



# *Our Shared Story*

SCHMIDT COLLEGE OF MEDICINE  
FLORIDA ATLANTIC

CHARLES E. SCHMIDT COLLEGE OF MEDICINE







## + *Letter from the Dean*

### **SYNERGY - WHERE THE WHOLE BECOMES GREATER THAN THE SUM OF ITS PARTS**

As I reflect on the 2022-2023 academic year, I am immensely proud of the shared journey we undertook at the Florida Atlantic University Charles E. Schmidt College of Medicine, one powered by our collective strengths. Together, we harnessed our joint knowledge and passion to make significant strides in shaping the future of health care and medical education.

In my role as Interim Dean, I've had the privilege of witnessing the unwavering dedication of our faculty, staff, and students. Our shared commitment to excellence and innovation propels us forward. Our understanding of true success in health care mirrors the inspiring run of our Florida Atlantic Owls basketball team during March Madness, where teamwork and shared purpose prevailed.

Our college stands as a testament to this ethos, consisting of 84 faculty, 1303 affiliate faculty members, 273 medical students, 177 residents and fellows, 100 graduate students, and 20 post-baccalaureate students. Together, we have achieved remarkable milestones.

**+ Expanding Opportunities:** To address the critical shortage in health care professionals, we've taken decisive action. Over the past two years, we expanded our class size by 25%, accommodating 80 students. Simultaneously, we initiated construction projects to facilitate further growth. Additionally, we forged strategic partnerships, creating new pathways for aspiring health care professionals. This expansion not only strengthens our capacity to educate future health care leaders but also introduces innovative curriculum strategies that significantly enrich the educational experience.

**+ Exceptional Medical Graduates:** The Class of 2023 exemplifies the excellence of our medical education programs, with 100% of the graduates successfully obtaining residency program placements. This achievement is further reflected in the high satisfaction rate of 95%, as reported by the AAMC Graduation Questionnaire. Notably, 28% are contributing to Florida's healthcare sector, and 38% have chosen careers in primary care.

- + Launching the M.D./Ph.D. Program:** A testament to our dedication to innovation, the launch of M.D./Ph.D. Program, in partnership with the Schmidt College of Science and the Max Planck Florida Institute for Neuroscience, empowers students to become physician-scientists capable of leading health care and biomedical research innovations. This pioneering program prepares the next generation of health care pioneers for leadership roles.
- + Graduate Program Achievements:** Our commitment to excellence in graduate education has yielded noteworthy achievements. We have attained a 95% one-year retention rate, an 85.71% two-year graduation rate, improved representation among students, a notable 26% increase in enrollment numbers, a significant increase in degrees awarded, and remarkable success among our alumni. These outcomes affirm our dedication to nurturing the next generation of leaders in the field.
- + Graduate Medical Education (GME) Advancements:** Our GME programs have seen substantial growth, including the welcoming of the West Palm Beach VA Healthcare System and collaboration with the Health Care District of Palm Beach County to host psychiatry residents. Additionally, the recent approval of the FAU Pulmonary Medicine and Critical Care Medicine Fellowship by ACGME marks a significant milestone in our journey.
- + Research Excellence:** Our faculty's commitment to pioneering research is exemplified by the achievement of \$20 million in NIH funding, accounting for a substantial 74.8% of Florida Atlantic University's total NIH funding. In addition, our total research funding amounts to \$31.5 million, marking a significant milestone that underscores our dedication to groundbreaking research. This accomplishment is further highlighted by a remarkable 31% increase in research expenditures over the past five years.
- + Advancements in Amyloidosis Research:** Philanthropic support has facilitated bold steps in amyloidosis research. Ann and John Wood's generous donation of \$11.5 million has fueled the FairfaxWood Health & Innovation Technology Initiative. This initiative utilizes AI and data science to investigate amyloid fibril formation, paving the way for groundbreaking discoveries.
- + Community Integration and Advocacy:** Our strong community integration has created a reciprocal relationship with the communities we serve. By securing grants that magnify our influence, we ensure that our initiatives are both impactful and sustainable. Our graduates emerge not only as medical doctors; they transform into advocates for their communities and empathetic caregivers.
- + Academic Service-Learning Projects:** Our medical students are actively involved in academic service-learning projects that positively impact community health and wellness. Collaborations with local organizations and schools are driving tangible improvements. The Virginia and Douglas Stewart Foundation grants have significantly enhanced the Healthcare Careers Opportunity Pathway (HCOP) program, connecting high school students interested in medicine with our medical students.
- + Community Health Collaborations:** Our commitment to community health extends to partnerships with the Health Care District of Palm Beach County. Together, we aim to expand behavioral and addictions service lines, addressing the pressing mental health and addictions needs of the community. This collaboration empowers us to train the next generation of health care professionals while providing essential mental health services.



While my appointment as Interim Dean was recent, I am delighted to share our remarkable story of collective accomplishments. In this narrative, my role is that of a “supersized support person,” dedicated to nurturing our victories and growth. Together, we generate synergy where the whole is truly greater than the sum of its parts. This synergy empowers us to surpass benchmarks, redefine possibilities, and bring dreams to life.

As we celebrate these remarkable achievements, we recognize that our journey is ongoing. Together, we are more than just a team; we are the living embodiment of synergy in action. We are a testament to the extraordinary accomplishments made possible when we unite our strengths to innovate, discover, and serve our global community.

With heartfelt appreciation for your dedication and shared vision,

**Curtis L. Whitehair, M.D.**

Interim Dean

Designated Institutional Official



## *Unity in Excellence* Empowering Academic Medicine's Future

**84** Dedicated Faculty, **273** Passionate Medical Students,  
**251** Committed Residents/Fellows, **100** Inspired Graduate Students,  
**20** Aspiring Post-Baccalaureates

## + Year in Review

**\$5 Million Boost:** Our persistent efforts secured an additional \$5 million in recurring state legislature funds, resulting in **15%** annual funding increase.

**US News and World Reports Ranking:** Achieving our **first-ever** ranking in the US News and World Reports, a testament to our united and intentional efforts.

### Philanthropic Impact

**The FairfaxWood Health & Innovation Technology Initiative:** A transformative \$11.5 million gift from Ann and John Wood fuels our fight against amyloidosis. This initiative brings together experts to explore complex disorders and establish an endowed Chair in Clinical Neurosciences.

**Sam W. Klein Student Hub:** Generously funded with \$250,000 by the Sam W. Klein Charitable Foundation, this hub will support vital college needs.

**SLK Lighten Up Program:** Lisa Knoop's generous \$25,000 gift fosters student well-being during medical school by introducing a program that emphasizes relaxation and rejuvenation, supporting their academic journey.

#### Philanthropic Contributions:

Over \$12.9 million in philanthropic support from 173 donors has made a profound impact, contributing 18% of the total TransendTomorrow campaign for Florida Atlantic University.

**Robert A. Wood Medical Scholarship Program Fund:** Starting with the Class of 2025, this fund empowered 50 students with debt-free education, ensuring aspiring medical professionals can pursue their dreams without tuition debt.

**Douglas E. Stewart and Virginia E. Stewart Charitable Foundation:** An additional \$25,000 donation to support the expansion of our pathway programs, helping FAU undergraduate students advance into medical school.

### Advancing Research & Academia

**\$20 Million in NIH Funding:** Our substantial NIH funding, comprising 74.8% of Florida Atlantic University's total NIH funding, underscores our research excellence.

**\$31.5 Million in Active Awards:** Our remarkable achievement of \$31.5 million in active research funding reaffirms our commitment to advancing medical science and leadership in critical research areas.

### Media Spotlights

**Prominent Media Outlets:** Featured in The Washington Post, The New York Times, U.S. News & World Report, CNN, CBS News, Scripps National, MSN.com, Healthline, Health Day, WebMD.

**Media Hits:** Achieved **8,350** media hits

**Estimated Ad Value Equivalency (AVE):** Earned nearly **\$71 million**.

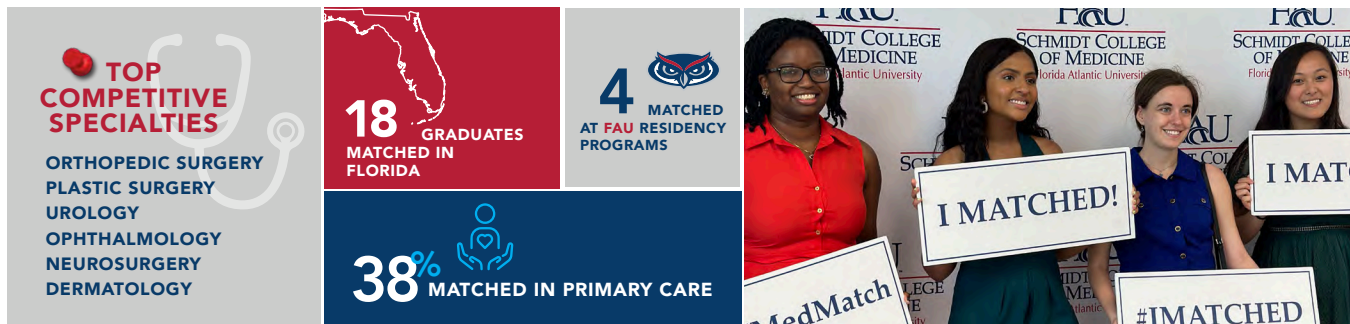


**ACADEMIC  
FOUNDATIONS**



## + Key Achievements

# 100% RESIDENCY PLACEMENT 2023



## Medical Education

### + Expanding Class Size

To address the pressing healthcare workforce shortage, the Charles E. Schmidt College of Medicine is proactively working to train the next generation of healthcare professionals. In the past two years, we achieved an impressive 25% increase in class size, welcoming 80 first-year students in 2023. This expansion aligns with our innovative curriculum strategies, enhancing clinical education and research preparedness. Collaborations with academic, clinical, community, and research partners further expand student experiences, highlighting our commitment to excellence in healthcare education and research. The introduction of the Research Distinction Track further amplifies students' contributions to medical science.

### + FAU-MPFI M.D./Ph.D. Dual Degree Program Launch

In partnership with the Florida Atlantic University Schmidt College of Science and the Max Planck Florida Institute for Neuroscience (MPFI), Charles E. Schmidt Colleges of Medicine launched an innovative M.D./Ph.D. program. This program equips future physician-scientists with comprehensive training in medicine and biomedical research, culminating in an M.D. from FAU's Charles E. Schmidt College of Medicine and a Ph.D. in integrative biology biomedical sciences or neuroscience from FAU's Schmidt College of Science. This initiative prepares our students to lead in health care and research.

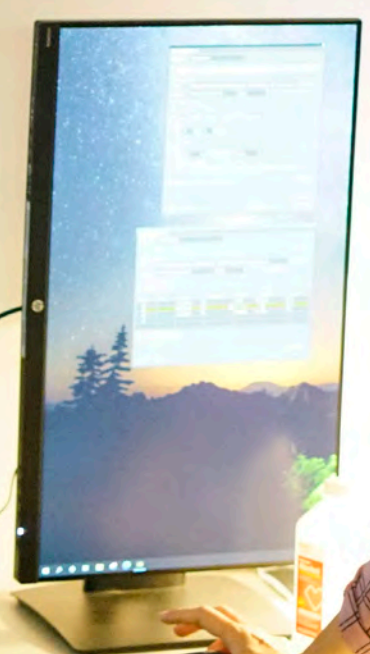
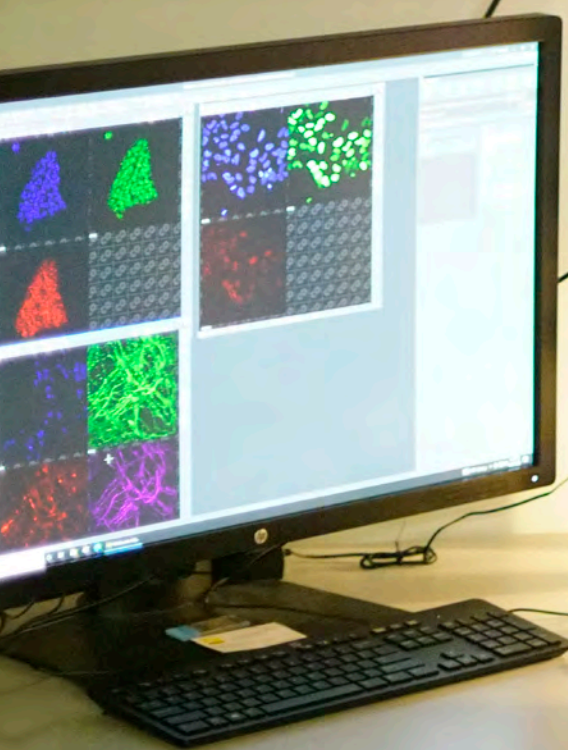
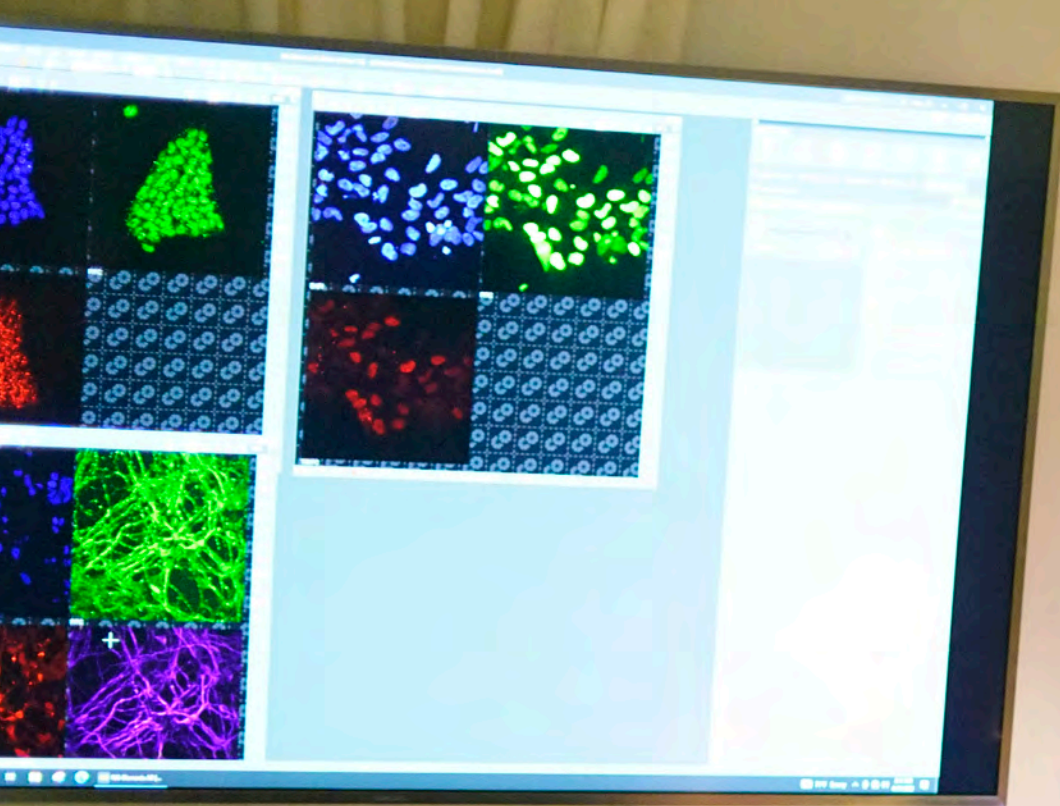
### + New Opportunity for the FAU High School M.D. Direct Program

Students enrolled in the FAU High School M.D. Direct Program now have the extraordinary opportunity to pursue one of two advanced degrees after receiving their bachelor's degree: an MS in Biomedical Engineering (MS BME) or an MS in Artificial Intelligence (MS AI). This program paves an accelerated educational path for exceptional FAU High School seniors to pursue medicine while gaining additional expertise in areas that they can use to participate in the advancement of medical innovation. This initiative was developed through the collaborative efforts of the Charles E. Schmidt College of Medicine and the College of Engineering and Computer Science.



### **+ Global Collaborations**

We are actively involved in groundbreaking research through strategic collaborations with global leaders such as Robeauté and Insightec, with primary focus on combating neurodegenerative diseases. Robeauté's neurosurgical microrobot and Insightec's research on diseases like Parkinson's and Alzheimer's are revolutionizing biopsies, therapeutic delivery, and data collection. Our commitment to advancing focused ultrasound (FUS) technology, particularly through collaboration with the Integral A.C. Neuroscience Center HM CINAC in Spain, aims to improve the treatment of neurodegenerative diseases. These collaborations emphasize our dedication to research and our mission to improve the lives of those affected by neurodegeneration.





***Transform Health Care***  
**Trainees Equipped for Modern Medicine**

## Graduate Medical Education (GME)

### Residency Programs

Internal Medicine,  
Emergency Medicine,  
Psychiatry, Neurology,  
General Surgery

### Fellowship Programs

Cardiovascular Disease,  
Geriatric Medicine, Pulmonary  
Disease and Critical Care  
Medicine, Hospice and Palliative  
Medicine, Vascular Surgery

### Accreditations

All programs and the  
sponsoring institution maintain  
Accreditation Council for  
Graduate Medical Education  
(ACGME) accreditation status.

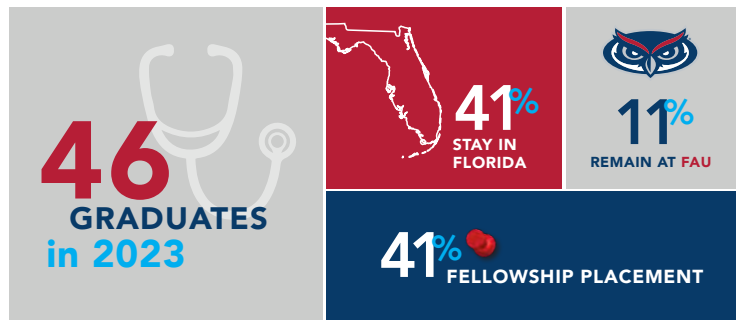
At the FAU Charles E. Schmidt College of Medicine, our legacy of excellence in graduate medical education is a source of pride. As a sponsoring institution, we have had the privilege of guiding **251** residents and fellows on their journey to successful medical careers. This remarkable achievement has been made possible through the leadership of Dr. Curtis L. Whitehair, who serves as Interim Dean and Designated Institutional Official (DIO), as well as our dedicated GME team, program directors, department chairs, and esteemed hospital partners.

Our GME programs have experienced substantial growth, exemplified by the recent inclusion of the West Palm Beach VA Healthcare System. Our collaboration with the Health Care District of Palm Beach County, set to host our psychiatry residents, is particularly promising.

Another significant milestone in our GME journey is the approval of the new ACGME FAU Pulmonary Medicine and Critical Care Medicine Fellowship. Looking ahead, we are actively exploring the addition of two more fellowships and potential new residency programs within our consortium, exciting developments that will continue to shape our commitment to medical education excellence.

In 2023, we celebrated the graduation of 46 residents and fellows, achieving remarkable outcomes in several programs. Specifically, 8 residents (33 %) from our Internal Medicine program secured fellowships, along with 5 residents (100 %) from General Surgery, 2 (33 %) from Emergency Medicine, and 1 resident (50%) from Cardiovascular Disease who matched into additional sub-specialty fellowships.

**100%**  
ACGME  
ACCREDITATION



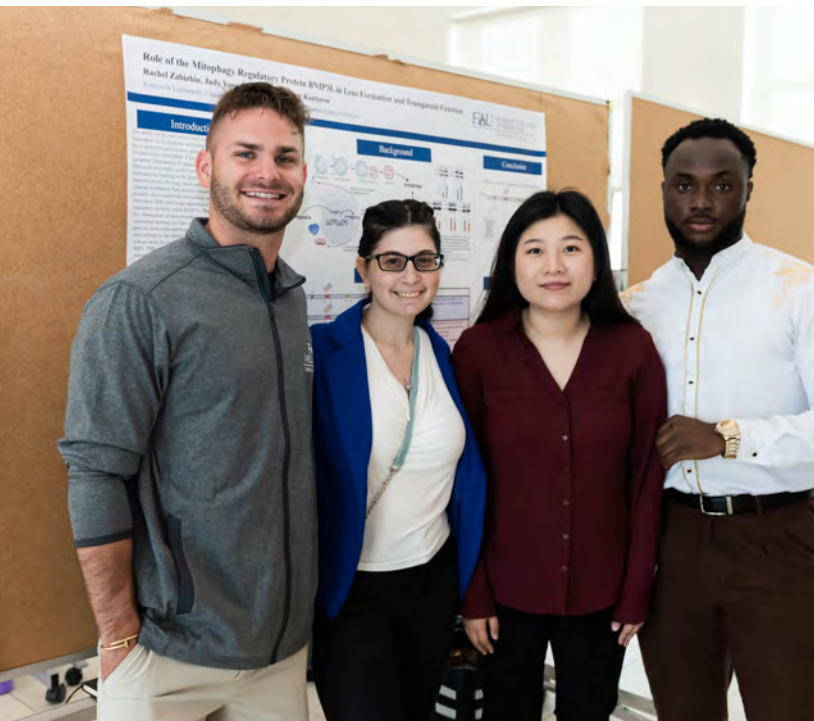
## Graduate Education

### Graduate Programs: 2022-2023 Achievements

This academic year witnessed remarkable progress and achievements within the Charles E. Schmidt College of Medicine's graduate programs. Our commitment to excellence and student success is evident in several key areas:

#### MS Biomedical Science Program:

- + **Retention Rates:** Our one-year retention rates reached an impressive **95%**, a substantial increase from 81.8% recorded in 2018-2019. This achievement exceeded the university-wide retention rate of 88.3% for the previous academic year, demonstrating our dedication to supporting students throughout their academic journey.
- + **Graduation Rates:** For full-time non-thesis MS Biomedical Science students, the two-year graduation rate reached **85.71%**, surpassing university-wide rates for the previous academic year.
- + **Vibrant Student Backgrounds:** We are dedicated to fostering a varied student body, which is evident in our program. In this year, **54.29%** of degrees awarded were to individuals from underrepresented backgrounds, showcasing a substantial increase from previous years.
- + **Enrollment:** Enrollment reached an all-time high of **78** students, marking a remarkable 26% increase over the past five years.
- + **Degrees Awarded:** The program awarded a total of **35** degrees, representing a notable 21% increase over the past five years.
- + **Alumni Success:** Our commitment to student success extends beyond graduation. In a recent survey of alumni (2015-2023), **60%** reported acceptance to medical school, highlighting the program's effectiveness in preparing students for further studies. Additionally, 11% pursued dentistry school, 11% entered PhD programs, and 25% embarked on various career paths in education, industry, pharmacy, and more.



### **IB-Ph.D. Program at Charles E. Schmidt College of Medicine: IBBS Ph.D. Track**

**+ Enrollment Growth:** The Integrated Biomedical Sciences (IBBS) program at the Charles E. Schmidt College of Medicine has experienced consistent growth. Currently, **12** students are enrolled, and this program has become a pivotal pathway for students to attain prestigious post-doctoral fellowships, secure positions in the biotech and pharmaceutical sectors, and find teaching opportunities upon graduation.

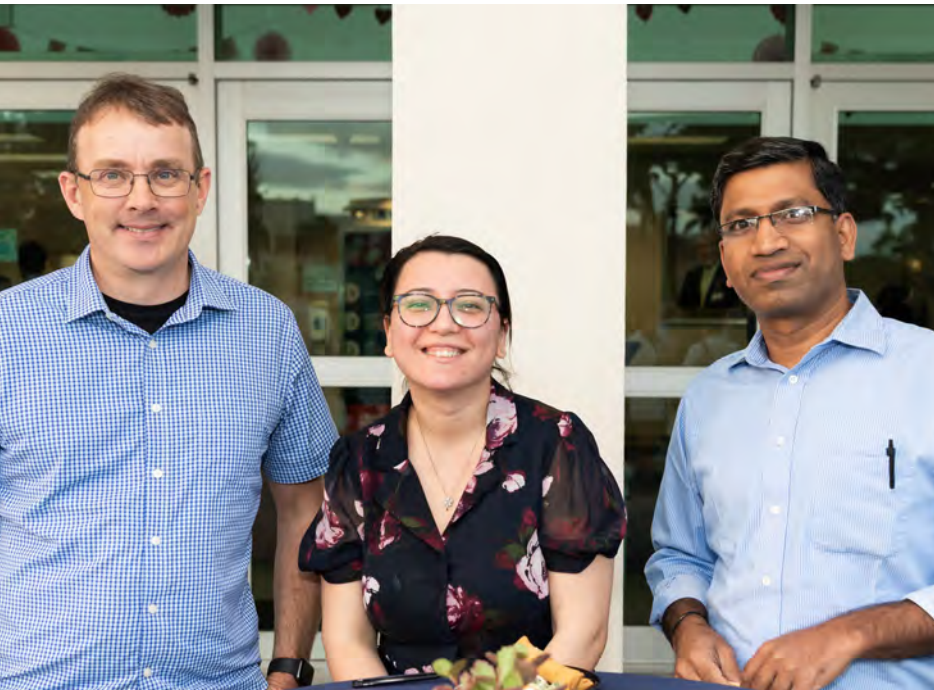
### **Genomics and Precision Medicine Program:**

**+ Increasing Enrollment:** The Genomics and Precision Medicine Certificate Program, a relatively new addition, has seen remarkable growth with **9** students enrolled in this year.

**+ Graduates:** Since its inception in 2021, **17** students have successfully graduated from this program, highlighting its rapid development and popularity among students interested in cutting-edge fields.

These achievements highlight our continued dedication to fostering student growth and success in our graduate programs. The Charles E. Schmidt College of Medicine remains committed to providing an exceptional educational experience and preparing students for rewarding career paths. Our success is a testament to the hard work and commitment of our students and faculty, and we look forward to further growth and accomplishments in the future.











**RESEARCH  
EXCELLENCE**

## FUNDING EXCELLENCE



Federal Funding: **\$22,234,475**

State Funding: **\$1,597,439**

Foundation/Other Funding: **\$7,744,902**

Total Funding: **\$31,576,816**

### ***Funding and Research Achievements***

The Charles E. Schmidt College of Medicine achieved a remarkable milestone in research, securing 71 active awards totaling \$31.5 million in funding. This impressive funding not only reaffirms our position as a leader in critical research areas but also highlights our commitment to advancing cutting-edge research. Notably, we take pride in reporting a substantial **31% increase in research expenditures over the past five years**, showcasing our commitment to pioneering research endeavors.

### ***Key Research Departments and Accomplishments***

In the realm of innovative research, the Charles E. Schmidt College of Medicine achieved remarkable accomplishments across several departments, showcasing our commitment to advancing medical knowledge.

#### **NIH Funding: Biomedical Science**

**\$18,957,310**

#### **Department of Biomedical Science (BMS)**

Under the leadership of Dr. Patrick A. Grant, Chair of the Department of Biomedical Science and Interim Senior Associate Dean for Research, the Department of Biomedical Science at Charles E. Schmidt College of Medicine has emerged as a powerhouse of research excellence, securing \$12.8 million in NIH funding.

Dr. Randy D. Blakely, Executive Director of Florida Atlantic Stiles-Nicholson Brain Institute and Professor of BMS, along with his colleagues in the BMS department at the Institute, is making substantial contributions to pioneering neuroscience research. Their efforts have secured \$6.1 million in NIH funding. The innovative approach of the BMS department towards understanding the complexities of the brain holds great promise for the future of health care.

#### **NIH Funding: Clinical Neuroscience**

**\$992,338**

#### **Department of Clinical Neurosciences**

Led by Dr. Michael R. Dobbs, who serves as the Professor and Chair of the Department of Clinical Neurosciences and holds the FairfaxWood Endowed Chair of Clinical Neurosciences, as well as the role of Associate Dean of Clinical Affairs, the Department of Clinical Neurosciences plays a pivotal role in advancing clinical neuroscience research. Their substantial contribution of \$992,338 in NIH funding for neurological studies exemplifies our dedication to enhancing patient care and improving outcomes.

## NIH-Funded Principal Investigators and Their Projects

Our esteemed faculty members and Principal Investigators have played instrumental roles in securing NIH funding. This year, nineteen faculty members received NIH funding, supporting a wide array of pioneering research projects, including:

### **Drs. Randy Blakely and Maureen Hahn:**

Together, they lead multiple projects funded by NIH, the Florida Department of Health, and private foundations. Their research delves into the neuroinflammatory and metabolic aspects of depression, autism, and neurodegenerative diseases, with total awards reaching approximately **\$3 million**.

### **Dr. Patrick Grant:**

Dr. Grant oversees various projects, including a new NIH R01 award of **\$670,540** that explores sex-based differences in dopaminergic and glutamatergic mechanisms underlying cocaine addiction. Additionally, he secured **\$248,050** in funding for a project, from the Florida Department of Health's Live Like Bella Pediatric Cancer Research Initiative, titled "Identification of Epigenetic Mechanisms of Resistance to Chemotherapy in Pediatric Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia."

### **Dr. Ilknur Telkes:**

Dr. Telkes joined the Schmidt College of Medicine in 2022, bringing K99/R00 funding totaling **\$745,531** for a research project titled "Assessment of EEG Responses to Spinal Cord Stimulation Waveforms in Chronic Pain Patients." The objective of this project is to investigate EEG responses in patients suffering from chronic pain.

### **Dr. Massimo Caputi:**

Dr. Caputi is at the forefront of innovative research funded by NIH/NIAID R21. His work focuses on circular RNAs generated from back splicing of the HIV-1 primary transcript, and this project has received **\$450,000** in funding to advance its impact.

### **Drs. Marc Kantorow and Lisa Brennan:**

Dr. Kantorow and his team are leading multiple NIH-funded R01 research projects focused on ocular development and disease. Their studies encompass various aspects, including regulatory role of PI3K signaling pathways in lens differentiation and function, as well as hypoxia regulation of lens development, with total funding of approximately **\$4.7 million**.

### **Drs. Lawrence Toll, Andrea Cippitelli, and Akihiko Ozawa:**

Dr. Toll and his team are leading multiple new and ongoing NIH and Department of Defense projects. Their research centers on NOP receptor agonists and neural circuits of pain, with awards totaling more than **\$3.5 million**.

### **Dr. Ning Quan:**

Dr. Quan serves as the principal investigator on multiple NIH-funded projects investigating neuronal IL-1R1 signaling, neuroinflammation, behavior, and traumatic brain injury. These awards collectively amount to approximately **\$5 million**.

## Other Highlights of Research Grants and Funding

**+ The Great Fall Prevention Project:** Led by Dr. Richard Shih, this initiative secured a substantial **\$1 million** award from the Florida Medical Malpractice Joint Underwriting Association (FMMJUA). This project, referred to as the Geriatric Emergency Department (ED) Fall Injury Prevention Project (The GREAT FALL), focuses on researching ED-based prevention strategies to improve patient safety and outcomes among high-risk geriatric patients.

**+ Identification of Mixed NOP/mu Partial Agonists for the Treatment of Methamphetamine Use Disorder:** Dr. Andrea Cippitelli has received funding of **\$192,521** from Phoenix PharmaLabs, Inc. to identify lead compounds for the treatment of methamphetamine use disorder.

## Bold Steps in Amyloidosis Research



In a big step toward fighting amyloidosis, a life-threatening disease that affects various organs, including the brain, the Schmidt College of Medicine at Florida Atlantic University embarks on a transformative journey. The late John Wood, co-founder of the FairfaxWood Scholarship Foundation, alongside his wife Ann, left an enduring legacy with an extraordinary **\$11.5 million** donation to spearhead this initiative.

In memory of John Wood, we recognize his profound impact on the FAU community, particularly within the Schmidt College of Medicine. His commitment to advancing medical education and research continues to inspire us, shaping the future of healthcare and education in profound ways.

This substantial gift has led to the creation of the FairfaxWood Health & Innovation Technology Initiative. This initiative, focused on the FAU Amyloidosis Project, brings together clinicians, researchers, and world-class institutes in a collaborative model. Its goal is to uncover the fundamental causes of amyloid fibril formation throughout the body, including the brain.

To address the complex nature of amyloidosis, the initiative harnesses the potential of artificial intelligence and state-of-the-art data science. By breaking down silos among researchers and clinicians who typically focus on single organs, this initiative seeks treatments and, ultimately, a cure for amyloidosis. The infrastructure created through this initiative may serve as a permanent resource for research on other challenging illnesses in the future.



A vital component of this gift is the establishment of the inaugural endowed "FairfaxWood Chair of Clinical Neurosciences." Dr. Michael R. Dobbs, a distinguished expert in vascular neurology, has been appointed as the inaugural chair. In this role, he will lead "discovery to cure" initiatives for amyloidosis and other intricate disorders. Dr. Dobbs brings a wealth of experience, having held leadership positions at various medical institutions and making significant contributions to stroke research and outcomes. His appointment signifies a pivotal step in advancing the fight against amyloidosis.

## State-of-the-Art MRI Infrastructure

At the core of FAU Charles E. Schmidt College of Medicine's research capabilities, lies its state-of-the-art neurophysiological research suite. This facility supports both pre-clinical and clinical studies, with a focus on neurological exploration.

Central to this research suite is the high-performance GE Signa Premier 3T MRI scanner. This advanced scanner is enhanced with MR 30 AIR™ Recon DL technology, significantly reducing scan times while simultaneously improving image resolution. The MRI scanner is a pivotal asset, enabling transformative research in both human and large animal studies. It provides an array of specialized coils and an MRI Simulator designed for participant acclimation. Moreover, the facility supports concurrent EEG and MRI data acquisition, providing a comprehensive insight into brain functionality.

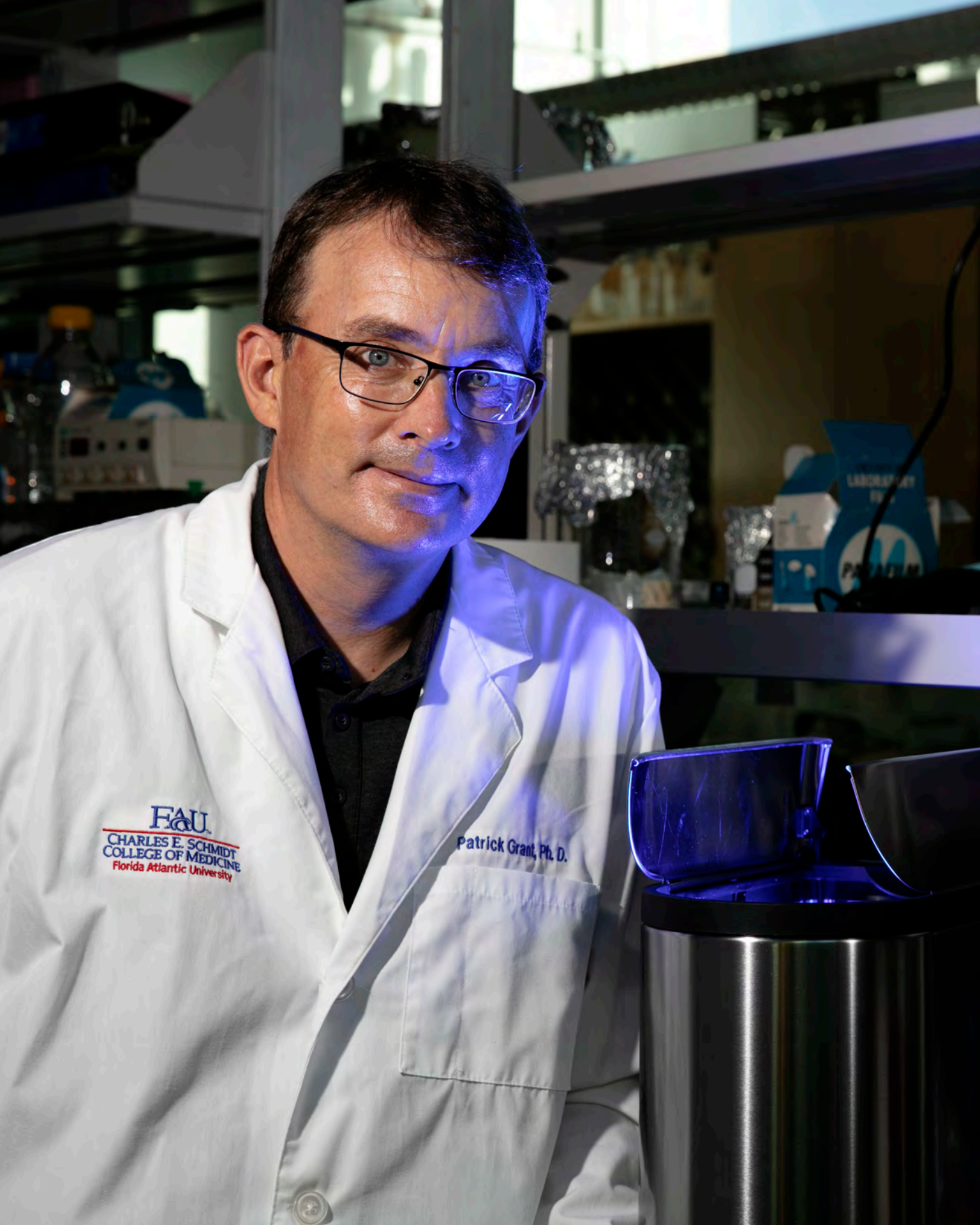


**ADVANCED MRI INFRASTRUCTURE**  
*Cutting-edge research capabilities  
at FAU's disposal*

**GE Signa Premier  
3T MRI Scanner**

**MR 30 AIR™ Recon  
DL Technology**

**EEG and MRI Data  
Acquisition Capabilities**



**FAU**  
CHARLES E. SCHMIDT  
COLLEGE OF MEDICINE  
Florida Atlantic University

Patrick Grant, Ph. D.



**COMMUNITY  
IMPACT**



## *Power Partnership with Broward Health North*

The potential for transformation is powered by the synergistic partnership between Florida Atlantic University (FAU) and Broward Health North. Fueled by the innovative ethos of the Schmidt College of Medicine, this partnership is dedicated to reshaping the health care landscape in Southeast Florida. Our comprehensive approach integrates robust education, pioneering research, advanced medical training, and compassionate clinical care to create a path toward enhanced health and well-being. This synergy highlights our commitment to the well-being of communities, setting new benchmarks in academic medicine and driving positive changes.

Since June 30, 2023, the FAU and Broward Health Partnership has been making progress through a Master Affiliation and Interlocal Agreement. This innovative collaboration centers around Broward Health North, soon to be renamed "Florida Atlantic University Hospital at Broward North," a 409-bed

acute care facility. With joint clinical practice at its core, this agreement establishes the FAU/Broward Health Academic Practice Plan, where FAU will employ clinicians providing services at the rebranded hospital.

The FAU and Broward Health North partnership has garnered attention from health care leaders at the national, regional, and local levels. Together, we are establishing prominent presence in academic medicine within our community and neighboring regions. This transformational partnership is attracting exceptional health care professionals from across the nation and the region, all dedicated to advancing health care while strengthening local connections. With a patient-centric focus, the FAU and Broward Health North partnership is propelling our community forward, making a significant impact on the health and well-being of our residents.

## *Community Wellness with Marcus Institute of Integrative Health*

At the Marcus Institute of Integrative Health (MIIH) within FAU Medicine, we are committed to making health and wellness accessible. Generously supported by The Marcus Foundation, we have developed integrative health programs, workshops, and classes that are provided free of charge to the South Florida community. Since our launch in July 2019, we have hosted nearly **450** health and wellness events, reaching thousands of community members.

MIIH blends traditional and alternative therapies, recognizing the holistic nature of human well-being. Our offerings include acupuncture, yoga, meditation, and nutrition counseling, all designed to complement conventional medical treatments. These therapies have been shown to reduce stress, enhance mental and emotional well-being, and promote physical strength and flexibility.





Our programs are led by experts in integrative medicine, nutrition, and mindfulness, and they cater to mixed age groups and interests, fostering community and social connections. We also collaborate with local organizations, such as Florida Atlantic Stiles-Nicholson Brain Institute, to enrich our interdisciplinary approach.

Furthermore, our partnerships with non-profit organizations like Brain Bowl and Spirit of Giving actively engage stakeholders, raise awareness, and provide essential health education. At the heart of our mission is the transformation of health care practices to address individual health care needs through prevention, collaboration, and root-cause analysis. We are dedicated to nurturing health care providers who prioritize holistic care, thereby improving health outcomes, longevity, and overall well-being by recognizing and embracing the interconnected nature of mind, body, and spirit.

## ***Community-Centered Commitment***

At the Schmidt College of Medicine, our distinctive approach to medical education is deeply rooted in community engagement. Our students fully immerse themselves in local communities, adapt to specific needs, and forge meaningful connections. This community-based approach also opens doors to funding opportunities that expand our impact.

What distinguishes us is the holistic experience we provide. Our graduates emerge not only as skilled medical professionals but as community advocates, catalysts for change, and empathetic healers. Their success is a testament not only to their medical expertise but also to their deep understanding of the human aspect of healthcare. Our commitment enriches the educational journey, ensuring a unique and transformative experience.

## ***Community-Driven Service Learning***

At the Charles E. Schmidt College of Medicine, our dedication extends beyond traditional medical education. We are committed to nurturing the physicians of tomorrow who can effectively address evolving community health care needs. Our innovative approach revolves around student-led academic service-learning projects, which play a pivotal role in enhancing community health and well-being through dynamic collaborations with local organizations.

Every fall semester, our second-year medical students dedicate 1,500+ hours collaborating with public schools and local nonprofits, positively impacting the lives of participants and our community. These Service-Learning Projects (SLPs) engage various populations, from the elderly to children with special needs, nurturing medical knowledge and essential life skills.

Key to this effort is Dr. Peter Averkiou, Director of Service-Learning Projects. The Virginia and Douglas Stewart Foundation ongoing support strengthens our work, enhancing the Health care Careers Opportunity Pathway (HCOP) program. HCOP connects high school students interested in medicine with our medical students, providing valuable mentorship experiences. The program, overseen by Alicia Rootes, Director of K-12 Pathways and Community Engagement, serves 6th and 12th-grade students in medical choice programs across the School District of Palm Beach County. This pathways program focuses on augmenting classroom learning with educational enrichment activities while also addressing known barriers to educational success; program components include career awareness and exploration, basic science and anatomy lessons, clinical exposure, college preparedness, financial literacy, formal mentorship, professional skills, and research experience.

## Clinical Outreach: A Transformative Impact

At the Schmidt College of Medicine, our commitment to community engagement and holistic medical education is making a profound impact on community health. Guided by Dr. Mario Jacomino, Professor of Pediatrics, and Dr. Stacy Rubin, Assistant Professor of Medicine and Director of Foundations of Medicine, our clinical outreach initiatives are shaping the future of healthcare.



Incorporated in our curriculum, students regularly contribute their time to the Caridad Clinic and Mission Medical Center, where they dedicate two half-days per semester to patient care. This commitment translates to approximately 12 patients per week throughout the academic year, offering invaluable hands-on experience and community connections.

Our commitment extends beyond the formal curriculum, exemplified by Dr. Lisa Martinez, Associate Professor of Medicine, Associate Director of the Year 3 Curriculum, and Medicine Clerkship Director. Dr. Martinez

has been instrumental in mentoring students in various extracurricular efforts that showcase our dedication to community health. One of these initiatives is the Caridad Saturday clinic, where faculty and students collaborate to provide care, exemplifying our commitment to community well-being. We also provide patients with glucose and blood pressure monitors, ensuring they have the essential tools needed to effectively manage their chronic conditions.

But our impact goes even further. Education lies at the heart of our outreach efforts, with student groups actively engaging in informative activities focused on women's health and nutrition. We also extend our support to local children through back-to-school sessions, ensuring they are equipped with the knowledge and resources needed for a healthy start to their academic year.

Our commitment extends to nutrition through Project Grow, our innovative student-led community garden initiative. We are actively cultivating nutritious food to distribute to patients at Caridad, complemented by essential nutritional education. Our clinical outreach efforts are not only expanding healthcare access but also enhancing the well-being of our community in multifaceted ways.



## Community Health Collaboration with HCDPB

The Schmidt College of Medicine has joined forces with the Health Care District of Palm Beach County (HCDPB) to expand their behavioral and addictions service lines. This collaborative effort is led by Dr. Ashley Beattie, Assistant Professor of Psychiatry; Dr. Adam Demner, Assistant Professor of Psychiatry and Director of Addiction Psychiatry; and Dr. Gavin Rose, Program Director of the Psychiatry Residency Training Program. Their collective goal is to address the pressing mental health and addiction needs within the community.

The HCDPB, known for its extensive network of clinics throughout Palm Beach County, provides crucial health care services to various patient populations, including uninsured and insured individuals, the homeless, and undocumented residents.

This collaboration not only reinforces our commitment to community-based medical education but also strengthens its connections with the local health care community. It aligns seamlessly with the college's mission as a community-based institution.

Looking ahead, this synergy promises exciting growth opportunities. Our Psychiatry Residency Training Program envisions the possibility of offering fellowships in addiction psychiatry and consultation-liaison psychiatry, further enriching our collaborative landscape.



Dr. Gavin Rose, reflecting on this achievement, emphasizes that this collaboration aligns with the college's mission as a community-based, university-affiliated psychiatry residency training program. It enhances our educational experience and empowers us to effectively address critical mental health and addiction issues in South Florida.

As this collaboration unfolds, the Schmidt College of Medicine and the HCDPB take a significant step forward in providing essential mental health services and preparing the next generation of health care professionals. Together, our goal is to create a brighter, healthier future for the community we serve.

## + Students & Alumni Spotlights

### Current Student Spotlight



#### **Kaylynn Wilkes**

*Class of 2024, A Rising Star in Pediatric Medicine*

Raised in Auburn, California, Kaylynn Wilkes pursued her undergraduate degree in behavioral neuroscience at the University of San Diego. Her journey initially led her towards a career in elementary education, but life had a different plan. While working as a substitute aid for children with learning disabilities and developmental delays, Kaylynn discovered her passion for medicine. FAU's Schmidt College of Medicine provided her with the perfect environment to nurture this newfound calling, allowing her to work with a pediatric

dermatologist during her preclinical years and participate in a 44-week outpatient pediatric preceptorship in her M3 year. FAU not only offered excellent medical education but also support as she embraced motherhood during her M3 year. Kaylynn's journey underscores the value of a supportive environment and determination in achieving balance.

Kaylynn's dedication and excellence in her medical journey have been acknowledged through various honors, including her induction into Alpha Omega Alpha and the Gold Humanism Honor Society. She has also received the prestigious Ticho Prize, awarded to a graduating student who demonstrated excellence in psychiatry in academic work and clinical clerkships, as well as empathy, respect for the suffering of mentally ill patients, and compassion in work with all patients while in medical school.

### Alumni Spotlight



#### **Mary Ellen Billington, M.D.**

*Year of Graduation: 2015*

Assistant Professor of Emergency Medicine, Core Faculty at Florida Atlantic University Emergency Medicine Residency, Director of Quality Improvement and Process Improvement

Dr. Mary Ellen Billington, a true Floridian at heart, started her medical journey as a member of the inaugural class at the Schmidt College of Medicine. After graduation, she pursued her passion for Emergency Medicine with a robust residency training program at UT Southwestern/Parkland Hospital in Dallas, TX. Her dedication led her to complete a Medical Toxicology fellowship, becoming double-boarded in Emergency Medicine and Medical Toxicology. Dr. Billington sharpened her clinical skills in both private and academic practice, all while actively engaging with her national specialty and subspecialty organizations. She also initiated a bedside Medical Toxicology service at UT Health in Houston, TX, showcasing her commitment to the field. Returning to Florida Atlantic University, where her medical journey began, Dr. Billington now contributes to the advancement of medical education, completing a full circle of commitment and gratitude.

## M.D. Student Organizations

### + 2023 Gold Student Summer Fellows: Project Grow

In 2023, four outstanding students from the Schmidt College of Medicine - Sara Burgoa, Shannon Gallup, Madison Goon, and Samantha Hicks - embarked on an inspiring journey known as Project Grow. Supported and funded by the Arnold P. Gold Foundation, this initiative has thrived and achieved significant progress. Selected through a competitive process, Project Grow exemplifies our commitment to community well-being. At its core, the project involves conducting meal preparation workshops and patient education sessions at the Caridad Center, utilizing the produce cultivated in the garden. By imparting nutritional knowledge and providing hands-on experiences with fresh farm produce, Project Grow nurtures well-being from the ground up.



### + Threshold Choir: Harmonizing Compassion

Threshold Choir, led by compassionate students Sinjana Kolipaka and Taylor Fistel, harnesses the healing power of music. Their mission is clear: to bring comfort through song to those on life's threshold, believing in music's capacity to heal and bring inner peace. Through their harmonious community, they provide solace, transcending medical boundaries and touching the human spirit.

### + AI In Health Care: Pioneering the Future

AI In Health care, led by Amit Sagar, is a pioneering student group exploring AI's transformative impact on health care. This organization serves as a bridge between medical students and AI advancements, aiming to integrate AI into health care. They host events, share research opportunities, and empower students to embrace the future of medicine through AI. They are at the forefront of medical innovation.







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