



Nov-Dec 2022 Residency Times From Your DIO

A number of WSUSOM leadership, clinical faculty, and staff attended the meeting, including me and the GME Research Coordinator, Dr. Heidi Kenaga. I'd like to provide here a brief summary of some of the sessions as an indication of the event's value in understanding the social, cultural, and political contexts in which medical care takes place and how they impact its outcomes. In the *Voices of Medicine and Society* series on "Dying of Whiteness: Politics, Policy, and Racial Resentment," Jonathan Metzl, MD, PhD, the Rentschler Professor of Sociology and Medicine, Health, and Society at Vanderbilt University, drawing on his 2019 book [Dying of Whiteness](#), spoke about his research on how the beliefs of working- and middle-class white Americans often result in political choices and policies that critically undermine their own health status. Another *Voices in Medicine and Society* series session, "Under the Skin: Racism and Health," featured City University of New York Associate Professor Linda Villarosa's research on maternal and infant mortality among Black mothers. In a much-cited 2018 *New York Times Magazine* article and her recently published book [Under the Skin: The Hidden Toll of Racism on American Lives and the Health of Our Nation](#), Villarosa documented how forces in both the clinical care system and US culture -- rather than the (still-persistent) fallacy that blacks are biologically different than whites -- create negative health outcomes among citizens of color when compared with equivalent white populations. In the final plenary session, "Facing the Truth That the South Defines

America,” journalist Jon Meacham interviewed Imani Perry, PhD, JD, the Hughes-Rogers Professor of African American Studies at Princeton University. Dr. Perry’s recent book [South to America: A Journey Below the Mason-Dixon Line](#) uses historical investigation, ethnographic analysis, and personal anecdotes to situate racial inequity as a determining feature of the national landscape, prevalent in all regions of the country including the Midwest, albeit drawn from practices and policies originating in the South.

Much emphasis was also placed across Learn Serve Lead sessions on the crisis of physician wellness that we face, including the lack of well-being among both attending and resident physicians.

In another session in *Voices of Medicine and Society*, “The First Wave: COVID’s Toll on Caregivers (and What It Will Take to Heal),” Northwell Health ER physician Nathalie Dougé and Northwell Health President and CEO Michael Dowling spoke about the stress experienced by the healthcare workforce during the initial months of the COVID-19 epidemic and its continuing toll on provider well-being.

Dougé and Dowling are featured in the recent National Geographic documentary *The First Wave* (<https://films.nationalgeographic.com/the-first-wave>). One meeting panel addressed mental health and suicide prevention during COVID. Although the societal stigmas associated with mental health treatment in the past are now on the decline, robust risk identification and prevention strategies specifically designed for health professionals are needed. This panel, subtitled “Science, Culture and Solutions,” focused on how increasing residents’ and attending physicians’ interactions with the communities in which they serve can improve well-being as well as positively impact patient care. Another panel, “Resident Orientation and Our Communities,” explored two concrete examples: speakers from residency programs in Florida and New Jersey detailed how they expanded the pre-training summer event to include introductions to their community’s health profile to create greater

engagement and advocacy by residents and thus an increase in the perception of meaningful work.

These AAMC meeting sessions provided powerful, tangible examples of ways in which we can improve our residency programs and the well-being of our attending physicians, and I intend to enact some of these suggestions in the next year.

I encourage our program leadership and residents to consider attending the next [AAMC Learn Serve Lead](#) meeting, which will be held in Seattle, Washington, on Nov. 3-7, 2023.

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