



May-June 2021 Residency Times

Resident Spotlight: 2021-22 Resident Council officers

Danyal Taheri Abkouh, President-Elect (PGY2, Internal Medicine, APRH)

Katrina Siemiesz, Vice President-Elect (PGY1, Family Medicine, APRH)

Q: Tell us a little about yourself.

Dr. Taheri: I'm originally from Iran and immigrated to Vancouver, Canada during my teen years. I come from a family of educators and academics, and thus growing up there was always a huge emphasis on higher-level education. As a teenager while getting accustomed to living in a new country, I began to develop an interest in the field of medicine, realizing the importance of learning about human body and how this knowledge translates beyond any language, culture, or physical border. Pursuit of medicine requires a lot of physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual sacrifices. The education that one acquires is a commodity that remains for a lifetime, and combined with that is the ability to help provide comfort to a human being at a time of need. This is something that cannot be undervalued.

I went to Avalon University School of Medicine in Curacao, a beautiful Dutch-speaking island in the southern belt of the Caribbean. I did my clinical rotations in Las Vegas and Phoenix prior to starting my Internal Medicine residency at Wayne State. With regard to choosing a field of practice, I simply enjoy meeting people, getting to know them, learning about their families, and what is important to them. Establishing a personal connection with my patients is of the utmost importance as it helps me provide better individualized care. That's primarily what I enjoy the most about being in primary care.

Dr. Siemiesz: I am a born and raised Michigander. I grew up 20 minutes from Wayne State University and 15 minutes from most of my relatives. It was definitely an adventure when I decided to attend the American University of the Caribbean (AUC) for my medical training. My family was a big part of why I became interested in medicine, especially primary care. Not because any of them have a background in medicine but because the eldest generation of my family had a slew of chronic medical conditions. Primary care doctors became a major part of their lives, and I wanted to be able to provide that kind of care to my patients. Primary care also plays a large role in offering support and preventing disease in our patients, which has been a large focus for me over the past year.

Have you held leadership positions prior to residency?

Dr. T: As a medical student, I was the President of our Student Government Association, and I also established the Mu Delta chapter of Phi Chi at Avalon, which is one of the oldest professional medical fraternities in the world. I held multiple positions, including grand-chapter representative. After medical school, I worked in medical administration, managing multispecialty clinics in Toronto as well as my hometown of Vancouver. In my Internal Medicine residency training, I have participated in resident wellness and healthcare disparities committees. I will also be serving as the Chief Resident of Internal Medicine at APRH starting in July 2021.

Dr. S: Following medical school graduation, I supervised medical assistants at an orthopedic clinic, introducing a superbill which was easier for everyone to use. Shortly after, I was a clinical fellow at AUC, training medical students in physical-exam and history-taking skills, as well as leading research projects in breast abnormalities and diabetes. I've also conducted fundraising initiatives for the American Medical Women's Association. I decided to run for the WSUSOM Resident Council because I wanted to contribute to and facilitate changes for residents.

Why do you feel the Resident Council (RC) is important for our residents?

Dr. T: The RC bridges the gap between residents of the various Wayne State University sole-sponsored programs, the program directors, the Office of Graduate Medical Education, and WSUSOM administrators. It is a forum for residents, run by residents for the purpose of unity, communication, and collaboration to optimize the teaching and learning environment across all ACGME-accredited programs. The RC serves an important purpose in supporting WSU residents throughout their time in their respective residency programs. An area I'd like to improve upon is encouraging greater participation by residents at the meetings, which will help improve the quality of our programs and RC initiatives.

Dr. S: I feel that RC is an important forum that provides residents the opportunity to express their thoughts and ideas. It is also an excellent environment for promoting the exchange of residents' perspectives across residency programs. I hope to increase the communication among the various Wayne State programs, located in hospitals all over the Detroit metro area; many residents do not have a lot of contact with trainees in other programs. The RC is a great opportunity to foster connections between residents in all our programs to get a broader idea of not only what would benefit from change, but also what is being done well.

What are your priorities for the RC in the upcoming year?

Dr. T: Residency can be overwhelming and stressful. It's important to remember that you're not alone. As the RC president, I would like our WSU residents to know that we are here for them. In order for the RC to serve its purpose, it is crucial for residents to be aware of the forum, participate, and contribute in enhancing the residency experience across all programs. We all have unique experiences that we can share with others and learn from. Thus, one key

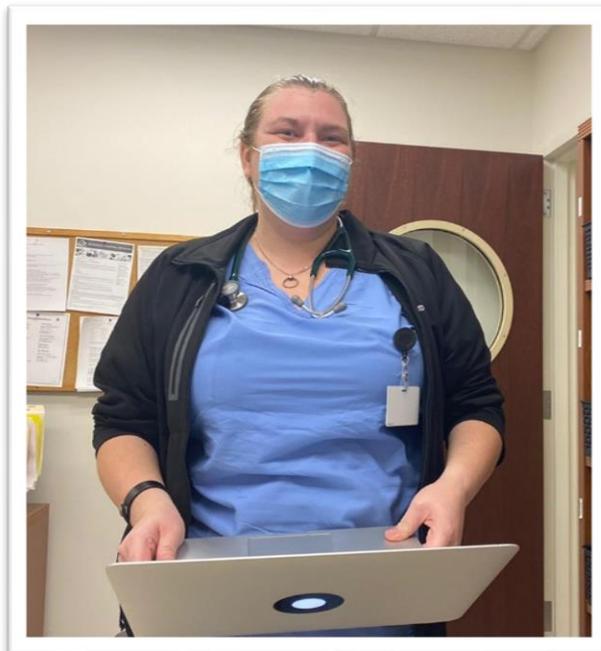
goal for the upcoming year is to spread the reach of the RC to all of my colleagues and bring our community of residents, medical students, and educators closer.

What are your plans after completing residency?

Dr. T: After residency, I would like to start my career primarily focused on hospital-based medicine, preferably in an academic setting. My short-term goal is to gain more experience in medical practice, and my long-term goal is to obtain a master's degree and pursue a career in healthcare policy and administration.

I would like to thank the Office of Graduate Medical Education for giving me this leadership opportunity. I would also like to thank the readers for giving me their time. I feel privileged to be in this position to help the future generation of physicians. We offer a supportive and inclusive forum for all WSU residents and will continue to ensure a top-quality education and work environment for our colleagues.

Dr. S: I don't know exactly what I will be doing after completing my residency. I entered Family Medicine with the goal of working in a clinic, or perhaps completing a hospice fellowship. During my first year, I have also taken a liking to inpatient medicine. No matter what the future holds, I'm sure I will be well prepared to start my journey after graduation, given the high quality of training I've received.



Dr. Siemiesz' first day in clinic! Taken by one of her attendings