Upstate too. The current plan from the AAMC is that students will be applying to residency this fall in the month of September.

The class of 2023 has been spending dedicated time studying for the USMLE Step 1 exam, and will start Transition to Clerkships (Third-year orientation) on May 17, and will include things like overview of clerkships and learning in the clinical setting, practical education for donning/doffing PPE, orientation to the OR and sterile environment, EMR use, and ACLS training. The new year of clerkships starts on May 24. We are happy that COVID rates in our area and our medical facilities remain low and that PPE supplies remain plentiful. We are optimistic that the coming year of clerkships should have plentiful learning opportunities. Last academic year, clerkships were shortened by 20% of their clinical time because the clerkships start was delayed by the pandemic. We are now returning to the previous 5-week and 10-week length clerkship schedule for the 2021-2022 academic year.

We know this is a challenging time, and we thank you all for your continued flexibility, adaptation, and motivation! We continue to be proud of the entire Upstate team since the COVID pandemic was declared, including all faculty, staff, and students.

Matt Mason, MD
Assistant Dean for Clinical Sciences

From the Exam Coordinator

Testing Corner

The MS1 year is approaching the end of your year. You are preparing for the Gateway exam. Please note that this will be in the **NBME testing platform**. Be on the lookout for information on how to make sure you have a smooth exam by preparing your **laptop**. Please note that you must take the exam on a laptop; iPads and tablets without hard drives cannot be used.

The MS2 year is completed and you are in the process of transitioning into your MS3 year. Please be on the lookout for items from our office regarding your agenda, group breakouts and other requirements. Your MS3 year is going to be an exciting year. Please remember to prepare yourself. You will be on the floors for full shifts and then will need to make time to study daily. You will also want to make time for eating healthy, exercise, relaxing and socializing. That's a lot to do. Please make sure to set up a schedule to keep yourself healthy, happy and wise.

For the MS3s heading into the MS4 year, good luck with your AI's, electives and interview trail. Binghamton students returning to Syracuse, please let me know ASAP if any of you need assistance with hospital credentials at the VA or Crouse. There is documentation that needs to be completed for these and advance timing is essential for the VA (4-6 weeks).

For the MS4s, congratulations on your successes at Upstate. Thank you for the memories that you have given me and the smiles we have had. I wish you all the best in your life adventures. I look forward to hearing from you on your successes!!

~Your Upstate Testing Lady, Colleen

Technology Updates

MS1/MS2: As of the start of Academic Year 2021-2022, we will not be using Exam Monitoring as a normal proctoring method. We will be moving to a Webex monitoring system where you will be monitored in real time. More information to come in the future.

Clerkship Exams had a few glitches in the beginning of the year, but I believe we have it worked out to a well-oiled machine now. These exams will continue to be proctored in person with remediations either in person or remote, as needed.

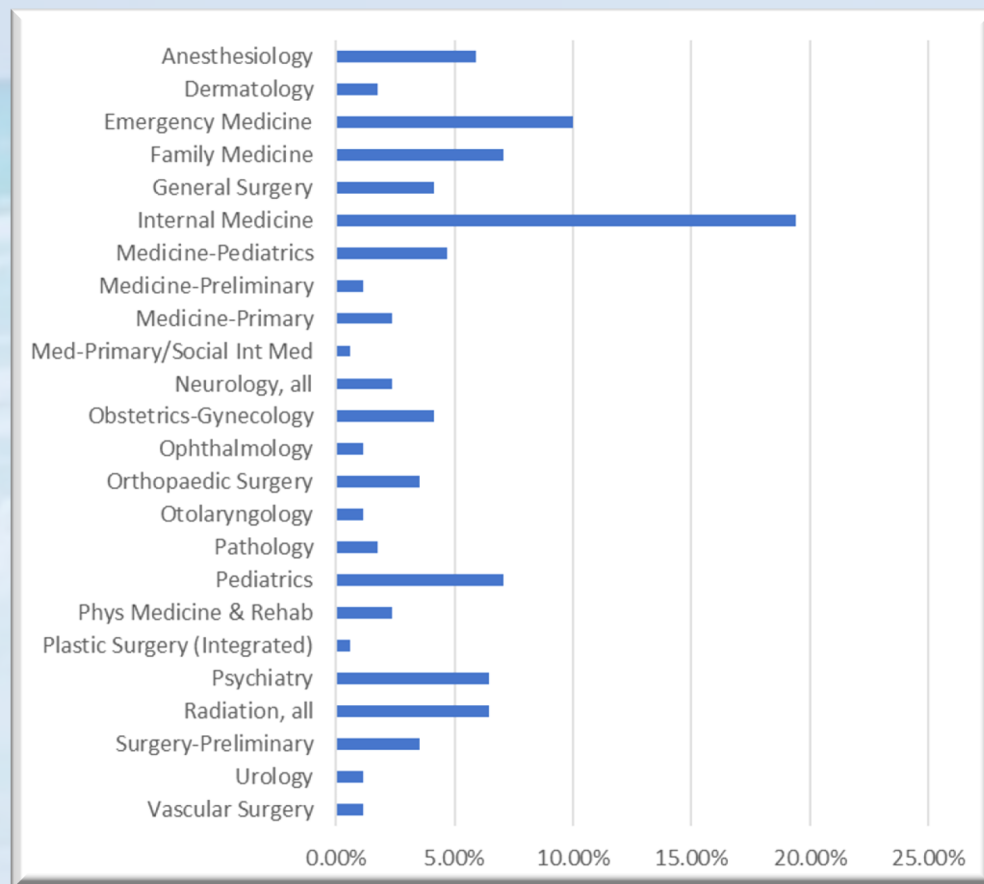
Student Access Requests

For anyone students needing EPIC, PACs/Synapse, and/or Remote access, please make sure to visit our website at [Student Access Request](#). If there is an immediate need (48 hours), please urgent email me.

If you are completing research for an IRB project and need Slicer Dicer with Delegate, please note that you must send me the IRB # associated with your research, you must make sure that the PI has added you to the IRB project with the Research office, and you must have MS3 or higher level Epic access. If the IRB has not been submitted OR you are not on the IRB, the access will not be granted.

Greetings from the Office of Evaluation, Assessment and Research

MS IV students: Please let us join the chorus of voices congratulating you on a very successful match day! We are bursting with pride over your accomplishments and cannot wait to see the big things you'll do in the future. The below chart illustrates the percentage of your class that matched into each specialty.



MS III students: As you start to plan your away electives for next year, please make use of the Away Elective Survey Report, found here: <https://www.upstate.edu/com/pdf/intra/away-electives-feedback.pdf>. For the past few years, we have asked graduating students to complete a survey regarding their experiences during their away electives. This data is then compiled into a report to be used by MSIII students.

MSII students: We hope your dedicated study time is going well. Our office assists in analyzing Step 1 predictive data. Performance in your assessments during the first two years of medical school tends to correlate with Step 1 performance. If you are concerned about your performance in those assessments, we encourage you to reach out to Maryann Grandinetta, Director, COM Educational and Career Success for help and guidance on your studying.

MSI students: Congratulations on being nearly through your first year of medical school! We know that is no small feat! As you know, the Gateway exam will be given May 19th. This exam tests residual knowledge and is correlated with success on Step 1.

As always, please feel free to contact our office with any questions or concerns.

Ms. Josie Suser: suserj@upstate.edu & Dr. Lauren Germain: germainl@upstate.edu

From the Office of Accreditation & Compliance



LCME Status Report Survey

On February 1, all COM students received a short survey with questions needed to respond to the LCME Status Report as well as questions that will help Student Affairs better serve student needs. In addition, Dean Chin added a survey question in order to get students' input on their ideas to improve the medical school. We received 512 comments and suggestions. All responses were manually coded by two staff members using Nvivo software and the constant comparison method. Data were first coded by theme and then were organized by area of oversight within each subtheme. Leadership are reviewing the student feedback and will submit their suggestions to Dean Chin for his review and potential implementation.

| Responses by Student Year & Campus | | |
|------------------------------------|------------|-------|
| MS1 | 104 | 20.3% |
| MS2 | 92 | 18.0% |
| MS3-SYR | 98 | 19.1% |
| MS3-BIN | 53 | 10.4% |
| MS4-SYR | 123 | 24.0% |
| MS4-BIN | 42 | 8.2% |
| Total | 512 | |

All students who completed the survey were entered into a raffle and 2 students won an iPad!

Michael Mellace, MS2
Efe Ebhohimen, MS3

AAMC 2021 Graduation Questionnaire (GQ)

On **February 14**, all MS4 students were sent a link to the AAMC GQ survey. This survey is a national questionnaire administered annually to all graduating medical students. This provides students the opportunity to give their feedback on all four years of the curriculum and their overall experience at Upstate. We value your feedback and use the results to inform decision-making in the College of Medicine!

The overall national completion rate is 60.1%. By comparison, last year's response rate was 62.8% at this time. Currently, half of our MS4 students have taken the time to complete the questionnaire – thank you! We hope the other half will take the time to complete as well!

| SUNY Upstate | Total | Percent |
|--------------|-------|---------|
| Completed | 88 | 50.0% |
| In Progress | 28 | 15.9% |
| Not Started | 60 | 34.1% |



Access Volunteer Opportunities
<http://www.upstate.edu/>

Track Your Volunteer Work in My Upstate

Employees

Log into Self-Serve ➡ My Information ➡ Community Service

Students

Log into MyUpstate ➡ Community Service

Security, Student, Safety, and Disaster Preparedness

Upstate Medical University ensures that adequate security systems are in place at all locations and publishes policies and procedures to ensure student safety and to address emergency and disaster preparedness.

SUNY Upstate Campus Disaster Plan [Link](#)

Code of Conduct

In order to support the mission and values of Upstate Medical University, all members of the Upstate community are expected to maintain the highest level of professional behavior, ethics, integrity and honesty, regardless of position or status.

The Upstate Code of Conduct [Link](#)
The Student Code of Conduct [Link](#)

Student Occupational Health Exposure Policy and Procedures

The College of Medicine Policy on Student Occupational Health Exposure outlines mechanisms for treatment after student exposure to infectious or environmental hazards, mechanisms for reporting, and guidelines for financial reimbursement.

Why this matters?

- We care about your safety!
- In 2020, we had a total of 9 student blood and body fluid exposures.

Students receive education on prevention methods at orientations and through Blackboard Modules (i.e., "Safety at Work" and "Right to Know")

Do you know the steps for the care and treatment after exposure to infectious and environmental hazards?

Step 1: Treat Exposure Site:

- ✓ Wash the exposed skin with soap and water as soon as possible after exposure.
 - ✓ Flush exposed mucus membranes with water.
 - ✓ Flush eyes with at least 500 ml of water or normal saline for at least 15 minutes.
 - ✓ Do not apply disinfectants, antibiotics or caustic agents to the wound.
- Proceed to the Emergency Department if wound suturing or other first aid is needed.

Step 2: Initiate Follow-Up Without Delay:

- Weekdays between 7:30 am – 4 pm call Employee/Student Health (ESH) at (315) 464-4260. Students will be instructed where to follow up.
- After hours, weekends, and holidays
 - Proceed to Emergency Department at clinical site.
 - Proceed to closest Emergency Department if none is at facility
 - Notify ESH of the exposure by leaving a voicemail or calling the next day of business.

Step 3: Review the policies noted below:

- Upstate's Policy on Student Occupational Health Exposure [Link](#)
- Upstate's Policy on Blood Body Fluid Exposure Follow-Up [Link](#)





Gold Star and Commendation Form



Commendation Forms are accessible in [MedHub](#) for faculty interested in acknowledging students that go above and beyond the call of duty! **“Gold Star” Reports can be filled out by anyone** to nominate students, faculty, or staff who demonstrate exemplary professional behaviors or contribute to a positive learning environment. Nominations can be made by going to the [website](#):

Psychiatry Clerkship Administrator: Cassandra Read

Cassie has continued to adapt to the ongoing changes within our clerkship. She consistently lends a hand to our Binghamton team as we all navigate changes in personnel and increasing our use of electronic tracking/monitoring/grading systems. Cassie goes above and beyond, she is always two steps ahead of me, and we are so very lucky to have her coordinating our Psychiatry Clerkship in Syracuse. Thanks, Cassie!

Standardized Patient Program Director: Steve Harris

Steve Harris went above and beyond to make the RMED students feel comfortable coming back to take the family medicine summative SPE. There is a great deal of stress and pressure that builds up prior to these exams, and Steve calmly explained all details and directions to us. As a Binghamton clinical campus student, I had not taken an SPE in Syracuse since mid-second year before the pandemic shutdown. He carefully and slowly explained the procedures that were in place to keep us all safe. His calm and confident guidance definitely made me feel at ease, and I was able to focus on the standardized patient encounter. His small kindnesses did not go unrecognized, and I am grateful that he is there to steer the ship during SPEs.

Internal Medicine Resident: Aya Albittar, MD

The moment that really stood out to me is when the patient I was carrying, while initially seemed to have improved, began to decompensate. When his wife came to visit, Aya took the time to speak with her and explain to her how important it was for her (the wife) to know exactly what was happening as well as find out his prognosis. She really emphasized how important it was for the patient's wife to weigh her options and offered emotional support. It was my first time seeing the "tough conversations" we hear about but never really learn until we are on the wards. What Aya had said really resonated with me and even the patient's wife was extremely grateful for the information and support Aya provided. She also made sure that I knew I could talk to her and she saw how painful it was for me to see a patient who had been doing well decompensate so rapidly.

4th year Medical Student: Vasiliki Giannakakos

The Clerkship Practice Sessions are two new learning activities for second-year medical students that help to prepare them for working on the hospital floors during their third year. Precepting the sessions involves up to four consecutive hours of intense small-group teaching, which this year was provided by an amazing crew of fourth-year student volunteers. Although they were all wonderful, Vasia G. particularly stood out because she was the only one to volunteer for the entire four hours of the December session and then come back again for all four hours in March. She is a peer education machine, and her new residency program is very lucky to have her.



The AOA junior elections were held on April 22, 2021. Please join me in congratulating the newly elected members from the Class of 2022!

Haley Burdge
Yelim Chung
Fiorella Guido
Nick Huang
Thomas Knoerl
Stephen Lucas
Christine Ly
Margaret Mandato
Casey Mohrien

Amylisa Phillips
Aleksandar Popovic
Alyssa Purdy
Marissa Rice
Sunita Singh
Almasa Talovic
Megan Tatusko
Melia Wakeman

Patty Gooden
AOA Administrator, Upstate Gamma Chapter

STUDENT RESEARCH DAY

Student Research Day was held virtually on April 7, 2021. The event highlighted student research from students in the College of Graduate Students, the College of Health Professions, and the College of Medicine. The day featured a keynote presentation, oral presentations from students, and a poster/abstract session. Please join me in congratulating this year's awardees from the College of Medicine.

Oral Presentation

Cameron Bosinski
Robert She

Research Award

Sruti Akula
Mark Derbyshire
Andrew Pivovar

Clinical Vignette Award

Leona Ramos

This is an annual event, and we look forward to more COM students participating again next year!



*Patty Gooden
COM Student Research Day Liaison*



Thank a Resident Day

On February 26, 2021, the Upstate Chapter of the Gold Humanism Honor Society (GHHS) participated in Thank a Resident Day.

The students collaborated with senior leadership to personally deliver light fare breakfast items to each resident physician room. GHHS members also gave every residency program a personalized thank you letter with each delivery to thank the residents for their continued mentorship and service, even during these difficult times. It was a successful event and utilized the values of the GHHS!



Patty Gooden
GHHS Administrator

EXCEPTIONAL MOMENTS IN TEACHING



The 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.

Rebecca Greenblatt, PhD, is assistant professor of Microbiology and Immunology at SUNY Upstate Medical University. She is the **March 2021** Recipient of the **Exceptional Moments in Teaching Recognition**.

COMMENTS FROM DR. GREENBLATT'S STUDENTS:

"I love Dr. Greenblatt's extremely clear and concise teaching style. She always focuses on clinical relevance, which I appreciate. I enjoyed going to her live lectures because she's so enthusiastic and engaging. I also appreciate the Poll Everywhere questions to keep students involved, which is both difficult to do and so important with remote learning."

"Dr. Greenblatt always came to class with energy and excitement for the material."

"Dr. Greenblatt is incredibly quick-witted, and always inserts jokes into her presentations, which helps keep students engaged. She presents the core material and also provides additional interesting details for those who are curious."

"Very clear presentation, and her lectures are always super well organized. It is like she is telling a story with the presentation which always helps me remember things better personally."

"I appreciate Dr. Greenblatt's enthusiasm and incorporation of humor into lectures. Although I often watched these lectures from home, these traits still kept me engaged."

EXCEPTIONAL MOMENTS IN TEACHING



Birx Nolan, MD, is a second-year Resident in Obstetrics and Gynecology at SUNY Upstate Medical University. She is the **April 2021** Recipient of the **Exceptional Moments in Teaching Recognition**.

COMMENTS FROM DR. NOLAN'S STUDENTS:

"Dr. Nolan is a great mentor. My surgical experience is very limited but Dr. Nolan was very patient and explained to me everything that needs to be done step by step — from scrubbing in, to proper OR etiquette."

"Dr. Birx acts with decisiveness and confidence. She is considerate of all people in her presence, and she demonstrates a commitment to excellence in patient care and team interactions. It is inspiring and very telling to observe her in action. She exemplifies respectfulness, and she very obviously cares deeply for others. I truly hope to practice in a way similar to her in the future."

"I was able to see a consult with Dr. Birx, and she helped explain to me what the management for the patient would be and why estrogen would not be a good option. On OB nights, I felt she truly cared for the medical students and wanted them to get a great experience. I overheard her asking the nurse to find a medical student to be involved in the delivery of a patient who had been rushed to a room. She also had a difficult case that night that I thought she handled very well considering how challenging the situation was."

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Brian Tran, DO, is clinical instructor of Pediatrics at Upstate University Hospital. He is the **May 2021** Recipient of the **Exceptional Moments in Teaching Recognition**.

COMMENTS FROM DR. TRAN'S STUDENTS:

"Dr. Tran was phenomenal. He was actively engaged in my experience and learning, always looking to teach and involve me in the care of the patients. Got to know me personally. He has a fantastic demeanor underlined with kindness, respect, a fantastic base of knowledge and strong work ethic."

"Dr. Brian is an amazing role model for how to interact with children and their families, with both a very personable demeanor and a bedside manner that allows both serious and lighthearted situations to be discussed with patients and their families. I learned many ways to help make children comfortable during some of the more uncomfortable situations that medicine often brings with it. For example: kneeling to their level, giving children choice about how to proceed with exams, and lighthearted jokes to help ease tension."

"Dr. Brian was always willing to teach and answer my questions. What I found the most amazing about him is that despite being a great professional he still was able to be "silly" with the kids. I saw the kids' eyes light up when they saw him. While I don't intend to be a pediatrician, I hope to one day emulate his impeccable connection with his patients and their parents."

Medical Specialties

S Q M E D I C A L G E N E T I C S N E U R O L O G Y
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ANESTHIOLOGY
 CARDIOLOGY
 CARDIOTHORACIC
 CLINICALBIOETHICS
 COLORECTAL
 DERMATOLOGY
 EMERGENCY
 ENDOCRINOLOGY
 FAMILY
 GASTROENTEROLOGY
 GENERALSURGERY
 GERIATRICS
 GYNECOLOGY
 HEMATOLOGY
 HOLISTIC
 IMMUNOLOGY
 INFECTIOUSDISEASE

INTENSIVECARE
 INTERNAL
 INTERVENTIONALRADIOLOGY
 MEDICALGENETICS
 NEPHROLOGY
 NEUROLOGY
 NEUROSURGERY
 NUCLEAR
 OBSTETRICS
 OCCUPATIONAL
 ONCOLOGY
 OPHTHALMOLOGY
 ORTHOPEDICS
 OTOLARYNGOLOGY
 PAINMANAGEMENT
 PATHOLOGY
 PEDIATRICS

PHYSICAL
 PLASTICSURGERY
 POPULATIONHEALTH
 PREVENTIVE
 PRIMARYCARE
 PSYCHIATRY
 PULMONOLOGY
 RADIOLOGY
 RECONSTRUCTION
 REHABILITATION
 RHEUMATOLOGY
 SLEEP
 SPORTS
 TRANSPLANTS
 UROLOGY
 VASCULARSURGERY