



Mayo School of Health Sciences

Connections

A publication for alumni, students, faculty and friends of Mayo School of Health Sciences

SPRING | 2016

KATHY BREWER
DISTINGUISHED
ALLIED HEALTH
EDUCATOR



Coming soon: More opportunities to be involved

A year ago, when I became president of Mayo School of Health Sciences (MSHS) Alumni Association, I wanted to find more opportunities for alumni to be involved with both students and fellow alumni. Thanks to input from many of you and the work of our Alumni Association Board of Directors, those opportunities are nearing reality.

Last fall, hundreds of you responded to a survey or talked with board members about ideas for the association. Several topics garnered significant interest.

Mentoring: Our alums want to share their knowledge and experience as mentors. Connecting mentor and mentee may occur via the MSHS Alumni Association website (<https://mshsalumni.mayo.edu>). There also may be training or

discussion opportunities at the annual meeting in Rochester, or at gatherings on Mayo Clinic campuses in Florida and Arizona.

Virtual reunions: Alumni told us they would like more ways to connect virtually, such as the website or via other social media. We want to make our website your go-to place for these virtual reunions and a tool to connect you with other alumni.

More gatherings in more places: We heard that colleagues would welcome get-togethers in Arizona and Florida in addition to the annual meeting in Rochester.

Connections magazine: We want to make sure we are connecting with alumni via articles published in this magazine. The Alumni Association Board of Directors will

provide a liaison to the magazine's editorial board. We will continue to reach out to alumni for article ideas.

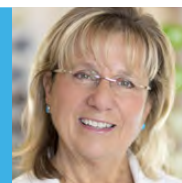
Work groups are developing plans and recommendations around these areas to be presented at the MSHS Alumni Association Annual Meeting, April 15, in Rochester. (See page 3 for all the details.) I look forward to seeing many of you there.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Randy Roesch".

Randy Roesch, PT, DPT, MBA
President
MSHS Alumni Association
rroesch@ymail.com

ON THE COVER / Physical Therapist Kathy Brewer was named the 2015 Distinguished Allied Health Educator of the Year on Mayo Clinic's Arizona campus. Read more on page 8.



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» <https://mshsalumni.mayo.edu>

» www.facebook.com/mshsalumni

Caution: Distorted thinking at work

Gregory Poland, MD, director of Mayo Clinic's Vaccine Research Group, knows an epidemic when he sees one, and he contends that society is plagued by faulty thinking. "The ability to make good decisions as a matter of habit directly determines your quality of life and the quality of life of the people you touch," Dr. Poland says. "It has a profound influence on all of our work, and it is critical to living a good life."

As a resident in the early 1980s, Dr. Poland returned from a conference, eager to share mind-blowing new information: stomach ulcers are caused by bacteria and can be cured with an antibiotic.

"The attending physician said, 'You got it wrong,'" Dr. Poland recalls. "At that time, everybody knew that ulcers were due to excess stomach acid. Because it did not fit into their understanding of what an ulcer was, physicians everywhere could not believe that a paradigm this different could be possible."

People are often unaware that misguided choices could sabotage their careers and the care they provide.

"I've always been extremely interested in how irrational our lives and decisions are," explains Dr. Poland. As a result, when he's not working as an international authority on vaccines and biodefense as the Mary Lowell Leary Professor of Medicine, Dr. Poland is a motivational speaker. On the speaking circuit, Dr. Poland shares his approach to success, including how to make good decisions.

Shortly after the turn of the millennium, Dr. Poland and his team coined the term vaccinomics — the use of genotype information to predict immune responses and adverse effects to vaccines. He predicted that individual health eventually would be protected from viruses by personalized vaccines.

"Vaccines now are population based. We all get the same vaccine at the same dose, regardless of risk factors. We don't do that in medicine for anything else," Dr. Poland says. "But I was



Gregory Poland, MD

laughed at. I couldn't get papers published or grants funded." By 2010, *Scientific American* called vaccinomics "one of the most innovative scientific concepts of the decade."

Dr. Poland traces what he calls an epidemic in flawed judgment to two forms of automatic thought patterns:

- **Cognitive biases**

These mental shortcuts allow quick decisions guided by instinctive rules of thumb. However, to minimize internal conflicts, cognitive biases can prevent you from seeing new information objectively. See types of cognitive biases at skepticalmedicine.com.

- **Cognitive distortions**

These irrational thoughts or beliefs produce errors in the thought process. See examples at psychologytoday.com. Search "50 common cognitive distortions."

These unconscious mental habits taint the decision-making process in myriad ways, he says. How else can you explain, he asks, why people vote for the candidate who simply looks most presidential, or lead a sedentary lifestyle despite warnings about the long-term health consequences?

Several years ago, Dr. Poland started hearing a buzzing sound in his ear. Results were normal from a magnetic resonance

angiogram of the blood vessels in his head and neck, and the buzzing subsided. A few years later, after the buzzing recurred, further testing revealed a tumor in Dr. Poland's left parotid gland. Fortunately, the tumor was benign and easily removed.

"We looked back on the first scan, and you could clearly see the tumor," Dr. Poland says. The walnut-sized tumor was missed because the care team was looking for circulatory abnormalities, not tumors.

It's easy to repeat systematic errors in judgment. "We are blind to our own biases and distortions," Dr. Poland says. "Once your eyes are opened to them, you are shocked." >>

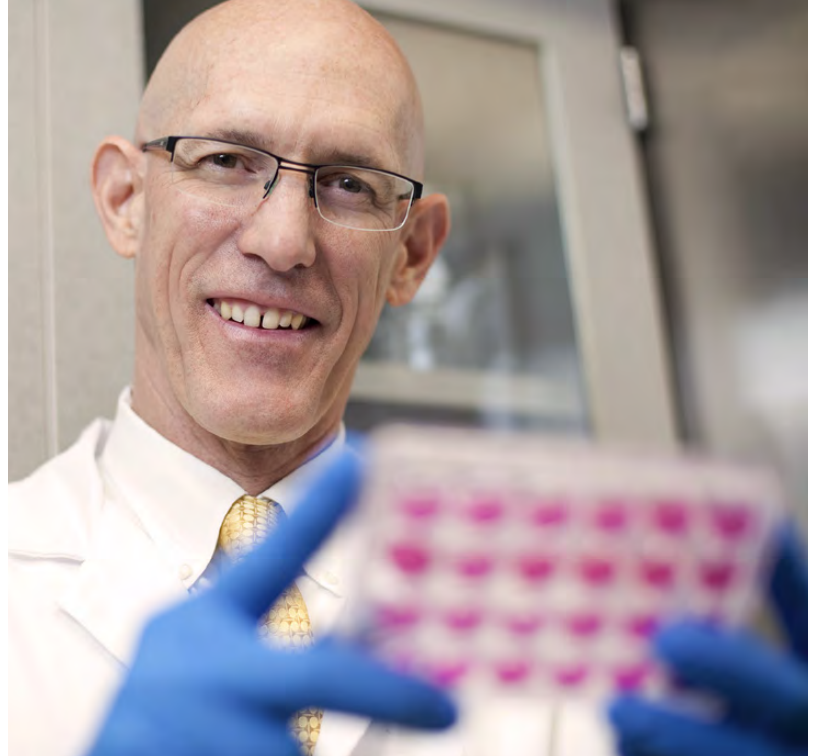
Awareness is the vaccine for cognitive bias and distortion. Dr. Poland helps people recognize their tendencies, so they can make a conscious effort to minimize the impact on their thought process and decision-making. And he provides practical tools to optimize decision-making. In short, he teaches people how to think better.

"If you learn to be wise and discerning," Dr. Poland says, "it can change how you do things in life."

First steps to good decisions

Poor choices typically can be traced to flaws in your decision-making process. Dr. Poland offers two suggestions for instant improvement:

- **What you see is all there is**
Humans leap to conclusions because our brains automatically interpret what we observe. "We impart meaning based on our biases," Dr. Poland explains. To avoid misinterpreting a person's appearance or mannerisms, make a conscious effort to focus on the facts.
- **Slow down in the face of uncertainty**
Quick decisions often reflect our cognitive biases and distortions. Wise decisions take time and effort. Be thorough in gathering data. Be deliberate in analyzing options. Be rational in making your choice. ©



Dr. Poland featured speaker at Alumni Annual Meeting

Gregory Poland, MD, is the featured speaker at the MSHS Alumni Association annual meeting on Friday, April 15, 2016.

In his speech, "How We Make Decisions and Inhibit Scientific Advances," Dr. Poland will explore the role of cognitive biases and distortions in the judgment and decision-making of health care professionals.

April 15, 2016

Double Tree Hotel
150 South Broadway
Rochester, Minnesota
5:30 p.m. – Reception
6:15 p.m. – Program
7:15 p.m. – Dinner

The evening is free for association members and a guest. Reserve your spot by April 8, 2016, at mshsaadinner.eventbrite.com.

About Dr. Poland

Dr. Poland is director of Mayo Clinic's Vaccine Research Group and editor-in-chief for the journal *Vaccine*.

He has published more than 500 peer-reviewed scientific articles and book chapters, accumulated more than \$185 million in federal funding for his research, and received the 2013 Mayo Distinguished Investigator Award, the 2012 Mayo Clinic Department of Medicine Lifetime Research Achievement Award and the highest civilian medal from the U.S. Department of Defense.

Fellowship prepares providers for rural emergency departments

Mayo School of Health Sciences (MSHS) is at the forefront in preparing nurse practitioners (NP) and physician assistants (PA) to staff rural emergency departments.



The first graduates of the 18-month MSHS NP/PA Emergency Medicine Fellowship — one of the few fellowships of its kind in the United States — will receive their certificates in March 2016.

"We're providing the experience and training that would take three to five years to learn on the job, if they were lucky enough to find a position that offered such on-the-job training" says Victoria Clemens, PA-C, fellowship program director.

"Our graduates are fulfilling a major need in rural health care," says Alex Beuning, MD, fellowship medical director. Traditionally, rural emergency departments have been covered by family physicians who work

in nearby practices or by locum (temporary) physicians.

Dr. Beuning, medical director for Mayo Clinic Emergency Medicine NP/PA practice, was one of the advocates for the new MSHS fellowship when it launched in 2014. "I'm trained as a both a family medicine and emergency doctor," he says. "It is getting harder to find family physicians who have the interest and ability to do emergency medicine."

Now, in Mayo Clinic Health System and across the country, rural emergency departments are increasingly staffed by PAs and NPs, says Dr. Beuning.

Clemens says that additional training in emergency medicine

is critical for PAs and NPs because they often are solo providers in rural emergency departments. "They need to be able to manage situations when life and limbs are at risk," she says.

The fellows complete rotations across Mayo Clinic Health System emergency departments, working alongside emergency medicine specialists. They also rotate through trauma, anesthesiology, orthopedic surgery, ENT, critical care, radiology and ophthalmology.

At graduation, the fellows are well-prepared to handle all types of emergency care, including high-risk, low-frequency procedures such as intubations, lumbar punctures and placement of central lines and chest tubes. >>



Alex Beuning, MD,
and Victoria Clemens

“We’re looking for people who are committed to emergency medicine and rural communities.”

» ALEX BEUNING, MD

That’s just the type of expertise Mayo Clinic Health System is looking for in its 22 emergency departments in Iowa, Minnesota and Wisconsin, says Dr. Beuning. Over the next few years, Mayo Clinic Health System will need to hire about 50 NPs and PAs to staff emergency departments.

“We’re looking for people who are committed to emergency medicine and rural communities,” he says. “We’re looking for people who love the job and want to stay.”

First graduates hired in Mayo Clinic Health System

HAKKON ROSENDAHL, physician assistant

Hakkon Rosendahl, PA-C, doesn’t hesitate when asked what he enjoyed most about the MSHS NP/PA Emergency Medicine Fellowship.

“I got to manage critical patients with direct supervision from highly skilled emergency physicians,” says Rosendahl, who will graduate in March 2016. “I was able to manage high-acuity patients. As the only learner, I performed every procedure.”

When Rosendahl completed his physician assistant program in 2014, he says he was certain his place was in emergency medicine. But he wanted more training to feel fully prepared. “I could have tried to learn on the job, and hoped to find a good physician champion as a mentor, or just accepted that I wouldn’t be able to manage critical patients in the emergency setting.”

Upon hearing about the MSHS fellowship, he knew he had found a better way to develop the skills he sought. “I had access to incredible training,” he says.

Hakkon Rosendahl



Rosendahl starts work in the emergency departments at Mayo Clinic Health System in Albert Lea and Austin, Minnesota, in April. He likes that it is close to Osage, Iowa, his hometown, where he lives with his wife, Ashley, and their young daughter. And, he looks forward to the variety and pace of the work.

"I could see a 1-year-old with croup, a 90-year-old with chest pain and a 30-year-old trauma patient within minutes of each other," he says.



MATT DUNN, **nurse practitioner**

Matt Dunn, DNP, says he jumped at the opportunity to delve deeper into emergency medicine at Mayo Clinic. "There aren't a lot of post-graduate opportunities for nurse practitioners," he says.

He will graduate from the MSHS NP/PA Emergency Medicine Fellowship in March 2016.

Dunn conducted research on the readiness of nurse practitioners to care for complex patients as part of his doctorate in nursing practice, which he completed before the fellowship. While conducting a literature search and survey, he found that "it's assumed that nurse practitioners should have no problem transitioning to an acute care setting."

Dunn, who has worked in emergency departments for five years, advocates that more training is better. "The training we had in this fellowship prepared us to provide top-quality emergency care," he says.

One example is point-of-care ultrasound, where nurse practitioners or physician assistants use bedside ultrasound as a tool to place a difficult IV, examine a trauma patient for intra-abdominal bleeding, or detect an aortic aneurysm.

Dunn, working with Alex Beuning, MD, fellowship medical director, is developing a plan to implement this new tool across Mayo Clinic Health System emergency departments. "It's a wonderful opportunity to start our practice with this advanced skill in hand," says Dunn. "I'm looking forward to sharing these skills with other providers."

In April 2016, Dunn plans to begin work at Mayo Clinic Health System emergency departments in Cannon Falls and Red Wing, Minnesota. An outdoor enthusiast, the Oregon native has quickly embraced life in the Midwest, which he had never visited before the fellowship. "I really enjoy more rural settings." 



Kathy Brewer imparts compassion for older patients

Kathy Brewer, PT, DPT, GCS, MEd, CEEAA, says education is in her genes.

“My mother was a dietitian and taught dietetics. My grandmother was a missionary and taught in a Native American boys’ school,” says Brewer, a physical therapist and clinical education specialist in the Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at Mayo Clinic in Arizona. “My mom used to tell me that no matter what I did in life, I’d be a teacher.”

Her mother was right. Throughout her clinical

career, Brewer has also found opportunities to teach. Her contributions at Mayo Clinic were recognized in October when she was named the 2015 Distinguished Allied Health Educator of the Year in Arizona. She was nominated for the award by her colleagues and chosen by a selection committee that included Mayo School of Health Sciences (MSHS) leaders and past award recipients. She was surprised and humbled to be chosen for the honor.

“You do the work and put in the time because it’s the right thing to do, but it’s not something you expect credit for,” she says. “It means so much to be nominated by your peers. I felt so absolutely honored by the award.”

In their nomination form, Brewer’s colleagues praised her work as a clinical education specialist, a position that tasks her with supporting the learning and development of more than 100 staff in the Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation. They also highlighted her efforts to develop

and lead the MSHS Physical Therapy Geriatric Residency Program.

Building the residency program — the only credentialed program of its kind in the western United States — is, in many ways, the culmination of Brewer’s longtime commitment to caring for geriatric patients.

“Early in my career, I saw what an underserved population this was,” says Brewer. “Older adults were very often written off.” But she knew from personal experience that the population had great potential.

“My grandmother lived to be 107 and showed me what healthy aging looked like,” she says. “I

“My grandmother lived to be 107 and showed me what healthy aging looked like.”

» KATHY BREWER





Kathy Brewer uses a spine model to educate her patient about biomechanics related to her diagnosis and symptoms.

knew our field had a lot to offer geriatric patients.”

Brewer’s commitment to education also can be seen in her personal approach to professional development. This year, she finished her doctorate.

“It’s been quite a year,” she admits, adding that after 38 years in the field, she’s not even thinking about slowing down. “I don’t sit still. I continue to grow and evolve.”

She knows that her commitment, as well as the recognition from her peers, would please her mother, who passed away five years ago.

“I can feel my mother’s smile,” she says. ☺



With guidance from Kathy Brewer, a patient practices therapeutic exercises to improve core stability and reduce her symptoms.

MSHS alumni plan proton beam therapy treatments

When Janelle Miller, CMD, RTT, began the Mayo School of Health Sciences (MSHS) Radiography Program, being a dosimetrist had never occurred to her.

Dosimetrists work with radiation oncologists and physicists to create individualized, highly technical treatment plans to administer prescribed radiation.

Then, Miller did a rotation in radiation therapy with dosimetrists. “It was so interesting,” she says. “Every patient is different because every tumor is different. It’s like putting a puzzle together for each person. That’s a challenge I still look forward to every day.”

Miller graduated from the program in 1993 and the MSHS Radiation Therapy Program in 1994. Now, along with five other MSHS alumni, she’s a dosimetrist in Mayo Clinic’s new Proton Beam Therapy Program, which opened on the Rochester campus in June 2015. Miller also supervises

“Every patient is different because every tumor is different. It’s like putting a puzzle together for each person.”

>> JANELLE MILLER



dosimetrists in the Department of Radiation Oncology in Rochester.

“Dosimetrists do their work between the time a patient comes in the door and the time they actually have their treatment,” says Miller. They develop treatment plans based on the radiation oncologist’s goals and priorities for a patient.

“The physicians tell us what areas of the body they want to target,” she says. Using computer software, dosimetrists determine exactly how the prescribed dose will be administered. Some of these plans take two weeks or longer to develop.

About proton beam therapy

Proton beam therapy deposits a higher dose of radiation at the target site and has less effect on surrounding healthy tissues than do the X-rays used in conventional radiation therapy. In properly selected patients — especially children and young adults, and those with cancers located close to



Six dosimetrists working in the Proton Beam Therapy Program are alumni of the MSHS Radiography and Radiation Therapy programs. They are: Kathy Hoeft, RTT, Janelle Miller, CMD, RTT, Jeff Kuball, CMD, RTT, Stephanie Wurgler, CMD, RTT, Bret Kazemba, CMD, RTT. Not pictured: Alan Kraling, CMD, RTT.

critical organs and body structures — it is an advance over traditional radiotherapy.

However, Miller says, “there is a lot more to consider when planning proton beam therapy to make sure things are done accurately.”

For example, energy from proton therapy travels to a certain point in the body and then stops. (Conventional radiation therapy beams continue through the body, affecting tumors and healthy tissues.) The desired stopping point for proton beam energy is calculated based on properties of the body tissue. If tissue properties change due to patient weight loss or tumor shrinkage, dosimetrists revisit and update the treatment plan.

Miller credits her group’s skill and talent for the smooth transition into the new Proton Beam Therapy Program.

“We have a great group of dosimetrists,” says Miller. “It’s a good feeling to know we offer our patients another option to treat their cancer.”

Dosimetrist: How do I get this job?

Many of the dosimetrists working at Mayo Clinic transitioned from radiation therapists to dosimetrists. They trained on the job and passed the medical dosimetry certification exam.

Beginning in 2017, all U.S. candidates for that exam will be required to have a bachelor’s degree from a dosimetry program accredited by the Joint Review Committee on Education in Radiologic Technology.



>> ALUM PROFILES

First “real” jobs

Meet Mayo School of Health Sciences alumni who are settling into their first “real” jobs. They share challenges overcome, lessons learned and their delight in their new roles. Says one alumnus, “I get up every day saying, ‘I get to help somebody get healthy today.’”

There’s no better reason to head to work.

Inspired to work in surgery

William Lagrosa, CSA, brings heroic ambitions to his dream job as a surgical assistant.

"My main goal in life is to save people's lives," Lagrosa says. "I feel good leaving work every day, knowing that I played a part in helping somebody or in saving somebody's life."

Lagrosa was hired by Mayo Clinic shortly before he graduated from the Surgical First Assistant Program in 2015. He typically assists on four to six surgical procedures a day on the Rochester campus. He brings the patient to the operating room, positions and preps the patient, assists the surgeon, then closes the incision.

"I try to make it look perfect because that's what the patient sees," Lagrosa says.

He is delighted to be a surgical assistant at Mayo Clinic. "It's a good place for learning," he says. "You encounter unique cases that you won't see anywhere else."

Lagrosa nearly missed his calling. He had all but completed a bachelor's degree in exercise science from Florida Atlantic University in 2013. He was planning to go to physical therapist school until he shadowed a cardiac surgeon during an internship.

"This is awesome," he remembers thinking of the operating room. "This is my inspiration. I want a job in surgery."

So Lagrosa moved to Rochester to join the Surgical First Assistant class that started in 2014. In clinical rotation, Lagrosa specialized in plastic surgery.



"I thought it gave me an edge — all the practice with suturing and the attention to detail," he explains. "Doors have been opening left and right for me because of Mayo School of Health Sciences."

Lagrosa has applied to nursing schools in hopes of moving up in the operating room to the role of circulating nurse or registered nurse first assistant.

Meanwhile, Lagrosa remains committed to providing exceptional care to his surgical patients: "I get up every day saying, 'I get to help somebody get healthy today.'"

Tailoring physical therapy to the patient

As a physical therapist in outpatient rehabilitation, Jerome Crawford II, PT, DPT, MS, strives to provide patient-pleasing care.

"I may have three or four patients in the clinic at a time, but I make sure each patient is aware that I have their best interest in mind," Crawford explains.

Originally from Philadelphia, Crawford left home at 18 and returned at 30. In between, he earned a bachelor's degree in kinesiology-movement science from Penn State University; a master's in exercise science with an emphasis in human performance and physiology from Northeastern Illinois University, Chicago; and his doctorate in physical therapy from Mayo School of Health Sciences in 2014.

Now a clinician in orthopedics and sports medicine at three NovaCare Rehabilitation clinics

in Philadelphia, Crawford says he listens closely to patients for both symptoms and state of mind.

"You have to meet people where they are. They might be frustrated, or scared, or unsure of how physical therapy works," he says. "You have to find common ground and be flexible and adaptable to every patient. Care that is specific to the patient leads to a better patient experience versus a cookie-cutter approach."

Crawford says Mayo instructors and preceptors preached the patient-first commitment to students already ingrained with empathy.

"I can't overstate how thoroughly Mayo prepared us as clinicians," he says. "How you interact with patients is where Mayo Clinic really shines."

Patients give Crawford the kind of feedback that tells him he's in the right profession and providing the right kind of care.

"I get some form of validation almost daily," he says. "Somebody recovering from an injury will say, 'This is really working out for me.' That feels really good. I want all my patients to say that."

"You have to find
common ground and
be flexible and adaptable
to every patient."

>> JEROME CRAWFORD II





>> ALUM PROFILE: NASRA JIMALE

Social worker offers insights on caring for Somali patients

Nasra Jimale, MSW, LGSW, is using her knowledge of the Somali culture and her interest in cognitive behavior therapy (CBT) to provide better care to Somalis in the Rochester area.

Jimale, who was born in Somalia, researched the use of cognitive behavior therapy (CBT) in Somali patients while working on her master's degree in social work at Minnesota State University, Mankato. Social workers are increasingly using CBT to help patients view challenging situations more clearly and respond to them in a more effective way, explains Jimale.

She provided CBT to patients during her Mayo School of Health Sciences (MSHS) Social Work Internship.

"I wanted to make sure it could be adapted to some of the important features of Somali culture," she explains. She eventually concluded that minor adjustments in the therapy can overcome cultural barriers, including differences in language, religion, concept of time, family dynamics, family roles and gender roles.

Jimale shared some of these insights with colleagues at Mayo Family Clinic Northeast in Rochester during her internship, which she completed in 2015. She answered questions from

staff members about social work, and about the nuances of interacting with Somali patients and their families.

"My main goal was to learn," she says, "but I also wanted to educate my colleagues about the cultural barriers for Somali families and effective interventions."

When civil war erupted in Somalia in 1990, her parents and their nine children immigrated to Kenya and then, in 1993, to the United States. The family settled in Rochester in 1996, when Jimale was in grade school.

Jimale earned a bachelor's degree in psychology from Winona State University and planned to become a child psychologist. But four years working as a case manager at Zumbro Valley Mental Health Center, Rochester, changed her career direction.

"I really liked it," says Jimale. "I was focusing on all aspects of people's lives, not just mental health. I realized that social work is more in line with what I want to do."

Jimale joined the Emergency Department at Mayo Clinic Hospital – Rochester, Saint Marys Campus, as a social worker in January 2016. "I'm excited to start this new journey," Jimale says.

Working in the clinic and in surgery

Physician Assistant Jordan Becker, PA-C, learned about a job opportunity in Orthopedics during a clinical rotation with the department on Mayo Clinic's Rochester campus. Now, he works with orthopedic surgeon Mark Morrey, MD, seeing patients in the clinic and assisting in the operating room.

"One of the main attractions for me was the chance to be in clinic and the operating room," he says. In the clinic, Becker assists with clinical workups, rechecks patients who had surgery and provides recommendations for continuing care.

"I'm a big believer in maximizing quality of life for patients, so being a part of that is rewarding," he says.

At Mayo Clinic Hospital – Rochester, Becker goes on postsurgical rounds and takes charge of preparations for surgery on shoulders, elbows, hips and knees. "In the operating room, I help prep patients and assist during the procedure, and I do the majority of closures," he says.

Becker hopes to participate in research and education, too.

"Once I get a little more established clinically, I could see myself getting into PA education," he says. "It's a good way to give back."

Becker, who grew up on a farm in southwestern Minnesota, earned a bachelor's degree in health fitness from Gustavus Adolphus College, St. Peter, Minnesota, and a master's in clinical exercise physiology from the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse (UWL).

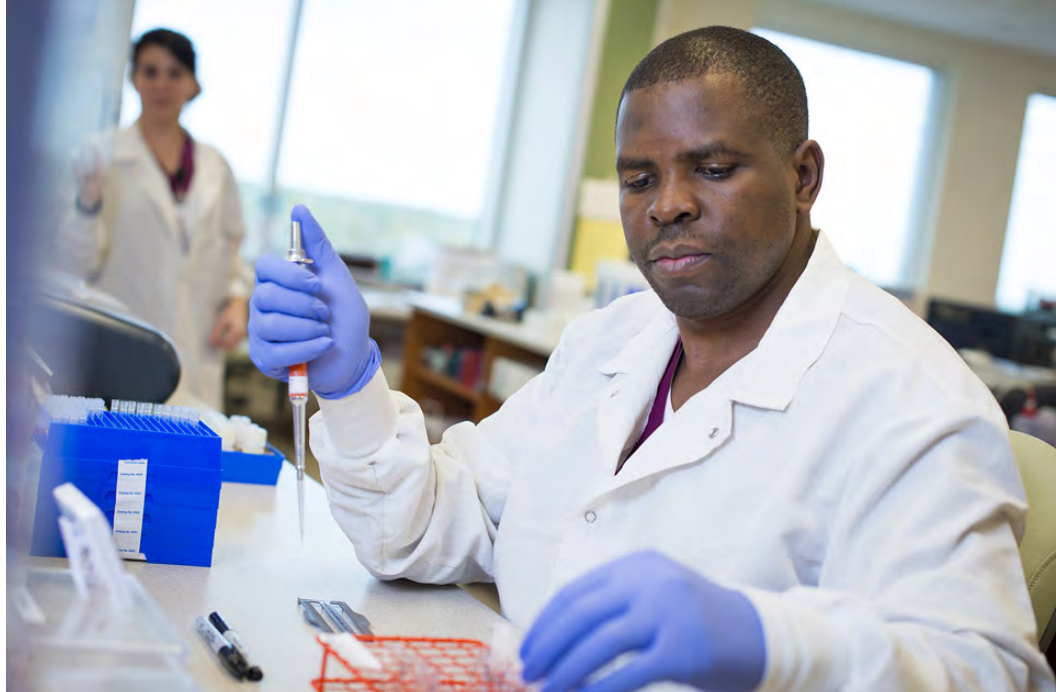
For a master's in physician assistant studies, he returned to UWL, which partners with the Mayo School of Health Sciences Physician Assistant Program for a 12-month clinical phase. He graduated in 2014.

"I felt very fortunate to be part of the program," says Becker. "It provides opportunities to gain experience at a world-class institution. You can't ask for a better learning environment."

"One of the main attractions for me was the chance to be in clinic and the operating room."

» JORDAN BECKER





>> ALUM PROFILE: AIMABLE HAKIZIMANA

From refugee to medical technologist

Aimable Hakizimana's new job as a medical technologist represents a giant step in his journey to a better life.

"It is amazing," says Hakizimana, who emigrated from Africa eight years ago. "For me, it is like magic." He completed the Mayo School of Health Sciences (MSHS) Medical Laboratory Science Program in Rochester, Minnesota, in 2015, and started work on the Florida campus soon after.

Hakizimana created his own magic through survival, perseverance and sacrifice. Born in Rwanda, he was 14 when his family joined a half million people who fled the country in 1994 to escape massacres and civil war.

"People were killing each other," he says of his final days in Rwanda.

Hakizimana spent the next 13 years in Tanzania in a refugee camp. He graduated from high school, started college, married and started his family, and he worked as a hospital lab assistant, all while living in a refugee camp.

"Conditions were horrible. We survived it," he says.

At age 27, Hakizimana, his wife and children moved to the Jacksonville area. He started work as a radiology imaging procedure assistant at Mayo Clinic. He completed a bachelor's degree in biomedical

science/biochemistry from Florida State College at Jacksonville and wanted more lab training.

Jacksonville has laboratory training programs, but Hakizimana was determined to enroll in the MSHS program in Rochester — despite having to leave his family for a year.

"It was very tough," he says. "My wife told me to hang on. I'm glad I did it now."

Now, Hakizimana is thrilled with his position in the Department of Laboratory Medicine. "They say that 70 percent of physician decisions come from lab work," he says. "Even though I don't help the patient directly, I do a lot to help with decisions."

Hakizimana would like to start graduate school in the next five years as a way to gain advanced knowledge, do more to improve patient care and provide a better life for his family.



Left, Aimable Hakizimana stands in front of his house in a Tanzania refugee camp on New Year's Day in 2000. Right, Hakizimana poses with his son at the same refugee camp in 2002.

An electrician for abnormal heartbeats

As a cardiovascular invasive specialist in Mayo Clinic's Heart Rhythm Services, Kevin Mulligan, RCIS, works with implantable devices that monitor and regulate the heart's electrical system. He also is intrigued by valves and other cardiovascular structures that control blood flowing through the heart.

"I consider myself an electrician, but I'm a plumber at heart," quips Mulligan, a 2011 graduate of the Mayo School of Health Sciences Cardiovascular Invasive Specialist (CVIS) Program.

Either way, Mulligan plays an important role in the care of patients with heart disease.

"I really enjoy collaboration and the chance to work as a team with nurses and physicians," says Mulligan, who works on the Rochester campus.

Mulligan has three primary duties:

- Performing 3-D electroanatomical mapping of the heart to help the physician pinpoint tissue causing an irregular heartbeat.
- Assisting with surgeries to implant a pacemaker or defibrillator.
- Extracting the insulated wire leads when a pacing device needs replacing.

"I always knew I wanted to do something in the medical field," he says. Family members with heart issues inspired him to apply for the CVIS Program. He applied as a senior in high school from Bancroft, Iowa, but was not accepted.

"I decided, 'I'm still going to pursue this,'" Mulligan recalls. To complete the prerequisite courses, he enrolled at Rochester Community and Technical College. (There, he met his future wife, Kyla Mulligan, now a surgical technician at Mayo Clinic.) And he found work at a group home to gain direct care experience. The next year, he was accepted into the 21-month CVIS Program.

"I describe myself as motivated," Mulligan says. "I work pretty hard to understand everything."

Since landing the job at Mayo Clinic, he has remained hungry for knowledge. He would like to pursue more education and be involved in research and clinical trials on new medical devices.

"In health care, it's vital to learn from everything we do," he says. "There's always room for development."





» ALUM PROFILE: JESSICA LANE

Thriving on independence

When Jessica Lane, DPT, a 2015 graduate of the Mayo School of Health Sciences (MSHS) Physical Therapy Doctoral Program started her first post-graduation job, she felt a new and invigorating sensation: independence.

"These patients are all my responsibility," she says. "I absolutely love it."

She's a physical therapist at HealthEast Optimum Rehabilitation in St. Paul, Minnesota. Lane's patients include those who are recovering from knee or hip replacements.

"My patients have more chronic pain than I expected," Lane says. "Coming up with ways to treat them has been difficult. Every person differs so much."

Her colleagues with more experience have been a great resource for Lane as she continues to learn on the job. "It's so easy to bounce ideas off other therapists," she says. "And when a therapy is not working, I can go to them and ask, 'What can I do differently?'"

A number of her patients have lymphedema, so Lane is training to be the clinic's go-to therapist for swelling in an arm or leg. She eventually would like to treat more patients with neurological conditions, especially stroke or spinal cord injury.

"I knew I wanted to be a physical therapist when I was in high school," Lane says. She was intrigued to learn that a physical therapist helped gymnast Blaine Wilson recover from an injury in time to help the U.S. team win the silver medal at the 2004 Olympics.

Born and raised in Las Vegas, Lane earned a bachelor's degree in kinesiology from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, in 2010. She delayed physical therapy school to help her mother defeat liver cancer.

Lane started the MSHS program in 2012.

"It was one of the best experiences I've ever had," she says. "We were together all the time for three years. It was like a family. And you could go to the faculty with any issues. I don't think any other program can compare to Mayo." ©

"These patients are
all my responsibility.
I absolutely love it."

» JESSICA LANE

The story behind the career choice

By Jenee Cummings

It's been a privilege to watch Anna Cummings grow into her health care career. She's a student in the Mayo School of Health Sciences (MSHS) Radiography Program.

Many of us find our health care careers because of a personal or family experience. Anna's path was inspired by her mom, Laurie. When Anna was 9, her mom began what was to be years of chemotherapy, radiation, surgeries and drug cocktails to treat breast cancer.

Anna frequently accompanied her mother to radiation treatments. She saw her mom become friends with the chemotherapy nurses and radiation therapists who cared for her. As a high school senior, Anna shadowed a radiation therapist at Fairview Ridges Hospital in Burnsville, Minnesota, where her mom had received many treatments. The experience helped confirm her desire to work in radiation therapy, where she could make a difference in the lives of cancer patients and their families.


After graduating high school, Anna enrolled in the University of Minnesota Rochester. Two years later, she started the MSHS Radiography Program. She was partway through the program when her mother began hospice care. Anna took a leave to be with her family.

Laurie died in 2014. She lived with cancer for 12 years. During that time, Laurie ingrained in Anna and her two sisters an important lesson: that nothing in this life should keep you from following your dreams. In a final message to Anna, Laurie wrote: "I am so proud of you, Anna, and what a strong and beautiful woman you have become. The career you have chosen will not only benefit your life, but the lives of many others."

Anna will graduate from the Radiology Program in May 2016. She plans to continue to the MSHS Radiation Therapy Program so she can help treat patients with cancer.

Laurie's cancer has influenced her daughter's journey down another path. In 2015, Anna completed her seventh Susan

G. Komen 3-day, 60-mile breast cancer walk. Her team, made up of neighbors and friends, has raised more than \$130,000 for breast cancer.

"I walk so cancer will not steal your mom like it stole mine," says Anna. "I want other kids to be able to spend as much time with their loved ones as possible. That's why I chose this career." 

Jenee Cummings is an analyst for Mayo Clinic Planning Services. She is married to Andy Cummings, Anna's cousin.

What do you think about medical education, patient care and careers in allied health professions? *Connections* invites Mayo School of Health Sciences alumni, students and staff to share experiences and viewpoints through "Let's Talk." Submit your viewpoint, up to 500 words, to the *Connections* managing editor at connectionsmanageditor@mayo.edu.

"I want other kids to be able to spend as much time with their loved ones as possible. That's why I chose this career."

» ANNA CUMMINGS





Stacey
Rizza, MD

MSHS takes a reading on diversity and makes changes

For the first time ever, Mayo School of Health Sciences (MSHS) conducted a 21-question Diversity Climate Survey in fall 2014.

About 34 percent of students responded (253 out of 743).

"There had not been a diversity climate survey at Mayo Clinic College of Medicine," says Stacey Rizza, MD, associate dean of student and faculty affairs at MSHS. "Credit for the idea goes to our MSHS administrative leaders."

Students shared their views about a variety of subject areas, including the presence of a welcoming and inclusive environment, the prevalence of discriminatory acts and behavior and cultural competency education.

"As our world and our school become more diverse, it's increasingly important that we treat each other respectfully regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual identity and religion," says Pete Myszkowski, the MSHS operations specialist who led the development and

implementation of the survey. "We weren't responding to a concern. We wanted to be proactive — listening to our students and then responding accordingly with a plan of action."

Results included:

- About 91 percent of students said MSHS was a welcoming community for diverse learners.
- Students age 27 or older reported feeling less welcome than their younger peers.
- More men (92 percent) than women (79 percent) expressed a strong sense of belonging at MSHS.
- Forty three students responded that they had witnessed a student or employee make discriminatory remarks or take a discriminatory action.
- Twenty seven students said they had experienced discrimination on a personal level.


In response to the results, MSHS implemented an action plan using input from student focus groups. The plan includes:

- Informing students of how to address discriminatory behavior, such as contacting their program director, school

administrator, operations manager, or a diversity officer, or by connecting with Mayo Clinic's Employee Assistance Program.

- Reaching out to older students and female students to create a more welcoming and inclusive environment.
- Adding cultural competency education to the school's faculty, student and staff professional development plan.

"We would hope discrimination would never happen here," says Dr. Rizza. "But it's important to know the environment so that we can help students who may be, unfortunately, perceiving this behavior. We're responding to student input — not just doing what we hope is best."

MSHS repeated the student survey in fall 2015, which coincided with the timing of Mayo Clinic's first-ever Climate Assessment Survey sent to all employees. The Mayo Clinic's survey will help assess Mayo Clinic employee views on diversity, among other workplace dimensions. 

Introducing Karen Sherk, CNP, president elect of MSHS Alumni Association

Karen Sherk's career in health care began with a personal experience.

"My dad had cancer when I was around 10 years old," says Sherk, a 2007 graduate of the Mayo School of Health Sciences (MSHS) Nurse Practitioner Clinical Residency Program. "We spent a lot of time at the hospital, and I saw what good care he received."

Fortunately, Sherk's father recovered. But the experience stuck with her and inspired her to find a way to help others facing hospitalization. In junior high school, she volunteered at the local hospital. And when the time came to choose a major at Bethel University in St. Paul, she chose nursing.

"It seemed like a good fit," says Sherk. And it was. After graduation, Sherk accepted a position at Mayo Clinic, working in the Emergency Department and an intensive care unit. She later went on to earn a Master of Science degree from the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities, to become a family nurse practitioner. After completing her

clinical rotations through MSHS, she worked at a women's health clinic in the Twin Cities. Today, she is a nurse practitioner in cardiac electrophysiology for Park Nicollet Heart and Vascular Center in St. Louis Park, Minnesota.

Sherk says she feels very fortunate to have completed the bulk of her clinical education at Mayo Clinic. That gratitude is one of the main reasons she became involved with the MSHS Alumni Association in 2014.

"It's a good way to give back to Mayo," says Sherk, who begins her term as president in April 2016. Her goals include increasing alumni involvement and connection.

"We're trying to figure out how to get alumni more engaged with current students and more connected to each other," she says. To accomplish this, the association conducted an alumni survey. (See results on front inside cover.) If you missed the survey, you can still offer suggestions on the association's Facebook page: www.facebook.com/mshsalumni.



Sherk encourages all alumni to become more involved with the association. She says the time demands of involvement are minimal — and the returns on the investment are great.

"It's a very doable commitment," she says. "It's a great group of people to get to know. There's a real diversity of ages, professions and experiences in the group." »

Meet MSHS Alumni Association board members



TIM FEDJE, PT

- *Physical Therapist*
(supplemental, retired 2010)
- *Mayo Clinic in Rochester*

Graduate: Physical Therapy Program, MSHS; Master's degree, Health Care Administration, University of St. Francis, Joliet, Illinois

Undergraduate: Concordia College, Moorhead, Minnesota

Why did you choose to study at MSHS?

I recognized that no other physical therapy program would give me the unique experiences that Mayo could offer.

What was your first impression of Mayo Clinic?

I was extremely impressed by Mayo Clinic and its many contributions to society. Many times I have asked myself how a small-town North Dakota boy from a high school class of 16 had the good fortune to get a professional education at one of the country's premier medical institutions.

How have you contributed to the Alumni Association?

I have participated in the selection process for the outstanding alumni award as well as the annual meeting discussions.

I feel alumni contribute significantly to the delivery of great health care at Mayo and outside of Mayo. Bringing alumni together annually permits us to share our knowledge with one another.

What do you do in your free time?

I take on remodeling projects at our home and cabin.

What would people be surprised to know about you?

I have an identical twin who comes to Mayo for some of his health care. I hear the funniest stories from him about his interactions with Mayo personnel who think he is me.



CHAD HANIS, RT, RDCS

- *Consultant in Cardiology Solutions, McKesson*
- *Grand Rapids, Michigan*

Certificate: MSHS

Echocardiography Program

Undergraduate: Associate's degree, Radiologic Technology, Grand Rapids Community College, Grand Rapids, Michigan

Military: U.S. Marine Corps

Why did you pursue a career in health care?

I was several months away from my time in the Marine Corps coming to an end. My wife asked me what I wanted to do once I was discharged. X-ray tech came to mind. When we moved back to Grand Rapids, I inquired about the radiography program at the community college. I saw the job and degree as a potential springboard for a health care career. After graduation from MSHS, I worked as a staff sonographer in Grand Rapids. Since 2005, I've been working in the industry side of health care.

Why did you choose to study at MSHS?

I was encouraged by one of the instructors in my radiography program to apply to MSHS. I talked to two graduates of my radiography program who had gone on to MSHS. They could not say enough good things about the program. I decided that the best possible education I could get would be at MSHS.

I loved my time in Rochester. The teaching staff and clinical staff all really wanted to see me and everyone else succeed. They took the time to explain things and made sure I understood.

How have you contributed to the Alumni Association?

I have had the honor to serve on the board for the past two years. I feel that MSHS has been the largest factor in getting me to where I am today. The education I received at MSHS has allowed me to move into my current position.

What do you do in your free time?

I am a golf nut. I cannot get enough of the game. Luckily, my wife, Laura, and our two daughters play as well so we get out as a family and play a round about once a week.

“MSHS has been the largest factor in getting me to where I am today.”

» CHAD HANIS



ANTHONY MENDEZ, PA-C

- *Physician Assistant, Department of Otolaryngology, Head and Neck Surgery*
- *Mayo Clinic in Arizona*
- *Instructor, Mayo Clinic College of Medicine*
- *Program director, MSHS Otolaryngology Physician Assistant Fellowship*

Fellowship: MSHS

Otolaryngology Head and Neck Surgery

Graduate: Master of Medical Science Degree, Physician Assistant Studies, Midwestern University, Glendale, Arizona

Undergraduate: Arizona State University, Tempe

Why did you pursue a career in health care?

I wanted a stable career that would fulfill my desire to help people in need.

Why did you choose to study at MSHS?

MSHS provided an opportunity to learn from the best minds in health care and in an environment that embraced education.

Join the board of directors

More than two dozen Mayo School of Health Sciences (MSHS) alumni volunteer to serve on the Alumni Association Board of Directors.

To volunteer, here's what you need to know:

- Board members provide direction for MSHS Alumni Association programming and activities.
- Board terms are three years.
- Board members return to Mayo Clinic each spring for an annual meeting.
- A nominating committee considers applications to ensure a broad representation of MSHS programs.
- To apply, complete the nomination form on the Alumni Association website and submit a letter indicating your interest to the MSHS Alumni Association at mshsaa@mayo.edu.
- Direct questions to the MSHS Alumni Association at 507-284-2317.
- <https://mshsalumni.mayo.edu>

What's a valuable lesson you learned at Mayo Clinic?

Your education continues beyond the years you spent in the classroom.

How have you contributed to the Alumni Association?

I am a member of the MSHS Alumni Association Board of Directors. This position has enabled me to get other alumni involved in the promotion of the MSHS and its programs.

What do you do in your free time?

I enjoy spending time with my wife and son. 🧘

News briefs

Career Immersion Program aims to jumpstart interest in health careers

This summer, Mayo School of Health Sciences (MSHS) is introducing a Career Immersion Program for junior and senior high school students with diverse backgrounds. The one-week program will be offered on the Rochester campus from July 11-18, 2016.

MSHS highlights health careers at a Boot Camp in the spring and fall on Mayo Clinic's Florida campus.

The program will accept 20 students. They will:

- Connect with health science professionals
- Gain hands-on exposure to health sciences
- Learn about career opportunities, including in-demand careers
- Learn the academic path for enrolling in accredited health sciences programs
- Meet current MSHS students

“High school students want and need help exploring health careers besides the traditional doctor and nurse professions,”

says Ruth Bello, MSHS operations manager. “We believe this new program will raise awareness about allied health careers, including MSHS programs.”

Interested students must complete an application form, supply a current high school transcript and letter of recommendation from a science teacher, guidance counselor or principal, and write a short essay about their interest in health sciences.

» For information: www.mayo.edu/mshs/careers





Robert Adams, OPA-C, director, MSHS Physician Assistant Program, demonstrates casting to students in the Explore Health Care Career Post.

MORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

MSHS offers additional opportunities for high school students to explore health care careers.

College Pathways Program, Rochester

- Introduces diverse Rochester Public School students to health sciences careers during events at Mayo Clinic campus
- About 50 students participate in clinical scenarios and interact with health care professionals
- Offered in the fall and spring

» For information: Ian Mwangi, Office for Diversity in Education, mwangi.ian@mayo.edu

Explore Health Care Career Post, Rochester

- Offers opportunities to learn about allied health careers
- Affiliated with Boy Scouts of America

- Open to sophomores, juniors and seniors; groups meet monthly during school year
- Serves 50 to 60 students from five or six area school districts

» For information, visit: careerawareness.mayoclinic.org/hubcap/exploring-program/

Health Sciences Summer Camp, Rochester

- Weeklong camp includes one day at Mayo Clinic, with hands-on training scenarios by MSHS faculty
- Is a collaboration between University of Minnesota Rochester and Mayo Clinic
- For sophomores, juniors and seniors from area schools

» For information: Ian Mwangi, Office for Diversity in Education, mwangi.ian@mayo.edu

MSHS Florida Boot Camp

- Provides opportunities to explore health careers and visit J. Wayne and Delores Barr Weaver Simulation Center
- Includes career fair with representatives from allied health careers
- Offered in the spring and fall

» For information: Education Coordinator Shantel Williams, williams.shantel@mayo.edu

MSHS Arizona Health Care Career Open House

- Half-day career fair for high school, community college and university students featuring MSHS educational programs
- Offered each fall

» For information: Education Coordinator Judy Cimochofski, MCAMSHS@mayo.edu

A quilt of comfort and friendship for Sonography student

The day Mayo School of Health Sciences student Linda Gallagher missed her regular 5:10 p.m. bus home from Rochester to Cannon Falls, Minnesota, her fellow bus riders noticed. “Somebody asked me about not seeing me that day, and so I just said, ‘Well, something’s going on,’ and then I told her the story,” Gallagher says.

A student in the Sonography Program, Gallagher had felt a lump in her armpit and used her new ultrasound skills to scan it. What she saw was alarming, and a Mayo physician soon confirmed she had breast cancer. Her classmates and her bus friends — they affectionately call themselves the “Bus Moms” — stepped up to

support their colleague and friend.

Audrey Anderson, a fellow commuter and supervisor in the Mayo Clinic’s Immunodermatology and Mohs Laboratory, was quilt maker-in-chief, organizing bus mates and classmates to provide squares. There were “secret meetings” to drop off supplies to make the quilt squares, and then to drop off the finished squares. The quilt presentation was a big surprise.

“They surprised me in the Gonda 3 break room — which is where we have a lot of our clinicals — by having the manager of the Ultrasound Unit send out an e-mail saying there was going to be a recognition

event,” Gallagher says. “It was all just to fake me out.”

And it worked. “When I got over there, there were my bus friends and all of my classmates,” she says. “It was so cool because when I looked at the quilt, each square reflected the person who made it.”

Gallagher, a 2015 graduate of the Sonography Program, successfully completed her treatment. There are no signs of malignancy. “I am thankful that I was in this program because the cancer was discovered sooner than it would have been otherwise,” she says. “And also because of all special people in the Mayo family that encouraged me in the journey.”

“Bus Moms” along with Sonography Program classmates and faculty surprised Linda Gallagher with a quilt. Attending the surprise presentation were: front row, Megan Felker and Meagan Cole; back row, Amy Webb, Sylvia Belford, Karla Paciorek, Linda Gallagher, Becky Madery, Kristin Theede, Teresa Emery and Diane Youngs.



We welcome alumni and student news

Your comments, academic and career news, and story ideas are welcome. Email: connectionsageditor@mayo.edu

About Connections and MSHS

Connections is published three times a year and mailed free of charge to alumni, students and friends of Mayo School of Health Sciences (MSHS).

MSHS has a distinguished history of preparing students for successful careers in the health sciences. Mayo Clinic has been training allied health professionals for more than 100 years.

Nearly 1,700 students are enrolled in more than 128 MSHS programs and rotations representing more than 68 health sciences careers. Programs are available at Mayo Clinic campuses in Arizona, Florida and Rochester.

Enrollment information

www.mayo.edu/mshs
507-284-3678 or
1-800-626-9041 (toll-free)
Email: mshsenrollment@mayo.edu

Alumni information

<https://mshsalumni.mayo.edu>
Deborah Oscarson,
alumni relations coordinator
507-284-2317
Email: mshsaa@mayo.edu

Stay in touch

You have three easy ways to update your address:

- Visit MSHS alumni website
<https://mshsalumni.mayo.edu>
- Email mshsaa@mayo.edu
- Call 507-284-2317

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» MAKE THIS GOOD DECISION

Plan to attend the MSHS Alumni Association Annual Meeting

Featured speaker Gregory Poland, MD, director of Mayo Clinic's Vaccine Research Group and a motivational speaker, will talk about decision-making — both good and flawed. He addresses how biases and beliefs lead to flawed decisions and steps you can take to instantly improve decision-making.

April 15, 2016

Double Tree Hotel	5:30 p.m. – Reception
150 South Broadway	6:15 p.m. – Program
Rochester, Minnesota	7:15 p.m. – Dinner

The event is free for alumni. See page 4 for registration details.



Gregory Poland, MD