Pisacano Leadership Foundation Names 2014 Pisacano Scholars

Alex Scott

The Pisacano Leadership Foundation, the philanthropic arm of the American Board of Family Medicine, recently selected its 2014 Pisacano Scholars. These 7 medical students follow in the footsteps of 95 scholar alumni who are practicing physicians and 16 current scholars who are enrolled in medical schools or family medicine residency programs across the country. The Pisacano Leadership Foundation was created in 1990 by the American Board of Family Medicine in tribute to its founder and first executive director, Nicholas J. Pisacano, MD (1924–1990). Each Pisacano Scholar has demonstrated the highest level of leadership, academic achievement, communication skills, community service, and character and integrity.

Darcy Benedict, a 2014 Pisacano Scholar, is a fourth-year medical student at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) College of Medicine enrolled in the joint MD/MPH program. She graduated from Colgate University in 2006 with a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology. At Colgate, Darcy was the first student to be awarded for 2 consecutive years the Jim P. Manzi Fellowship to engage in clinical volunteer work at Boston-area mental health and safety-net hospitals. She also was awarded the Native American Studies Award for Service for her leadership as president of the Native American Student Association and advocacy to increase underrepresented minority student recruitment efforts. In her senior year at Colgate, Darcy was inducted into the peer-selected Konosioni Senior Honor Society for her exceptional leadership and dedication to community service.

Upon entering medical school, Darcy was selected for the Urban Medicine Program, a special track for developing physician–leaders to provide care for underserved urban communities, and the Patient-Centered Medicine Scholars Program for students committed to social responsibility, community service, and patient welfare. As a member of the Urban Medicine Program, Darcy has focused on providing health and wellness education to Chicago's Native American community; in 2012 she was invited to give a talk on nutrition and obesity at the annual American Indian Heritage Celebration at UIC. As a patient-centered medicine scholar, Darcy has worked with Chicago's homeless population, providing care for individuals awaiting placement in a shelter.

While in medical school, Darcy also has engaged in several policy and advocacy initiatives. In her second year, Darcy was a founding member of Students for Affordable Medical Education, a group that successfully reversed a 21% tuition increase at the College of Medicine in the interest of preserving UIC's diversity and social mission. In addition, at UIC Darcy has continued to develop a curricular health disparities seminar to improve medical students' understanding of the social determinants of health.

In addition to her institutional contributions, Darcy also serves on Students for a Healthy Chicago, a student advisory committee to the commissioner of the Chicago Department of Public Health. As a committee member, Darcy has engaged in public health policy development and testified before the Chicago City Council in support of 2 tobacco control ordinances, which passed earlier this year. For these accomplishments, Darcy has been awarded the UIC Urban Health Pro-

From The American Board of Family Medicine, Lexington, KY.

Funding: none.

Conflict of interest: AS is an employee of the ABFM.

Corresponding author: Alex Scott, The American Board of Family Medicine, 1648 McGrathiana Parkway, Suite 550, Lexington, KY 40511 (E-mail: ascott@theabfm.org).

J Am Board Fam Med: first published as 10.3122/jabfm.2014.06.140235 on 7 November 2014. Downloaded from http://www.jabfm.org/ on 14 November 2026 by guest. Protected by copyright.

gram's Health Equity Pioneer Award and was recently inducted into the Gold Humanism Honor Society, a national organization recognizing students who are role models of humanistic care in their communities.

As a family physician, Darcy's vision is to unite patient-centered, compassionate care with community outreach and advocacy to empower patients and their communities and advance health equity for everyone, especially the most marginalized populations.

Max Goldstein, a 2014 Pisacano Scholar, is a fourth-year medical student at the David Geffen School of Medicine at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). Max's interest and commitment to family medicine began when he was 15 years old, living as an exchange student in the home of a Venezuelan doctor in Caracas. This experience led him to appreciate the complexity of health care and gave him the inspiration to positively influence community by working as a physician.

Max graduated cum laude with a Bachelor of Arts in Biology and Romance Languages from Bowdoin College in Brunswick, Maine. He was a member of Bowdoin's men's varsity swim team all 4 years of college, finishing his senior year with multiple school records. As a senior, he was awarded the Robert B. Miller Swimming Trophy, the highest honor in men's swimming.

During his junior year at Bowdoin, Max was awarded the Benjamin A. Gillman International Scholarship, which funds a select group of students to study abroad. He spent 6 months studying Arabic between the Bourguiba Institute for Modern Languages in Tunisia and a language academy in Sana'a in Yemen. Upon graduation, Max was named a Thomas J. Watson Fellow, a nationally competitive fellowship awarded annually to 40 US college graduates. This $28,000 fellowship is intended to aid in the development of leadership skills through independent organization of projects abroad. During his fellowship, Max volunteered with the Lifeguard Division of the Peruvian national police to create a summer program that focused on teaching first aid and lifeguarding skills to high school–aged youth. Throughout the year, Max also swam across the Strait of Gibraltar, once alone and a second time with a team of Moroccan and Spanish swimmers.

In medical school, Max has taken on leadership both in and out of the classroom. Between his first and second year, he was awarded a stipend to develop a youth-based emergency first response program in collaboration with nongovernmental organizations in Lima, Peru. During his second year at UCLA, Max served as his class president and as the copresident of the Family Medicine Interest Group, where he organized the building of a community garden at Esteban Torres High School in East LA. Max was also a recipient of the California Community Fund Fraser Scholarship, given to a select group of medical students committed to working as primary care physicians in underserved communities in California.

Max hopes that his career in family medicine will involve a lifetime of service in which he can help to improve a community's well-being through direct service as a physician as well as through leadership and activism. Max also hopes to build community gardens wherever he works—so look out for some fresh produce!

Seneca Harberger, a 2014 Pisacano Scholar, is a fourth-year medical student at Temple University School of Medicine. He graduated with honors from Harvey Mudd College in Claremont, California, where he majored in physics and was a captain of the Claremont College Rugby Football Club.

After college, he pursued a career in education, becoming an Oakland Teaching Fellow to connect with schools where he could be most useful. The fellowship was designed to train new teachers and draw them into math, science, and special education classrooms in struggling schools throughout the Oakland Unified School District. Through this fellowship, Seneca found a position as part of the extraordinary team at EXCEL High School in West Oakland. He earned a masters in education while he taught, but it was the example of his passionate colleagues and remarkable students that would influence him to pur-

J Am Board Fam Med: first published as 10.3122/jabfm.2014.06.140235 on 7 November 2014. Downloaded from http://www.jabfm.org/ on 14 November 2026 by guest. Protected by copyright.

sue a career in medicine and galvanize him to do so in communities that were similarly underserved.

At Temple, Seneca has received multiple scholarships and is pursuing a concurrent masters in urban bioethics, with a thesis focused on the health needs of the homeless population of North Philadelphia. In addition to the coursework, Seneca has been heavily involved in several organizations in the Temple community. As a research coordinator for a study of methicillin-resistance *Staphylococcus aureus* skin infections, he worked with many patients seeking their primary care in the Temple Emergency Department. As 1 of 4 student coordinators, he developed a seminar course in palliative care led by the inspirational palliative care team at Temple Hospital. As coordinator of the Temple Emergency Action Corps, Homelessness Initiative (TEACH), he helped organize health literacy sessions and small screening clinics in local shelters and initiated plans for a large-scale, comprehensive clinic as well as a seminar course in homeless health for medical students. Finally, as a leader of the Family Medicine Interest Group, he has sought to assert and exhibit the value of strong family physicians.

Seneca's path to medicine has been a little longer than normal, but it has wound through a combination of experiences that have fortified his commitment to service. He is passionate about primary care, devoted to family medicine, and thrilled at the prospect of a career in collaboration with the many deft and ardent colleagues that community offers.

Jonathan Jimenez, a 2014 Pisacano Scholar, is a fourth-year medical student at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai in New York. In 2009 Jonathan graduated from Yale University, where he earned a bachelor of arts in economics. He is currently earning his masters in public health at the Mailman School of Public Health at Columbia University.

As an undergraduate at Yale, Jonathan won the Nakanishi Prize, which is given to a student who shows exemplary leadership in enhancing race and ethnic relations at Yale. In 2009 he also received the Vicki Jackson Award, which is given to a senior who has demonstrated concern for the quality of life at Calhoun College at Yale. Jonathan also led a tutoring/mentoring group called Amigos, which served high school Latino males. Jonathan was also president of a pan-Latino cultural group, Alianza, which helped support policies benefiting undocumented immigrants in New Haven, Connecticut.

While in medical school, Jonathan was a co-coordinator for the Union Settlement Mount Sinai Partnership, which created an ongoing relationship between the medical school and one of the largest nonprofit service organizations in East Harlem. Jonathan received the Irwin Gelernt scholarship during his second year of medical school, which is awarded for commitment to community service. Most recently, he cofounded a chapter of Primary Care Progress (PCP) at Mount Sinai and became a Clinical Innovation Network Fellow for PCP.

Jonathan gives credit to his mother for teaching him the value of hard work and service. He has traveled to Colombia, where his parents are originally from, where he realized wellness was poorly distributed throughout the country and was based on income, race, and sex. His motivation to promote primary care and education for everyone makes him a difference-maker in the medical community. Jonathan's commitment against the plight of vulnerable populations coupled with a deep understanding of the issues affecting patients in underserved communities makes him qualified to be an outstanding family physician.

Stephanie Sandhu, a 2014 Pisacano Scholar, is a fourth-year medical student at the University of Colorado School of Medicine. Stephanie graduated summa cum laude from the University of Miami with a bachelor of science in neurobiology and women's studies/English literature. She was valedictorian of her high school, and for meeting rigorous academic credentials Stephanie was offered the University of Miami Foote Fellow scholarship. Stephanie was heavily involved in the student organization S.T.A.N.D. throughout her undergraduate years. She worked on multiple campaigns related to labor and antigentrification issues alongside various other community and labor organizations. She was awarded the Thinking Outside of the Box Award by her peers for developing and installing a symbolic art piece on campus

J Am Board Fam Med: first published as 10.3122/jabfm.2014.06.140235 on 7 November 2014. Downloaded from http://www.jabfm.org/ on 14 November 2026 by guest. Protected by copyright.

to attract campus members to obtain signatures of support for the Coalition of Immokalee Workers who fight for farmworker rights.

During her undergraduate junior year, Stephanie lived in her father's village in Punjab, India, for a semester and volunteered at a local clinic, where she helped assist in child care, dispensed medicines, and assisted in procedures. This experience helped her understand the importance of preventative medicine in primary care. After her first year of medical school, Stephanie again went abroad to Xela, Guatemala, to participate in the Somos Hermanos Spanish Immersion program. This program focuses on reducing barriers in health care by supporting the development of bilingual and culturally competent health care providers.

While in medical school, Stephanie served as a student leader in the Culturally Effective Medicine curriculum, which she developed along with a few other classmates to teach culturally effective methods in medicine. She was also a student leader for the Stout Street Clinic, where she managed and organized a weekly student-run clinic for the homeless. Stephanie served as the copresident of the Colorado Medical Society CU School of Medicine and was on the board of directors for the Colorado Medical Society in 2012. She currently serves on the board of directors of the Colorado Medical Political Action Committee as the medical student representative. Stephanie was the recipient of 2 scholarships—the Harry K. Albert Scholarship and the University Physicians Inc. scholarship—in recognition for her commitment to enhancing the diversity of the student body and campus through community service. In addition, she was recently chosen by her peers for induction into the Gold Humanism Honor Society.

Stephanie hopes that her experience in policy work along with her vision of addressing the social determinants of health inside and outside the office will allow her to justly serve the underserved as she moves forward in her career as a family physician.

Alyssa Shell, a 2014 Pisacano Scholar, is a fourth-year medical student at the University of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB), earning her MD/PhD in population health sciences. Alyssa graduated with honors with a bachelor of arts in social studies from Harvard University. She also received a certificate in health policy, which provided her with a comprehensive understanding of the structure of the US health care system. As an undergraduate, Alyssa received 2 Harvard College Research Program Grant awards, which provide financial support for student-initiated scholarly research guided by faculty. The first grant helped Alyssa perform public health research in Santiago, Chile, and the second grant supported her research on the experiences of low-income Mexican American women with type 2 diabetes in New Mexico. Alyssa's interest in Latino health continued as a graduate student at UTMB, where her dissertation investigated the relationship between neighborhood racial segregation and Latino mental health.

While in medical school, Alyssa received the John P. McGovern Student Award in Oslerian Medicine, which is given to a student who demonstrates compassion, professionalism, and commitment to science-based medicine and lifelong learning. She is also a member of the Gold Humanism Honor Society. In 2012 she received the US Public Health Services Excellence in Public Health Award for her commitment to public health practice through service and leadership. She also was awarded the Peyton and Lydia Schapper Endowed Scholarship, which is given to a student with an interest in gerontology or health promotion who has demonstrated outstanding professional and personal leadership among peers. Alyssa volunteered for 3 years and then served as the director of St. Vincent's Student Clinic at UTMB, a free clinic serving low-income people in the surrounding area. As a member of the Texas Academy of Family Physicians (TAFP), she was given the honor of representing Texas medical students as the delegate to the National Congress in Kansas City this year. Alyssa was recently awarded the Weldon G. Kolb, MD Medical Student Scholarship from the TAFP Foundation. This award is given to a student who meets high academic standards and expresses a commitment to family medicine.

Alyssa has a patient-centered attitude that started in high school during a summer volunteer program in Kenya, where she taught classes on HIV education. As her interest in health disparities continued, she pursued additional opportunities, such as working for the New Jersey Department of

J Am Board Fam Med: first published as 10.3122/jabfm.2014.06.140235 on 7 November 2014. Downloaded from http://www.jabfm.org/ on 14 November 2026 by guest. Protected by copyright.

Health and Senior Services after entering college. Alyssa's medical and graduate coursework solidified her commitment to family medicine and community health research. Her career goals include practicing full-spectrum family medicine; working to alleviate health care disparities, especially in rural areas; and eventually becoming a leader in health care policy.

Nicholas Kenji Taylor, a 2014 Pisacano Scholar, is a fourth-year medical student at the Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania. He graduated magna cum laude from and was a member of Phi Beta Kappa at Brown University, earning degrees in East Asian studies and neuroscience. He also completed a masters in innovation management and entrepreneurship engineering at Brown.

As a Bill & Melinda Gates Millennium Scholar at Brown, Kenji was deeply involved in community service learning, including founding an SAT prep program for low-income youth in Providence, which is still running today. During his junior year abroad in Japan, with support from the Miller Scholarship, he investigated health care access for undocumented foreign workers for his senior honors thesis. In addition, Kenji explored his entrepreneurial spirit, interning with Goldman Sachs and writing a business plan to commercialize a neurotechnology developed at Brown.

After college, Kenji worked in Los Angeles, London, and Tokyo through a managerial training program with The Capital Group Companies. It was his volunteer work with the board of a federally qualified health center in Los Angeles that convinced him social justice via medicine was the path for him.

Kenji returned to medical school to provide care for individuals from underserved communities and apply his business experience to improve health systems. He was humbled to be named 1 of 10 Gamble Scholars, Penn's highest merit award. In his first year of medical school, Kenji managed The Cut Hypertension Program, in which medical students visit African American barbershops to perform blood pressure screenings and educate customers about the silent dangers of hypertension. He continued throughout medical school to build this program via an Albert Schweitzer Fellowship and United Health Foundation award. To understand and improve the health system for underserved communities abroad, Kenji had the opportunity to work with Wharton researchers, management consultants, and *mothers2mothers* in South Africa to build a system that followed mothers infected with HIV through the process of preventing HIV transmission to their infants.

Through the CDC Experience Applied Epidemiology Fellowship, Kenji recently spent a year away from medical school working on global pediatric HIV care and treatment research, technical support, and health policy in Namibia and Malawi. Upon completion of the fellowship, he returned to the East Arkansas Family Health Center, a community health center where he previously spent time as a third-year providing primary care to Arkansas's most vulnerable underserved populations. To recognize his efforts in the local and global health community, classmates and faculty elected him to the Gold Humanism Honor Society.

Kenji envisions his future in family medicine as the privilege to provide one-on-one primary care to individuals in his local community as well as strengthen systems of health and preventative services to the most vulnerable populations around the world.

J Am Board Fam Med: first published as 10.3122/jabfm.2014.06.140235 on 7 November 2014. Downloaded from http://www.jabfm.org/ on 14 November 2026 by guest. Protected by copyright.