A Residency Story
are they now?

Kevin Musto, MD ‘14
The Wright Center for Graduate Medical Education
Residency Program
The Wright Center, Scranton, PA
Specialty: Internal Medicine
Hometown: Pittston, PA

“TCMC really excels at preparing its students in the gathering of information and the presentation of this information to attending physicians.”

Although the hours are long, the time spent with patients and learning them thank you for helping them makes it all worth it.”

Kevin said, “I feel that I am miles ahead of other residents in my interaction with patients and my presentation skills. Because we started from day one at TCMC, interacting with patients and learning how to do a history and physical, I feel like I am much more efficient at my job and I can spend my extra time developing a connection with my patients.” He is learning to put his knowledge to the test.

Kevin’s advice for graduating medical students: “Take advantage of the opportunities you are given in the third and fourth years. During this time you are given a lot of knowledge in your education and it is important to maximize this. Take these years seriously even though you won’t always have someone watching over your shoulder to make sure you are doing what you should be doing.”

Six years ago, 65 aspiring physicians took a chance on a startup independent medical school in northeast Pennsylvania opening in temporary classrooms.

Today, the Commonwealth Medical College (TCMC) has much to celebrate.

This year we welcomed our second class of 100 MD students and our sixth class of 60 MBS students. Eighty-two of our MBS alumni are now in the MD Class of 2018. Four of our new medical students are graduates of Regional Education Academy for Careers in Health - Higher Education Initiative (BREACH HE), our pipeline program to bring underrepresented minorities and disadvantaged students from the region into medical careers.

In July, TCMC received the much anticipated news that both the Liaison Committee for Medical Education (LCME) and Middle States Commission for Higher Education granted TCMC full accreditation. A mere “thank you” does not express my gratitude for the years of hard work by faculty, staff, volunteer clinical faculty and students.

Both the LCME and Middle States acknowledged our improved finances and deemed TCMC sustainable. For an independent medical college, especially as new as TCMC, this is outstanding. We thank Blue Cross of Northeastern Pennsylvania and many other donors for their unremitting generosity.

Even before accreditation, TCMC’s Board of Trustees had decided to stop seeking affiliation with another university or hospital. As an independent medical college, we are running money successfully and growing our endowment. In 2015, we will launch an ambitious scholarship campaign to help ease the burden of debt faced by our students.

TCMC has a unique advantage in educating future physicians because our students gain hands-on experience from over 1,000 volunteer clinical faculty throughout 17 counties in northeast and north central Pennsylvania. Students are required to perform community service and pursue research projects in quality improvement and community health.

Full accreditation is a huge achievement and it speaks to all of TCMC’s enormous accomplishments. Students and faculty are publishing their work in prestigious journals and speaking at international conferences. Our students pass the United States Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE) Step 1 and Step 2 exams at high rates. Most importantly, through a very competitive process, the members of both of our MD graduating classes have matched with residencies at some of the best teaching hospitals and community-based residences around the country.

Accreditation is only the beginning. In this issue of The Journal, you will read about many exciting activities and initiatives in pursuit of our mission. In subsequent issues, we will highlight even more. TCMC’s impact will continue to grow, through our students, our alumni, our dedicated faculty and staff, our corps of volunteer clinical faculty and through the patients our students will eventually serve. Together, we have changed the future, but our work is just beginning.

Sincerely,

Steven J. Scheinman, MD
President and Dean
Everyone at TCMC was delighted to learn in Summer 2014 that we had been awarded full accreditation by both the Liaison Committee for Medical Education (LCME) and the Middle States Commission on Higher Education.

The LCME is the council that accredits programs leading to the Doctor of Medicine (MD) degree in the United States and Canada. Though it is a non-governmental entity, the LCME is recognized as the reliable accreditation authority by the US Department of Education, by Congress in health-related laws, and by state and territorial medical licensing boards. Middle States is a non-governmental membership association that accredits institutions of higher education in this mid-Atlantic portion of the country, and is dedicated to quality assurance through peer evaluation.

“We are incredibly proud of both of these accomplishments,” said Steven J. Scheinman, MD, President and Dean of TCMC. “It shows the faith that this entire region has had in our College was justified.”

Earning full accreditation by both the LCME and Middle States involved significant efforts over several years. Both agencies required detailed self-studies and both made week-long site visits earlier this year. The reviewers examined all aspects of the College’s programs and functions.

Both agencies praised TCMC’s innovative curriculum. The LCME reported, “The curriculum is structured to provide longitudinal patient care experiences that emphasize continuity of care, the psychosocial environment in which care is provided, and interactions with patients and their families. These experiences occur in primary care settings and span the full curriculum.”

Both accrediting agencies concluded that the College’s finances are sustainable. The TCMC community celebrated full accreditation with press conferences at all of our campuses in July. In August, the occasion was marked at the “Williamsport Welcomes the World” festival that is part of the Little League World Series and with TCMC Day at a Scranton/Wilkes-Barre RailRiders double-header.

White Coat Ceremonies are a rite of passage that welcome new medical students into the profession and emphasize the importance of compassion and professionalism. On August 8, family, friends, and members of TCMC’s community joined the Class of 2018 for this tradition.

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William F. Iobst, MD, FACP, Vice President for Academic and Clinical Affairs and Vice Dean at TCMC, presented the inaugural Dr. Lester Saidman Memorial Lecture.

Each year, The Dr. Lester Saidman Memorial Lecture will be the keynote address at TCMC’s White Coat Ceremony in honor of Dr. Lester Saidman, a well-respected physician and educator in Luzerne County. The children of Dr. Saidman hope these lectures will honor his life by emphasizing the student’s obligation in the doctor-patient relationship.

This year also marked the establishment of The Stanley J. Dudrick, MD and Alan G. Goldstein Endowment Fund, which serves to defray the cost of white coats for TCMC students. It was established through the generosity of Alan G. Goldstein, donor and strong supporter, in appreciation of his friendship with TCMC Professor of Surgery, Stanley Dudrick, MD, FACS.

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A FOCUS ON BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES
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TCMC's MBS Class of 2015:
Class Size: 66
Pennsylvania Residents: 23
Northeast and North Central Pennsylvania Residents: 13
Men: 38
Women: 28
Under-represented Minorities: 9
First Generation College Students: 27
Average Overall GPA: 3.23
Average MCAT: 27

TCMC's MD Class of 2018:
Number of Applicants: 5,971
Class Size: 100
Pennsylvania Residents: 78
Northeast and North Central Pennsylvania Residents: 36
Men: 50
Women: 50
Under-represented Minorities: 11
First Generation College Students: 23
Average Overall GPA: 3.53
Average MCAT: 30

Student Spotlight:
Abdul Hussain Azizi, MD Class of 2018

First-year medical student Hussain Azizi is well on his way to achieving his dreams. His recently widowed mother brought her seven young children from Afghanistan to America two weeks after the tragic events of September 11, 2001. The Azizi family bravely built a new life in Scranton.

Hussain said, “We found out very fast we were coming to America. My mom had to uproot us and start over from scratch. She didn’t speak English or have any friends here, but she knew her children would get the education they couldn't have in Afghanistan and reach their potential.” Hussain wanted to become a doctor after helping his mother with medical appointments and seeing firsthand how she improved from receiving quality healthcare.

As a college sophomore, Hussain participated in TCMC’s REACH-HEI program. He learned how to apply to medical school and did a research internship with cardiologist Samir Pancholy, MD, Clinical Professor of Medicine.

His own pediatrician, TCMC’s Clinical Assistant Professor of Pediatrics Paul Tomcykoski, DO, has also been a powerful mentor. “He is so passionate and cares so much,” Hussain said. “No matter what specialty I choose, I want to emulate him to the best of my ability.” Hussain’s and his father’s high participation in REACH-HEI at TCMC, Harzana in studying Nursing at Penn State University’s Washington College in Scranton, and Pancholy being a senior at Scranton High School. All of Harzana’s siblings are either in school or succeeding in health-related professions.

TCMC Receives $3.2 Million Grant
In October 14, The Northeastern Pennsylvania Health Care Foundation (NEPA HCF) announced a $3.2 million grant to TCMC. The grant will be awarded over an 11 year period and will fund four-year scholarships for incoming students from northeast Pennsylvania who are enrolled in TCMC’s MD program.

Candidates will be screened through TCMC’s admissions process, beginning with the 2013-2014 academic year. These need-based scholarships, up to $40,000 per year, will be awarded to students with prior community service from Lackawanna, Luzerne, and Wyoming counties who want to practice medicine in northeast Pennsylvania.

James Clemente, Chair of the Board of Directors of NEPA HCF, said, “There is a synergy of goals between TCMC and NEPA HCF in that we are both committed to working towards reducing the physician shortage in our region. The Foundation’s Board of Governors feels that supporting TCMC will have a positive impact on community health in northeast Pennsylvania for many years to come.”

Steven J. Scherman, MD, President and Dean of TCMC, said, “I applaud and thank NEPA HCF for this very significant commitment to our students and the health of the region. It will make a substantial difference for at least 20 medical students over the next decade. These scholarships will help us recruit bright students from this region who are economically disadvantaged but aspire to be doctors. Our mission and the goals of the Foundation in creating these scholarships are completely congruent.”

REACH-HEI to Continue in Scranton and Hazleton
In 2010, TCMC launched the Regional Education Academy for Careers in Health—Higher Education Initiative (REACH-HEI) to provide academic and career support from high school through college to the health professions. A federal grant for $2.5 million originally supported REACH-HEI. Over 400 students participated, five of whom are now at TCMC.

REACH-HEI’s federal grant has concluded, but Lisa Castro continues to seek new funding. The Hazleton Area School District has contributed $311,000 to deliver programming to 75 students over the next three years. In addition, with $10,000 from the Scranton Area Foundation, Ms. Castro has developed the REACH-HEI Education Leadership Program (HELP) between TCMC, The Women’s Resource Center and the Center for Independent Living. REACH-HEI/HELP will provide 23 high school students with coursework and projects linked to behavioral health careers.

TCMC’s Clinical Professor of Medicine. TCMC Receives $3.2 Million Grant. TCMC Receives $3.2 Million Grant. TCMC Receives $3.2 Million Grant.

First Row: Steven J. Scherman, MD, President and Dean; James Clemente, NEPA HCF Board Chairman. Second Row: Moonee Gambhir, Vice President for Institutional Advancement; Linda Serber-Demo, EdD, Associate Dean for Admissions & Student Affairs; Natalie Gels, NEPA HCF Board Chair; Kerry O’Grady, NEPA HCF Board; Michelle McGowan, NEPA HCF Board; Laura Oucources, President & CEO Scranton Area Foundation/ NEPA HCF Administrator; Andrea Mulini, Director of Corporate and Foundation Relations, Third Row: Robert Naismith, MD, TCMC Board; Robert Wright, MD, TCMC Board; Jeremiah Lagen, MD, NEPA HCF Board; Ron Havilah Sweeney, NEPA HCF Board; Fourth Row: Robert Knowles, NEPA HCF Board; Jim Manko, NEPA HCF Board; Christopher Dresel, MD, NEPA HCF Board.

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Photo by Eric Conover/Hazleton Standard-Speaker Staff Photographer

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Dr. Holt is examining a breast cancer mutation that occurs in descendants from the original Italian immigrants who settled in small towns in Lackawanna and Luzerne counties. Dr. Holt and Dr. White are interested in these microcosms of very well preserved founder effects within the past four generations. People whose ancestors came to northeast Pennsylvania over a century ago have stayed here. “There has been surprisingly little migration out of the area,” remarked Dr. Holt.

Rose explained that no one in her culture ever moved away, because a century ago, coming to America was a one-way trip. “When my parents left Italy, they never saw their own parents and relatives again. Everyone I know has heard stories like that and equated moving away with loss of family,” she said.

Therefore, the Italian-Americans have given TCMC researchers a rare opportunity for scientists to study a small, well-preserved gene pool.

“Fighting out who’s going to get cancer can be like looking for a needle in a haystack. The number of people you have to screen is so high that it’s impossible,” Holt said.

"Genetic mutations occur in .02% of the population. So for scientists to study a small, well-preserved gene pool..."
ADVOCATES for the COMMUNITY

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in recognition of National Primary Care Week, students of TCMC partnered with Scentsy Primary Health Care Center and National Health Service Corps scholars to host the third annual Steamtown Health Fair on October 11 at TCMC's Medical Sciences Building in Scranton.

This free, family-friendly health fair offered the public access to several local organizations that promote well-being and healthy behavior in the community. Over 100 attendees were able to receive free screenings, donate blood, and learn valuable health information and counseling information. Other highlights included Zumba demonstrations, children's activities, raffles, a bike ride to benefit the Think4Kidz Pediatric Cancer Fund and much more.

Champions of FAMILY MEDICINE

T

he American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) awarded TCMC's Family Medicine Interest Group (FMIG) the 2014 Program of Excellence Award for being the most improved FMIG in the nation at their annual conference in Kansas City, MO on August 8.

FMIGs are medical school-sponsored, student- and faculty-run organizations that give students a chance to learn more about family medicine through regular meetings, workshops, leadership development opportunities, and community and clinical experiences. The Program of Excellence Awards recognize FMIGs for their outstanding performance in organizational operation, community service, promoting the value of family medicine as primary care, promoting the scope of family medicine, exposure to family physicians, professional development, and measures of success.

The graded TCMC's FMIG, which is only in its third year, is to increase students' awareness and knowledge of family medicine and other primary care specialties through a diversified and patient-centered lens. The group engages students in community service projects and offers clinical skill workshops. It has been extremely active in northeast Pennsylvania. Most notably, in January and March, they collaborated with other students and organizations to offer several workshops on insomnia in the Affordable Care Act exchanges. Nearly 200 previously uninsured people signed up earning TCMC students personal recognition from Vice President for Alumni.

SAVE THE DATES!

Friday, March 20, 2015: MD Class of 2015 Match Day • Sunday, May 10, 2015: Commencement 2015
NEW FACULTY MEMBERS

Carmine Cerra, MD  
Associate Professor of Pathology  
Department of Basic Sciences

Glen Digwood, DO  
Assistant Professor of Medicine  
Department of Clinical Sciences

Deborah Hocko, RN, MS  
Instructor of Medicine  
Department of Clinical Sciences

Samuel Lesko, MD, MPH  
Professor of Family Medicine and Epidemiology  
Department of Family, Community and Rural Health

William Miller, PhD, MHA  
Professor of Family Medicine  
Department of Family, Community and Rural Health

April Troy, MD, MPH  
Assistant Professor of Pediatrics  
Regional Education Coordinator of Pediatrics, North Campus  
Department of Family, Community and Rural Health

Kalman Winston, PhD  
Assistant Professor of Family Medicine  
Department of Family, Community and Rural Health

Abhishek Yadav, MBBS, Msc  
Associate Professor of Anatomy  
Department of Basic Sciences

www.tcmc.edu

CONTINUING MEDICAL EDUCATION SAVE THE DATES:

April 11, 2015  
TCMC’s Medical Sciences Building  
525 Pine Street, Scranton, PA 18509  
Topic: Child Abuse

May 14, 2015  
TCMC’s Medical Sciences Building, Room 2001  
Topic: Breast Cancer, Presented by Carmine Cerra, MD, Pathologist, Laboratory Medical Director, Pocono Medical Center

Spotlight on DONALD STONE, DO  
Academy of Clinical Educators’ (ACE) Faculty Master

TCMC established the Academy of Clinical Educators (ACE) to recognize the contributions and generosity of our more than 1,000 volunteer clinical faculty. All volunteer clinical faculty are members of ACE, an organization which promotes faculty scholarship, participates in curriculum development, and develops new resources to support teaching. ACE members can advance to the level of Fellow or Master with exemplary service.

Donald Stone, DO, has taught at TCMC since 2009. He is an Associate Professor of Family Medicine and the Regional Education Coordinator for Family Medicine for our South Regional Campus.

His practice, Huntington Mills Family Practice in Luzerne County, serves all walks of life. He chose family practice out of a desire to care for people throughout their lifespan.

“Being a comprehensivist was more important than being a partialist,” he said, “In family practice, I love that I can deliver babies and take care of them all of their lives.”

Dr. Stone also cherishes the relationships he has built with individuals, families, and communities. “The most humbling upon you by patients allowing you to treat them in the best possible way means everything,” he said.

Like so many of his colleagues, Dr. Stone jumped at the chance to teach at TCMC. He said, “TCMC’s mission fits what I’ve done all my life. I’m a lifelong Pennsylvanian. I’ve been based in a rural community, serving diverse populations for over 30 years. Teaching is a way for me to share what I’ve learned all these years. It’s important to pass the baton to the next generation of doctors.”

He also loves the culture at TCMC. “The academic community is exactly what they say: a true community.”

He appreciates that the faculty have accepted clinicians with open arms. “I’ve felt nothing but acceptance and companionship throughout my time at TCMC’s culture, and feeling valued but respect from all my colleagues.”

High Honors for Dr. Dudrick

In Skawina, Poland, a hospital stands in honor of Stanley Dudrick, MD, FACS. Dr. Dudrick, Professor of Surgery at TCMC, traveled to “The Stanley Dudrick, MD, Memorial Hospital” in June 2014 for a dedication and to see the new construction. Administrators chose to name the hospital after Dr. Dudrick because of his invention, development, and clinical application of total intravenous feeding. When he returned from Poland, Dr. Dudrick received the Excellence in Nutrition Science, Excellence in Medical Research, and Excellence in Integrative Medicine Awards at the Sacred Fire of Liberty Gala in Cambridge, MA in September 2014. Most recently, the American College of Surgeons honored Dr. Dudrick as a “Hero of American Surgery” during their Clinical Congress in October 2014 in San Francisco. He is hailed as “The Father of Intravenous Feeding” for his development of total parenteral nutrition which has saved millions of lives. Most extremely low-weight babies would not have survived infancy without Dr. Dudrick’s work.

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Dr. Martin receiving the award from William Cotton, MD, FAAP, Chair of the Council on Sports Medicine and Fitness (left), and Joel Brenner, MD, FAAP, Chair of the Council on Sports Medicine and Fitness (right).

DR. MARTIN RECEIVES AWARD

Thomas Martin, MD, Professor and Education Director of Pediatrics, received the Thomas E. Shaffer MD Award for Pediatric Sports Medicine at the Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Pediatrics on October 11 in San Diego, CA. The American Academy of Pediatrics’ Council on Sports Medicine nominated Dr. Martin because of his lifetime contributions to the field of pediatric sports medicine.

DR. IOBST HONORED

William F. Iobst, MD, FACO Vice President for Academic and Clinical Affairs and Vice Dean at TCMC, received the 2014 Special Recognition Award from the Alliance for Academic Internal Medicine (AAIM) on September 12 in Washington, DC. The AAIM selected Dr. Iobst for his work advancing competency-based medical education within the internal medicine community.

Steven J. Scheinman, MD, President and Dean of TCMC, said, “This national recognition highlights that Dr. Iobst is a respected and visionary leader in the world of medical education and training.”
The TCMC Scholarship was established as part of the annual Employee Giving Campaign. Last year, TCMC staff and faculty members demonstrated a remarkable spirit with 64% participation. We are proud to announce this year’s scholar:

Julie Mercadante is a graduate of E.L. Meyers High School in Wilkes-Barre, and graduated from the University of the Sciences in Philadelphia with a Bachelor’s Degree in biochemistry. She was a member of two national honor societies: Alpha Chi, for the top 10% of juniors and seniors, and Alpha Lambda Delta, a freshman honor society.

“I am so thankful for the scholarship that was made possible through the generosity and support of the faculty and staff at TCMC. I feel very empowered knowing that so many people believe that I could one day become a great physician. Thank you!”

Julie Mercadante, MD

Greg Mendez is the first recipient of the newly established TCMC Alumni Scholarship, formed by the Charter Class and increased by the generous support of the Class of 2014 as their Senior Class Gift. Alumni have the opportunity to engage in truly making a difference in the lives of current and future TCMC students.

“Thank you so much to the TCMC alumni and community for awarding me the TCMC Alumni Scholarship. The idea of creating this scholarship is in and of itself a great testament to the character of all those who learn, work and serve at TCMC. I am truly honored to be this year’s recipient. I take much pride in our school and am inspired by the efforts taken to mold TCMC into what we, as students, and the community need it to be. The recent accreditation status is a prime example of our vast potential and I look forward to the future of TCMC.”

Greg Mendez, MD

To make a donation or for more information, please contact the Office of Annual Giving at 570.504.9619 or visit www.tcmc.edu/donate.
This report recognizes gifts received in fiscal year 2014 (July 1, 2013–June 30, 2014), including any matching gifts.
Abbigail Woll is a first-year medical student at TCMC and the first person to receive the Dr. Thomas J. Martin and Rev. Dr. Lois D. Martin Annual Scholarship. Dr. Thomas Martin, Professor of Pediatrics at TCMC, along with his wife, established the merit-based scholarship in 2014 to ease the financial burden of an incoming MD1 student from the region.

“I was not expecting a scholarship but in receiving it, I immediately felt supported, as if I were already a member of the TCMC community,” said Abbi. “Having the academic and emotional support given by TCMC and the financial support given by the Martins really has made the College a new home to me — a place where I know I’ll accomplish great things,” she added.

Abbi will be able to extend the impact of being a scholarship recipient: “I hope that one day I can give another TCMC student the opportunity of receiving a scholarship and help fund their dreams of becoming a physician,” she stated.

That feeling is mutual. “Lois and I have received so much from so many people. We have always believed in giving back in any way we can. Medicine is a wonderful profession and we want to encourage excellent people to enter this field,” said Dr. Martin. “I look forward to watching Abbi grow and become an excellent physician,” he added.

To make a donation or for more information, please contact the Office of Annual Giving at 570.504.9619 or visit www.tcmc.edu/donate.