



# Doctor of Medicine

MD Program

Geisinger









Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine educates aspiring physicians and scientists to serve society using a community-based, patient-centered, interprofessional and evidence-based model of education that is committed to inclusion, promotes discovery and utilizes innovative techniques.



# Doctor of Medicine

## MD Program

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Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine is committed to non-discrimination in all employment and educational opportunities.

## A message from the vice dean

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, medical education was evolving thanks to the demands of modern healthcare. The pandemic, however, served as a clarifying agent and revealed themes that are now our educational guideposts. You will learn more about our curriculum as you peruse these pages, but, here is a broad view of our goals:

- Integrate fundamental and clinical science. Clinical faculty teach students throughout their journey. Moreover, basic science faculty has reconnected and grounded the clerkship year and advanced application phase with concepts once confined to the classroom.
- Focus on professional identity formation, cultural competence and health justice.
- Emphasize the physician's role in promoting health rather than merely managing disease by connecting active learning with community engagement.

COVID-19 also removed barriers we didn't even know existed. When faced with crisis, they fell away, leaving only our pact with students and with the public to produce the best doctors possible. Along the way, we developed new means to work together, and many novel innovations based on a new understanding of technology. Although creativity is not necessarily an educational theme, we'll keep the freedom and energy our faculty experienced during the crisis alive and use it to continue to innovate and to mold physicians prepared to embrace the future.



Sincerely,  
William Jeffries, PhD  
Vice President for Academic Affairs  
Vice Dean for Medical Education







## Total Health Curriculum

The Total Health Curriculum is built on the science of learning and uses an evidence-based approach to train skilled, compassionate physicians who provide individualized care of patients and promote health in the communities they serve. In addition to providing a fully integrated and immersive educational experience in basic, clinical and health systems sciences, the curriculum emphasizes six themes, including Health Equity and Justice, Health System Citizenship, Primary Care, Personal and Professional Development, Community Immersion and Population Health. These themes will guide the training of physicians who are resilient, collaborative and ready to assume leadership roles in evolving healthcare settings.

At Geisinger Commonwealth, we envision our curriculum as a tree, similar to the tree of knowledge that forms our seal. The roots correspond to **Phase 1 – Principles of Science and Practice**, which encompasses foundational education rooted in basic, clinical and health system sciences. The trunk epitomizes **Phase 2 – Core Clinical Immersion**. With roots firmly planted, you will build a solid body of clinical experiences that begins early and grows in complexity and meaning. The trunk provides firm support for the branches, which represent **Phase 3 – Career Differentiation and Exploration**. You are now ready to branch off in your own direction. Following your core clinical experiences, you will progress in the development of advanced clinical skills and training that suits your individual interests and career goals.



## Phase 1

### Principles of Medical Science and Practice

Phase 1 includes three semesters and a capstone experience. The curriculum is organized into integrated, system-based blocks and features learning through the Clinical Presentation Model and other active learning formats. In this phase, clinicians and scientists work in concert to provide a consistent, clinically relevant and integrated understanding of basic science and clinical science knowledge. Early clinical experience in a primary care setting is also a feature of this phase. Phase 1 courses include Orientation, Integrated Sciences, Physician and Patient Centered Care and Preparation for Licensure. These courses feature our six curricular themes. Career development starts early in this phase as you progress through our Career Pathway Program.

experiences include Family Medicine, Medicine, OB-GYN, Pediatrics, Neurology, Psychiatry and Surgery. Diagnostic Medicine is a component of all clerkship blocks. These core clinical experiences will provide a solid foundation for future development of advanced clinical skills and experiences in advanced specialty care.

## Phase 2

### Core Clinical Immersion

Phase 2 contains a Transition to Clerkship/ Orientation session, five clerkship blocks, bridge weeks, a Capstone experience and components of the required Career Pathway Program. Clerkship

## Phase 3

### Career Differentiation and Exploration

Phase 3 includes required core clinical rotations, expanded elective exploration opportunities and a formal Transition to Residency component. Following your core clinical experiences, you will progress in the development of advanced clinical skills and trainings. A core set of experiences ensure that all graduates have the skills necessary to start any residency. This phase is also a time for a career exploration. With multiple specialties from which to choose, our clinical advisors will help you to identify which way to go. The career differentiation and exploration phase will help you to discern your own path forward to a career that will match your career goals.

## At a glance: Total Health Curriculum

August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June	July		
Phase 1 – Principles of Medical Science and Practice										Summer research			
Phase 1 – Principles of Medical Science and Practice							Phase 2 – Core Clinical Immersion						
Phase 2 – Core Clinical Immersion							Phase 3 – Career Differentiation and Exploration						
Phase 3 – Career Differentiation and Exploration													

## Why choose Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine?

### Key features

- **The science of learning:** The Total Health Curriculum uses an evidence-based, active learning approach to medical education that has been demonstrated to improve learning. The curriculum is also grounded in principles of cognitive science and uses learning strategies including metacognition, spaced repetition, interleaving, retrieval practice and elaboration.
- **The Clinical Presentation Model:** The Total Health Curriculum relies on decades of educational evidence and ensures basic science and other content receive necessary emphasis in clinical context. This approach creates mental models to enhance learning, increases clinical relevance of early educational experiences and promotes recall during the clinical years and later in practice.
- **Earlier clinical experiences:** Students are placed in the primary care setting in their second semester as part of the Longitudinal Clinical Experience. Students are placed in their core clerkship rotations in their second year.
- **A team approach to teaching and learning:** Clinicians and scientists work in interdisciplinary teams to create and implement the curriculum. This enhances the learning environment, provides clinical perspective and connects students early with Geisinger clinical faculty as role models and advisors for residency and specialty selection. Students also work in peer teams in class. These teams provide a supportive learning environment and help develop interpersonal skills necessary for medical practice.
- **Research and Scholarship:** Numerous opportunities exist for students to investigate research opportunities both within and outside of Geisinger and pursue supplemental funding to support their projects. Short and long-term research programs include the Summer Research Immersion Program and the Medical Research Honors Program. Students are provided multiple opportunities to present their research findings, including the annual Spring Research Symposium.

Students can also submit their scholarly and creative work for publication in Geisinger Commonwealth's *Journal for Scholarly Research in Progress (SCRIP)*.

- **Service learning:** Service has always been integral to a Geisinger Commonwealth education. The Total Health Curriculum builds on this tradition by creating a more interconnected structure for immersion that collaboratively advances the work of our local service agencies. Our students work with our community partners on projects that meet their needs to help provide solutions for their challenges. Students immersed in these experiences will understand community needs, how agencies work to meet these needs and how medicine can partner to deliver better health for individuals, families and entire neighborhoods — skills that will remain with our graduates to improve communities anywhere.





# Themes

Our six themes are longitudinal and cumulative curricular experiences that provide intentional emphasis and competency in contemporary aspects of medical practice. Thematic educational experiences start in the first year and continue as students matriculate in their medical training.



1. **Health Equity and Justice:** Ensures awareness and recognition of existent historic inequities in medicine to establish the next generation of physicians as agents of change. Students will learn to recognize their own biases and practice cultural humility in their interaction with patients and colleagues. Geisinger Commonwealth is part of a multi-institutional, multi-disciplinary team developing an educational antiracism curriculum funded by the Josiah Macy Foundation that will enhance students' knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviors regarding social justice, equity and inclusion.



2. **Health System Citizenship:** Prepares future doctors to contribute to quality improvement, participate in early adoption of technology and function in team-based models of care for improved patient care and healthcare delivery. This theme delves deeply into healthcare delivery science and leverages the strength of Geisinger's value-based care model to focus on system improvement.



3. **Primary Care:** Focuses attention on the most critical health need in the nation and centers the future physician's approach on wellness and disease prevention, regardless of medical specialty.



4. **Personal and Professional Development:** Supplies the tools, skills and knowledge necessary to promote lifelong learning and skill development, personal wellness and career development.



5. **Community Immersion:** Enables students to develop meaningful relationships with the community through partnerships with local patients, families and agencies. Students engage in service learning with mentorship by community leaders and patients.



6. **Population Health:** Leverages Geisinger's signature programs to introduce future physicians to successful models that recognize and mitigate the social determinants of health that affect individual patients, neighborhoods, communities and populations.

## Objectives and competencies

Geisinger Commonwealth's 34 MD program objectives for the curriculum ensure that learners master the six Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) competencies that define what it means to be a patient-centered physician in today's data-driven, systems-based environment.

Our program objectives are divided into six categories:

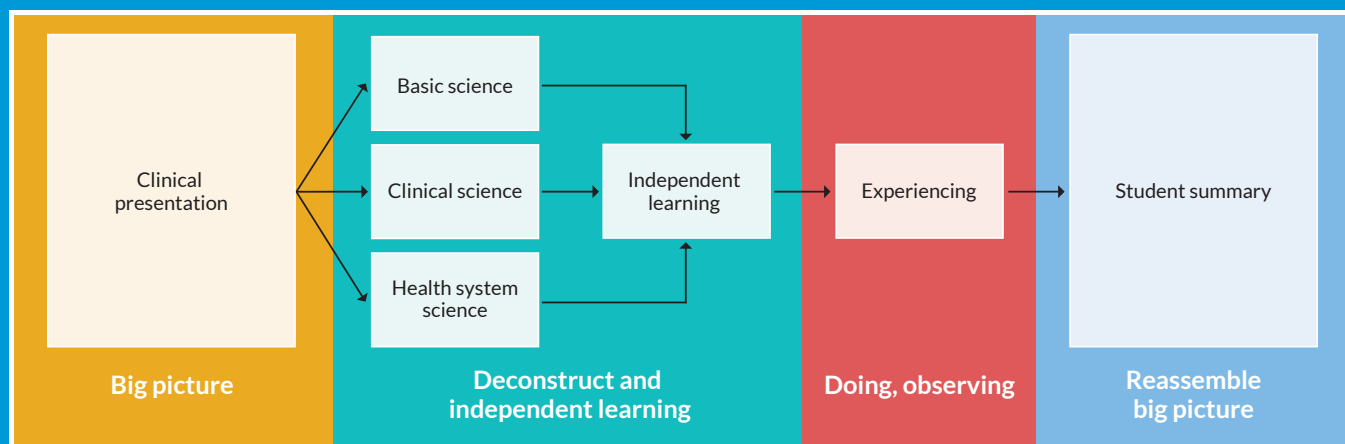
Patients, Families and Communities	Personal and Professional Development	Health System Citizenship
<p>Geisinger Commonwealth physicians focus on the patient. Our duty is to the patient and to the profession. We dedicate ourselves to excellence for the benefit of the community.</p>	<p>Geisinger Commonwealth physicians dedicate themselves to professionalism and the lifelong maintenance of their knowledge, skill and expertise. They appreciate their important role in their community and effectively tend to their own well-being, while living a life of service to others.</p>	<p>Geisinger Commonwealth physicians work effectively within a highly integrated system and know how to lead teams, leveraging each member's unique skill set and competently deploying technology to benefit patients and communities.</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Demonstrate insight and understanding of patient's and family's emotions and the human response. Build trust with patients and their families.</li> <li>2. Communicate effectively with patients, families and the public across diverse backgrounds.</li> <li>3. Counsel, advocate for and educate patients and their families to empower them to participate in their care and enable shared decision-making.</li> <li>4. Employ effective knowledge of the social determinants of health and populations of patients when advocating for optimal solutions for health issues facing patients and communities.</li> <li>5. Practice sensitivity, honesty and compassion in difficult conversations, including those about death, end of life, adverse events, bad news, disclosure of errors and other sensitive topics.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Adhere to the tenets of professionalism which include altruism, accountability, duty, excellence, honesty, integrity, respect for others and responsibility.</li> <li>2. Engage in lifelong personal and professional development and socialization into the medical community of practice.</li> <li>3. Set learning and improvement goals and incorporate feedback into daily practice to ensure a lifelong commitment to the understanding of current medical knowledge and practices.</li> <li>4. Identify strengths, deficiencies and limits in one's knowledge and expertise and perform learning activities that address one's gaps in knowledge, skills and/or attitudes.</li> <li>5. Participate in the education of patients, families, students, trainees, peers, members of the community and other health professionals and incorporate feedback into daily practice.</li> <li>6. Use the knowledge of one's own role and the roles of other health professionals to facilitate the maintenance of an effective healthcare team.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Discuss the core financial, legal, structural, policy and regulatory aspects of the United States healthcare system and their impact on the delivery of healthcare.</li> <li>2. Examine how quality improvement, patient safety and innovation can improve the various healthcare delivery models.</li> <li>3. Demonstrate a commitment to ethical principles pertaining to provision or withholding of care, confidentiality, informed consent and business practices, including compliance with relevant laws, policies and regulations.</li> <li>4. Engage in identifying medical errors and implementing potential systems solutions.</li> <li>5. Effectively communicate and work with other health professionals to establish, develop and continuously enhance interprofessional teams to provide patient- and population-centered care that is safe, timely, efficient, effective and equitable.</li> <li>6. Systematically analyze practice using quality improvement methods, and implement changes with the goal of practice improvement.</li> <li>7. Incorporate considerations of cost awareness, risk-benefit analysis and community needs in patient and/or population-based care.</li> </ol>



Critical Thinking	Clinical Skills	Knowledge for Practice
<p>Geisinger Commonwealth physicians master the key intellectual abilities required to be an effective provider. They intelligently assess and synthesize information from disparate sources to arrive at timely, accurate diagnoses and treatments.</p>	<p>Geisinger Commonwealth physicians master all aspects of clinical care including communication, physical exam, the use of technology, medical procedures, management of care and coordination with the healthcare team.</p>	<p>Geisinger Commonwealth physicians understand the foundational role of medical and clinical knowledge in the maintenance of health and the diagnosis and treatment of disease. They use scientific approaches to the care of patients and populations.</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Formulate clinical questions, appraise and apply evidence-based medicine to provide quality healthcare to individuals and populations.</li> <li>2. Make informed decisions about diagnostic and therapeutic interventions based on patient information and preferences, up-to-date scientific evidence and clinical judgment.</li> <li>3. Contribute to the creation, dissemination, application and translation of new healthcare knowledge and practices.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Conduct and document complete and focused medical histories and physical examinations, and recognize factors including age, gender, sociocultural factors, socioeconomic status, family history and emotional state.</li> <li>2. Gather and interpret pertinent and accurate information about patients and their conditions through the use of laboratory data, imaging and other tests.</li> <li>3. Identify and propose a treatment and management plan for acute and chronic diseases.</li> <li>4. Perform appropriate medical, diagnostic and surgical procedures essential for the patient care.</li> <li>5. Organize and prioritize responsibilities to provide care that is safe, effective and efficient.</li> <li>6. Provide appropriate referral of patients including ensuring continuity of care throughout transitions between providers or settings and following up on patient progress and outcomes.</li> <li>7. Provide healthcare services to patients, families and communities aimed at preventing health problems or maintaining health.</li> <li>8. Perform appropriate supervisory responsibilities commensurate with one's roles, abilities and qualifications on a healthcare team.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Apply established and emerging foundational scientific principles fundamental to healthcare for patients and populations.</li> <li>2. Apply established and emerging principles of clinical sciences to diagnostic and therapeutic decision-making, clinical problem-solving and other aspects of evidence-based healthcare.</li> <li>3. Apply principles of social-behavioral sciences to provision of patient care, including assessment of the impact of psychosocial and cultural influences on health, disease, care seeking, care compliance and barriers to and attitudes toward care.</li> <li>4. Apply principles of populational health sciences to the identification of health problems, risk factors, treatment strategies, resources and disease prevention/health promotion efforts for patients and populations.</li> </ol>



## Clinical Presentation Model



Traditional medical education relies on teaching basic, clinical and health system science concepts; however, these concepts must be well integrated and appropriately framed in clinical context. The Phase 1 curriculum uses the Clinical Presentation Model to integrate all content within the context of a clinical presentation. A clinical presentation is the mode by which a patient presents to a physician and represents the clinical problem a physician is expected to manage.

**Big picture:** The curriculum begins and ends with a focus on the patient, specifically the patient's clinical presentation.

**Deconstruct and independent learning:** Each clinical presentation is broken down into its basic, clinical and health system science content and students will use resources in our knowledge repository to focus on learning objectives in preparation for in-class work.

**Experiencing:** Large and small group active learning activities are designed to have students apply knowledge in a clinical context.

**Reassemble big picture:** For each clinical presentation, student groups will summarize material for their classmates, re-integrating all content in a large group interactive session.





## Phase 1

### Principles of Medical Science and Practice

Traditional medical education divides basic sciences from clinical learning, devoting two academic years to classroom learning of the basic sciences. Our curriculum focuses on phases rather than academic years. Every phase includes learning in the basic sciences, clinical knowledge and health system leadership.

Let's take a look at the pre-clinical phase. It begins when a student enters Geisinger Commonwealth and ends in January of the learner's second year. This stands in contrast to a traditional structure that requires six more months to move learners into their clinical phase.

Our pre-clinical phase has six sets of "bookends." They are depicted as vertical boxes:

- Orientation to integrated review weeks and winter break. Integrated review weeks are dedicated to activities that bring together all the knowledge and skills mastered in the preceding weeks.
- Winter break to spring break.
- Spring break to integrated review weeks.
- Capping off the first year of Phase 1 is the 8-week summer break that provides students an opportunity to participate in research or other activities during that break time.
- Summer break to integrated review weeks.
- The Integrative Review Capstone (IRC) that forms the final "bookend" includes complex patient encounters and challenging multi-system diagnostic problems which allow the learner to integrate previously acquired knowledge, including the complexities of the social determinants of health, healthcare disparities and how a patient interacts with a health system. This semester also includes the Preparation for Licensure Course, which culminates in students sitting for their USMLE Step 1 exam.

## At a glance: Phase 1 – Principles of Medical Science and Practice

August		September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June	July
Orientation	Principles of Medicine	Dermatology and Musculoskeletal	Integrative review	Gastrointestinal	Winter break	Cardiopulmonary		Spring break	Renal	Integrative review	Hematology	Summer Research Immersion Program (SRIP)
	ISC	ISC		ISC		ISC			ISC		ISC	
	PPCC	PPCC		PPCC		PPCC			PPCC		PPCC	

August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	
Endocrine/Reproduction		Integrative review	Neuroscience/Psychiatry		Winter break	Integrative Review Capstone	Preparation for Licensure	Phase 2 begins
ISC			ISC					
PPCC			PPCC					

**64 weeks** of instructional time

**2 courses:** Integrated Science Course (ISC) and Physician and Patient Centered Care (PPCC)

**How it works:** Case Presentation Model

Phase 1 has just two courses: ISC and PPCC

- **Integrated Science Course (ISC):**

ISC consists of blocks of clinical presentations of disease. Each block will have an exam and time will be built in for self-directed learning. Students will be required to prepare in advance for class discussions and activities. The blocks of clinical presentations of disease are, in the order presented:

- » Principles of medicine
- » Dermatology and musculoskeletal
- » Gastrointestinal
- » Cardiopulmonary
- » Renal
- » Hematology
- » Endocrine/reproduction
- » Neuroscience/psychiatry

- **Physician and Patient Centered Care (PPCC):**

PPCC focuses on connecting to humanity and humanism — the learner's own, as well as that of peers and patients who will benefit from our professional skills, knowledge and presence. The goal is to illustrate the need for and the benefits of collaborative approaches and efforts for advancements in health, health policies and clinical practices among the fields of clinical medicine, research epidemiology, biostatistics and public health. This broad vision course addresses physicians' unique relationship to individual patients, as well as clinical skills development, professionalism, cultural awareness, legal and moral values, and quality improvement.

## Fast fact:

Geisinger Commonwealth students have a pass rate of 99% for the Step 1 exam. The national average is 97%.







## Phase 2

### Core Clinical Immersion

The Phase 2 curriculum provides comparable, high-quality, foundational clinical experiences through both inpatient and ambulatory block rotations.

Students begin the year by participating in the Transition to Clerkships (TTC) and Orientation session. During this foundational experience, students will have the opportunity to hone clinical skills, and receive the necessary clerkship overviews and trainings in preparation to enter the clinical space.

Students then begin their clerkships which are delivered as five, 8-week block rotations inclusive of our seven core disciplines. At the end of each 8-week block rotation, students will have a bridge week.

During this time, students will wrap up the block experience, complete any remaining assignments, sit for their medical knowledge exam and receive orientation for the next 8-week experience. Bridge weeks also afford students the opportunity to explore subspecialty areas of interest, conduct research, follow up on continuity patients and/or meet with mentors and advisors.

A final 2-week Capstone experience culminates the end of Phase 2. The aim of Capstone is for students to reflect on their experiences during the clerkships, to ensure competency of core clinical skills and to prepare learners for transition into the more advanced clinical experiences in Phase 3.

### At a glance: Phase 2 – Core Clinical Immersion

Clinical blocks	Length of time by clerkship
Transition to Clerkships/Orientation	2 weeks
Family Medicine	8 weeks, containing 2 days per week Family Medicine, 1 day per week Pediatrics, 1 day Musculoskeletal Medicine and 1 day Geriatrics
Medicine	4 weeks Medicine, 2 weeks Medicine-ambulatory, 2 weeks Medicine-consultation
Women's and Children's	4 weeks Pediatrics, 4 weeks OB/GYN
Surgery	4 weeks Surgery-core, 4 weeks Surgery-specialty
Neuroscience	3 weeks Neurology, 3 weeks Psychiatry, 2 weeks Neurosciences selective
Bridge weeks	5 weeks (each week occurs after the end of each clerkship block)



## Phase 3

### Career Differentiation and Exploration

The advanced clinical experience phase is time for learners to complete their core curriculum requirements and explore their own interests in medicine through sub-internships and electives. The required core rotations include medicine, critical care, emergency medicine and interprofessional healthcare experiences.

#### Requirements for advanced clinical experiences

Activity	Length
Transition to Residency	2 weeks
Required rotations	18 weeks
Elective rotations	16 weeks



## Student spotlight



### Oluwaseyi Olulana, MBS '19 MD Class of 2024

Abigail Geisinger Scholar

As a member of Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine's MD Class of 2024, Oluwaseyi (Seyi) Olulana already has several research papers — one of them on COVID-19 — bearing her name. Although she's proud of the papers, it's the work that went into them that gave her new confidence in her role as a future physician.

Under the externship program offered by Geisinger Commonwealth's Center of Excellence, Seyi worked as a research extern at the Geisinger Neuroscience Institute Decode Lab in Geisinger Wyoming Valley Medical Center and Geisinger Medical Center during her gap year, after she received her Master of Biomedical Sciences (MBS) degree from the School of Medicine. At this externship, she worked with the research team to input data for the IMAGENE research study, contribute to the writing of research papers to be published on topics such as disparity and stroke, and further the understanding of stroke assessment within Geisinger under the mentorship of Ramin Zand, MD. The opportunity, which relied on work necessarily performed in person, was challenging and exciting — but it was suddenly uprooted by COVID-19. Seyi said that Dr. Zand

could have told her, "Oh well, there's nothing for you to do," but that didn't happen. Instead, he pivoted and challenged the team to produce even more than was done in person.

Some of the papers examine the impact of COVID-19 on various communities. "Our analysis shows that counties with more diverse demographics, higher population, education, income levels and lower disability rates were at a higher risk of COVID-19 infection." She was also part of a consortium of authors on other COVID- and stroke-related publications.

As the diversity and inclusion chair for the 2024 class, she successfully helped coordinate many initiatives such as the international luncheon, holiday events and cultural bazaars. Her most proud achievement was implementation of Civil Talks in the campus community. This initiative provided an opportunity for students to educate the campus community on any global civil crisis. The goal is to keep us aware about our global communities, but also promote awareness of some of the crises members of our community must deal with due to family ties or vested interests in these nations.



## Student spotlight



### Sean Gilhooley, MBS '20 MD Class of 2024

Abigail Geisinger Scholar

Sean Gilhooley was certain of two things when he entered Wilkes University as a biology major — he wanted to be a doctor and, more specifically, he wanted to be a primary care doctor.

“My dad is a primary care doc in Scranton, so I was introduced to medicine early. I learned from him what goes into medicine as a career,” he said. “But it was shadowing doctors when I was a student at Wilkes that convinced me to choose primary care. Every doctor I shadowed was in primary care, and I enjoyed seeing the relationships they had with their patients — they had known most of their patients for years and could easily talk about their families. They knew the person, not the symptoms on a paper.”

From Wilkes, Sean entered Geisinger Commonwealth as a Master of Biomedical Sciences (MBS) student. That’s when he and his classmates first heard of the Abigail Geisinger Scholars Program and began to discuss among themselves. “We talked

about what your debt really is to go to medical school. It’s staggering. And I knew I wanted primary care, and I knew I wanted to stay in this region to serve my own community. It’s what really drew me in.”

Now a second-year student, Sean said he couldn’t be happier about his decision to apply to the Scholars program. He particularly likes the way Scholars are prioritized for experiences at sites that offer an up-close look at Geisinger’s signature innovations, such as 65 Forward clinics and the Fresh Food Farmacy.

His research experience has also been positive. An abstract he co-authored based on a project initiated during the 2019 Summer Research Immersion Program (SRIP) was accepted for presentation at the national American Heart Association. Sean worked with Stephen J. Voyce, MD, director of clinical cardiology research at Geisinger, to conduct the study.

## Regional campus model

Geisinger Commonwealth offers a community-based model of medical education with five regional campuses: Central (Danville), Guthrie (Sayre), North (Scranton), South (Wilkes-Barre) and AtlantiCare (Atlantic City, N.J.). A sixth regional campus – West (Lewistown) – will also open in 2022.

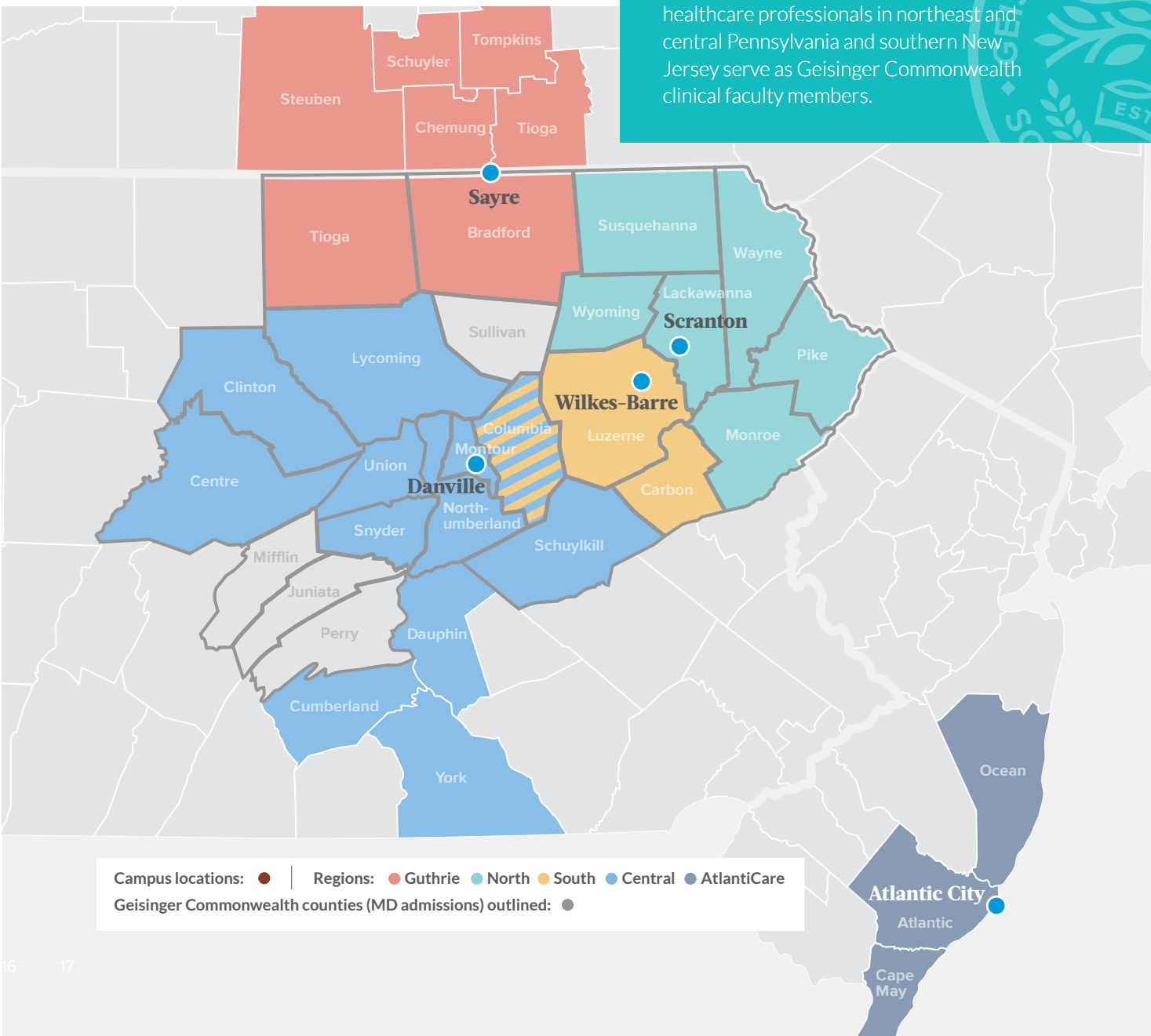
Medical students at Geisinger Commonwealth complete their clinical training at their assigned regional campus.

Each campus offers exposure to urban and rural settings, allowing for abundant, diverse clinical experiences. Geisinger Commonwealth is fortunate

to have outstanding clinical partners with whom we work in each regional campus community. We have affiliation agreements with several hospitals and healthcare systems in our region. Our healthcare delivery partners are each known for the quality of care they provide and for their commitment to healthcare education programs. Our students also work with physicians and health professionals in private practice, community health centers and other sites throughout our region.

### Fast fact:

Approximately 1,539 physicians and healthcare professionals in northeast and central Pennsylvania and southern New Jersey serve as Geisinger Commonwealth clinical faculty members.









## Campus office locations



### North Campus

Medical Sciences Building in Scranton, PA



### AtlantiCare Campus

AtlantiCare in Atlantic City, NJ



### Central Campus

Geisinger Medical Center in Danville, PA



### Guthrie Campus

Guthrie in Sayre, PA



### South Campus

Geisinger South Wilkes-Barre in Wilkes-Barre, PA

## Distributed campuses:

### An entire region dedicated to educating the healthcare teams of the future

Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine is unique among academic health centers, which all have well-developed research capabilities and carefully crafted educational programs. At Geisinger Commonwealth, patient care is a robust third pillar. Our distributed campus model and our tremendous community clinical faculty — who are physicians first — thrust patient care to the forefront of everything our students learn. That commitment to patient care is the great strength of a Geisinger Commonwealth medical education.

## Student spotlight

### Terrence Habiyaremye MD Class of 2022

Terrence Habiyaremye knew he found a second home at Geisinger Commonwealth when he heard the school's former Chief Diversity Officer, Ida Castro, talk about the Regional Education Academy for Careers in Health – Higher Education Initiative (REACH-HEI) program. "It was before the admissions interviews even started," he said. "Hearing her describe how Geisinger Commonwealth makes such a difference in children's lives struck a chord with me, given my background."

Terrence was born in Columbus, Ohio, and entered foster care with his younger sister when he was about 4 years old. "In second grade, I went to at least three different schools," he said. Then, in what he considers a life-changing moment, he and his sister were adopted by the Habiyaremye family from Harrisburg, Pa. – Rwandan refugees who felt the need to "pay forward" the second chance they'd been given. Terrence gained a stable home and three older siblings. "I don't know what would have happened to me if I didn't have my family," he said. "That's why REACH-HEI moved me so much — it gives hope to children."

Now in his fourth year at Geisinger Commonwealth, Terrence finds that the care for community and the person-centered focus he first intuited at his admissions interview are a central theme of his education. "I went to a liberal arts college where we talked about how political, socio-economic and even religious backgrounds impact us. Our experiences shape our outcomes. As a scribe at various Harrisburg hospitals during my gap year, that lesson became even more clear. I learned to appreciate that you have to look at where people start. So now, I make it part of every interaction with my standardized patients to ask them when they last saw a primary care provider. Are you on top of your medications? Do you understand why the instructions you are being given are important?"

Ultimately, Terrence hopes to return to Harrisburg as an emergency medicine physician. "Rural or urban — it doesn't matter," he said. "I think I can adapt anywhere there are people in need."



## Community well-being

As a system, Geisinger has devoted significant resources to examining the unique health needs of the communities it serves and proposing novel solutions that can be applied locally but transferred globally. Nowhere is this more evident than at Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine.

The School of Medicine plays a central role in the well-being of its home communities. Our impact is felt economically (Geisinger has an annual \$9.9 billion positive impact on the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's economy), but more importantly, it's felt in the ways our presence uplifts our neighbors and improves the region's quality of life.

Our **REACH-HEI (Regional Education Academy for Careers in Health – Higher Education Initiative)** program is an out-of-school experience that provides academic enrichment opportunities and enables students in northeast Pennsylvania to succeed in health-related professions. REACH-HEI has a proven track record of success, with hundreds of its program participants successfully completing their high school and college goals. Some have joined their Geisinger Commonwealth REACH-HEI family

as students in the school's Doctor of Medicine (MD) and Master of Biomedical Sciences (MBS) programs.

The School of Medicine also cares about behavioral health in the region. Almost 10 years ago, its **Behavioral Health Initiative (BHI)** determined that a 7-county region in northeast Pennsylvania would need to increase its number of psychiatrists by 40 percent simply to meet current demand. As a result of those data, in 2015 BHI generated a key recommendation: The School of Medicine and The Wright Center for Graduate Medical Education should co-create a psychiatry residency program to train new doctors in this desperately needed specialty. Just two years later, The Wright Center welcomed four residents to its brand-new, ACGME-accredited (Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education) psychiatry residency program. In addition, in 2018 nationally renowned psychiatrist Leighton Huey, MD, arrived as associate dean for Behavioral Health Integration and Community Care Transformation. Since his arrival, BHI has launched projects to integrate care and build resiliency in the community.





## Research and Scholarship

Geisinger Commonwealth students have many opportunities to engage in research and scholarship throughout their education. The Office of Research and Scholarship offers short- and long-term research programs, like the **Summer Research Immersion Program (SRIP)** and the **Medical Research Honors Program (MRHP)**. In addition, SRIP gives stipends to 65 preclinical students to engage in summer research each year. Projects are conducted over eight weeks in the summer after the first year of medical school.

Throughout SRIP, students work directly with a faculty mentor and a research team on specific projects that include scientific research aimed at improving health in the laboratory setting or, in a community setting, doing public health, community and clinical research that solve problems like access

to care. As part of SRIP, students must submit an abstract and share their research findings with the community as an oral or poster presentation at the Summer Research Symposium.

MRHP is a long-term research program that advances a student's fundamental scientific knowledge, refines their scholarly communication and fosters a mindset of lifelong learning. Program participants submit a research project proposal, write a thesis and deliver an oral defense to complete the 4-year program. The research experience is guided by a research mentor, a thesis advisory committee and the program manager. Additionally, students write abstracts, present posters and publish findings while building their thesis defense. Participating students who meet all program requirements will graduate with an honors distinction.





The Office of Research and Scholarship is committed to assisting students find and participate in research experiences. Through our programs, students can investigate a wealth of research opportunities both within and outside of Geisinger Commonwealth and pursue supplemental funding to support their research interests. Students are provided multiple occasions to present and publish their research findings, including presenting at the annual Spring Research Symposium or submitting their scholarly and creative work for publication in Geisinger Commonwealth's journal for **Scholarly Research in Progress (SCRIP)**. The *SCRIP* journal is an interdisciplinary, peer-reviewed publication showcasing the research and scholarly accomplishments of Geisinger Commonwealth students. This journal is published annually in both print and online mediums and is edited and produced with the assistance of student editors engaged in the editorial process.

[Go.Geisinger.edu/ResearchAndScholarship](https://go.geisinger.edu/ResearchAndScholarship)

## MyCode: Personalizing healthcare

Geisinger's research theme is to personalize healthcare by discovering ways to empower doctors to discern differences in patients — genetic, environmental or social — that impact quality and outcomes. Anchoring this theme is the MyCode® Community Health Initiative, a systemwide biobank storing blood and other samples for research use.

MyCode analyzes the DNA of volunteers and has surpassed its latest goal of 250,000 participants. Researchers use this vast body of data to transform knowledge of the genome into powerful intelligence that is personally relevant to individual patients. MyCode research has already been translated into ways to diagnose certain medical conditions earlier — even before symptoms appear — and to implement new treatments or medications to manage them.



## Student spotlight



**Malie Collins**  
**MD Class of 2024**

Malie Collins, a member of Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine's MD Class of 2024, has a longstanding interest in the intersection of medicine and technology. Her career began in Boston and Silicon Valley, firmly on the technology side of the fence. She worked for several years as a program manager for neurosurgical virtual reality and simulation programs at Stanford University.

The job was every techie's dream, but Malie said, "I've always enjoyed existing in the overlap of technology and medicine, but standing in the OR, I knew that nothing I was doing in my current job could cover those few steps between me and the surgeon."

One of her first moves as a first-year student was to reach out to Elizabeth Kuchinski, an instructor of Family Medicine and director of Geisinger Commonwealth's Summer Research Immersion Program (SRIP). Malie's SRIP project involved a multicenter retrospective review of tissue plasminogen activator and its use for large vessel occlusion.

The positive research experience with Dr. Christopher Griessenauer motivated Malie to choose to complete a "research year" between her second and third years of school. She will spend that year working with the vast set of data used in her original SRIP project. "There's so much more to stratify," she said. "We can compare strokes at different locations, strokes in different age groups. We will also be doing a genome-wide association study on the role of generic variants and how patients respond. It's the kind of work that can shape treatment plans," she said. In addition to Dr. Griessenauer and Geisinger faculty, Malie will also work with faculty from Stanford.

As a future doctor, Malie said the experience she is receiving will be invaluable. "Research is very important — not just because of my passion for it, but because, within neuro, there's so much we still don't understand. I think preserving your intellectual drive should be a priority for all doctors."



## Match maker

### The Personal and Professional Development Career Pathways Program

The Personal and Professional Development Career Pathways Program is a four-year longitudinal curriculum that embodies Geisinger Commonwealth's mission and values. It is a required program that is part of the promotion process each year and is a graduation requirement. It lives within the Personal and Professional Development theme but also is integrated within many of the courses.

It relies on current career development theories and models to assist students in their professional identity formation, using the "Careers in Medicine" model to support all phases of the career decision-making process for students. It uses diverse instructional methodologies and includes a combination of self-assessments, interactive lectures, problem and case-based small group learning, panel discussions, residency application components, mock interviews and the e-portfolio. These activities support lifelong learning in the professional development process.

Each student upon completion of the program will be able to:

- Develop and articulate their professional identity formation in an interpersonal context
- Engage in continual self-assessment and reflection to identify skills, abilities and interests in the selection of a medical specialty
- Create a self-directed career resource identification plan
- Enhance interpersonal communication skills through the development of a competitive curriculum vitae, personal statement and mock interviews
- Demonstrate skills of reflection through writing and discussion
- Integrate content knowledge from all courses



## The Match

Geisinger Commonwealth's student-centered approach to medical education reaches its denouement in the fourth year. That's when an abundance of resources is brought to bear to make sure our students make the best residency match possible. Geisinger Commonwealth's collaborative coaching model is intensive and effective. In fact, the school's student affairs team presented on their approach at a meeting of the National Resident Matching Program (NRMP). The process begins in the first-year Orientation course and continues to evolve every year with a combination of centrally provided content and individual processing opportunities allowing for multiple touch points with students throughout their medical careers. In the second half of a student's third year, collaborative team meetings are held weekly and during the fourth year, the team continues to meet weekly to guide students through the application and interview season. National and institutional match data is used to assist students in comparing their application to that of alumni who have successfully gained interviews and match status. Students receive strategic coaching in regard to application submission and alumni provide peer mentoring, as needed.

## Fast fact:

42% of Geisinger Commonwealth's Class of 2021 matched into a primary care specialty.

## Match 2021

In 2021, Geisinger Commonwealth medical students participated in the match experience hosted by the NRMP. Students interviewed across the country with residency programs in a wide range of specialties and programs.

### Anesthesiology

- Geisinger, PA
- Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania, PA
- University of Rochester/Strong Memorial, NY

### Dermatology

- Geisinger, PA

### Emergency medicine

- Albert Einstein Medical Center, PA (2)
- Allegheny General Hospital, PA (2)

- Baystate Medical Center, MA (2)
- Christiana Care Delaware, DE (2)
- CMSRU/Cooper University Hospital, NJ (3)
- Geisinger, PA
- Guthrie/Robert Packer Hospital, PA
- Naval Medical Center San Diego, CA
- Nuvance Health, NY
- Penn State Hershey Medical Center, PA
- Thomas Jefferson University, PA
- University of Illinois College of Medicine-Chicago, IL

### Family medicine

- Kaiser Permanente Napa-Solano, CA
- Thomas Jefferson University, PA
- University of California Riverside School of Medicine, CA
- University of Pittsburgh Medical Center-Susquehanna, PA (2)
- University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health-Madison, WI

### General surgery

- Christiana Care-Delaware, DE
- Eisenhower Army Medical Center, GA
- Geisinger, PA
- Geisinger-Wilkes-Barre, PA
- Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai (Morningside/West), NY
- Inova Fairfax Hospital, VA
- Lehigh Valley Hospital, PA
- Loyola University Medical Center, IL
- Spectrum Health/Michigan State University, MI
- Walter Reed Army Medical Center, MD

### Internal medicine

- Albert Einstein Medical Center, PA
- Bayhealth Medical Center, DE
- Campbell University Cape Fear Valley Health, NC
- CMSRU/Cooper University Hospital, NJ
- HCA Healthcare/USF Health Morsani College of Medicine, FL
- Inova Fairfax Hospital, VA
- Stony Brook Teaching Hospitals, NY (3)
- Temple University Hospital, PA (3)
- Thomas Jefferson University, PA (2)
- University of Rochester/Strong Memorial Hospital, NY
- University of Massachusetts Medical School, MA
- University of Michigan Hospitals-Ann Arbor, MI
- University of Rochester/Strong Memorial, NY
- Virginia Commonwealth University Health System, VA
- William Beaumont Army Medical Center, TX

- Womack Army Medical Center Fort Bragg, NC
- Zucker School of Medicine-Northwell, NY

### Interventional radiology

- Rochester General Hospital, NY

### Interventional radiology (integrated)

- New York Presbyterian Hospital-Weill Cornell Medical Center, NY

### Medicine-pediatrics

- Geisinger, PA

### Neurological surgery

- SUNY Upstate Medical University, NY
- Westchester Medical Center, NY

### Neurology

- University of Rochester/Strong Memorial, NY

### Obstetrics-gynecology

- Lankenau Medical Center, PA
- St. Louis University School of Medicine, MO

### Ophthalmology

- Geisinger, PA

### Orthopaedic surgery

- Geisinger, PA
- SUNY Upstate Medical University, NY

### Otolaryngology

- SUNY Health Science Center Brooklyn, NY

### Pathology

- University of Cincinnati Medical Center, OH

### Pediatrics

- Carolinas Medical Center, NC
- Geisinger, PA (2)
- Jefferson Medical College/duPont Children's, PA
- Johns Hopkins All Children's Hospital Florida, FL
- Nationwide Children's Hospital, OH
- Nicklaus Children's Hospital, FL
- Penn State Hershey Medical Center, PA (2)
- University of Massachusetts Medical School, MA
- University of Tennessee Health Science Center-Memphis, TN
- Zucker School of Medicine-Northwell Cohen Children's, NY

### Physical medicine & rehabilitation

- Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania, PA

### Plastic surgery (integrated)

- Carilion Clinic-Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine, VA

### Psychiatry

- Hartford Hospital, CT
- Lehigh Valley Hospital, PA
- Ohio State University Medical Center, OH
- Rush University Medical Center, IL
- University of California San Diego Medical Center, CA
- University of Washington, WA
- Wright Center for Graduate Medical Education, PA

### Radiology-diagnostic

- Brown University/Rhode Island Hospital, RI

### Surgery-preliminary

- Geisinger, PA
- MedStar Georgetown University Hospital, DC





## Alumni spotlight

### Nelson Sofoluke, MD '17, MBS '13 Neurosurgery resident at Geisinger

When he was growing up in Baltimore, Nelson Sofoluke, MD, loved computers. Delving into the mechanics behind what made a program run appealed to his curiosity and he was delighted by seeing immediate responses when he tweaked a program. In fact, he was fairly certain he was going to have a career in computers — right up until his junior year at the University of Maryland when he had a neuroscience course. That course sparked his deep fascination with the brain and the ways surgeons can revive lost function by fixing the brain or nervous system.

“When I began to think about medicine, I felt that I would be choosing to do all of the things I loved most — solving problems, thinking critically, being a detective,” he said. Since Dr. Sofoluke’s call to become a surgeon came late in his college career, he began to look for master’s degree programs where he could get the basic science prerequisites necessary to apply to medical school. “The Master of Biomedical Sciences (MBS) program was my introduction to Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine,” he said. “I chose it because I liked the community — it was small, and I felt at home there. The school was so

integrated with the community that I instantly felt a part of it. One of my favorite events at the school was the Alley Oop for Autism basketball tournament. All of my friends in the community came and played in it — it was open to everyone.”

Another of Dr. Sofoluke’s favorite memories of his time at Geisinger Commonwealth was sharing small group discussion as a medical student with Gino Mori, MD, a retired Scranton surgeon who decided to audit the first two years of medical school just for the intellectual stimulation. “In effect, he graduated with us,” he said, adding that he admired Dr. Mori’s dedication to lifelong learning.

Now in his fifth year of a seven-year residency at Geisinger, Dr. Sofoluke admits that, despite his confidence, he finds working in the OR the fulfillment of his dreams. “Neurosurgery has very high rewards because the risk is so great. When someone has a deficit and the surgery fixes it and function returns, the reward you feel is amazing. But I also think of how wrong things can go, so when patients trust you to touch them despite that risk, it’s humbling. Sometimes it’s nerve-wracking, but it’s always humbling.”

## GME enriches the UME experience

The medical student/resident relationship is mutually enriching. Residents and fellows have the opportunity to teach and mentor, and medical students benefit from having the chance to see what residency/fellowship is really like, up close and personal.



### Alex Chop, MD '18

#### Medicine-Pediatrics resident at Geisinger

Alex Chop, MD, loves everything about medicine. As a medical student and a member of Geisinger Commonwealth's Class of 2018, she was afraid that was a problem. "I loved treating adults. I loved treating children. I couldn't see myself committing to just one age group." Instead of narrowing her choices, as third year was supposed to do, Dr. Chop found joy in everything. "I was fortunate, however, to have a med-peds (medicine-pediatrics) trained doctor as a preceptor in my third year. I didn't even know such a specialty existed. It was a fantastic choice for me because of its flexibility and range of possibilities," she said.

Matched at Geisinger in 2018, Dr. Chop found she

was well prepared for the rigors of her program. "Intern year is always hard, but mine was smoother than I expected," she said. "I think Geisinger Commonwealth really prepares students. You learn to juggle and to quickly go from one way of thinking to another — and that's what residents need to do; they need to think on their toes."

Now in her fourth and final year of residency training, she serves as a chief resident for the med-peds program. "I will be pursuing a combined fellowship for both adult and pediatric rheumatology," Dr. Chop said. Another goal is to practice both clinical and academic medicine. "I really love working with medical students and residents and hope to help train future physicians to both be great doctors and to find joy in what they do."



### Matthew Busch, MD '21

#### Pediatric resident at Geisinger

When Matthew Busch, MD Class of 2021, entered medical school, he thought he might be a pediatrician. Volunteer experiences, a meaningful third-year rotation and a research project tailored to help kids enjoy a lifetime of wellness convinced him. "In my first and second years at Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine, I volunteered to tutor and mentor with REACH-HEI<sup>\*</sup>," he said. "I was also active in the school's American Sign Language club, where I learned to sign alongside parents of children who are deaf or hard-of-hearing. These experiences confirmed my passion for working with and advocating for children."

In his third year, Dr. Busch specifically sought a rotation at Geisinger Janet Weis Children's Hospital in Danville. He knew the region's only children's hospital would provide him a "more robust"

experience. "The benefit of a rotation at a children's hospital is that you get to work with residents and see what a pediatrics residency is like, its culture. And the residents were amazing. They were so willing to use time they didn't have to teach me," Dr. Busch said.

Dr. Busch's experiences were enriched by clinical research into adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and their impact on poor adult health outcomes. Working with Geisinger Commonwealth's Behavioral Health Initiative, Dr. Busch analyzed data for relationships between ACEs and substance use. "Understanding how ACEs impact a child's long-term health and how they are predictors of negative outcomes will make me a better advocate for better resources for my patients," he said. "It will be a good way to practice preventive medicine."

\* Regional Education Academy for Careers in Health – Higher Education Initiative (REACH-HEI)



## Max Vogel, MD '18

### Orthopaedic resident at Geisinger

Max Vogel, MD, a member of Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine's Class of 2018, is entering his fourth year of residency in orthopaedic

surgery at Geisinger Medical Center. As the son of a carpenter and registered nurse, the Aliquippa, Pa. native said his upbringing made his career choice and specialty decision almost effortless. It didn't hurt that, as an athlete, Dr. Vogel's earliest and most frequent exposure to medicine came through orthopaedics.

"I played baseball in college in South Carolina, where I met my wife, Kaley. She played volleyball. Sports brought us together, but we also both love the outdoors. We were happy to come back to Pennsylvania — and all of the outdoor activities it has — for my medical education," he said. "My experience at Geisinger Commonwealth was incredible. It has

such a family feeling — to the point of being on a first-name basis with many of the faculty and staff. Everyone there is on your side. Everyone is there to help. It's obvious that everyone involved is dedicated to the educational experience of the students. I am proud to have trained at Geisinger Commonwealth."

Dr. Vogel said that warm family feeling has continued at Geisinger Medical Center (GMC). "One thing that is consistent across both Geisinger Commonwealth and GMC is the focus on community. Geisinger was founded by a woman who had a goal of helping others in her community. Similarly, Geisinger Commonwealth was founded by the surrounding community. I think this has carried over at both GMC and Geisinger Commonwealth to create a culture of true pride and commitment to those in our surrounding areas."



## Gina Baiamonte, MD '20

### Emergency Medicine resident at Geisinger

Despite COVID-19 restrictions, Gina Baiamonte was overjoyed on Match Day 2020. Not only did she match into one of the more competitive medical

specialties — emergency medicine — but she also landed a spot in her first-choice program: Geisinger.

One major advantage Dr. Baiamonte got from Geisinger Commonwealth, she said, was being required to complete a two-week rotation in emergency medicine in her third year. "That was really fortunate," she said. "Most schools don't have such a requirement, so most students don't get to experience the Emergency Department until their fourth year, when it may be too late. I, for one, was certain I wanted to be a surgeon. It was that two-week rotation that changed my mind."

Having the advantage of knowing she wanted to practice emergency medicine allowed Dr. Baiamonte

to structure her fourth year in a way that would answer other questions she had. "I grew up in a small town and stayed close to home for college and medical school because I love it. But I wanted to experience a big city to be sure I wasn't missing out. I had an away rotation that proved to me that I don't want to live and work in an urban area," she said.

The away experiences convinced her that Geisinger would be her No. 1 choice on her rank list. "I did a rotation at Geisinger, and I just felt at home. All the residents were super friendly and willing to teach. I wanted to be a part of that," Dr. Baiamonte said.

Now, having completed her intern year, Dr. Baiamonte said practicing emergency medicine is a joy, even though it can be stressful. "Looking back, my intern year was actually fun. The fact that I adapted so well to the rigors of residency shows, I think, that Geisinger Commonwealth prepared me well."

## Fast fact:

Geisinger has 583 residents and fellows, comprising 37 accredited residency programs and 31 subspecialty fellowship programs, which encompass Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education physician programs, as well as dental, podiatry, pharmacy and others.



# Student well-being



Taking a holistic approach to total health, Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine offers a wealth of resources for students in regard to every aspect that contributes to a person's sense of well-being, including: mental & emotional, physical, spiritual, social, intellectual, financial and environmental.

## Signature programs

**Center of Student Wellness:** Coordination of wellness services are led by Director of Student Wellness, Halle Ellison, MD, through the Office of Student Affairs' Center of Student Wellness.

**Student Wellness and Engagement Center:** With the renovation of the fourth floor of the Medical Sciences Building, the Student Wellness and Engagement Center will include a gym, recreation, meditation and relaxation space, and offices for student government and the director of wellness. This space will be available to students 24/7.

### Geisinger Peer Navigators:

The Geisinger Peer Navigators are a student-led group designed to support students in addressing academic stress, interpersonal conflicts, imposter syndrome, feelings of isolation and general mental health concerns. Peer support is available to any Geisinger Commonwealth student.



**Peer Mentors:** Peer mentoring is a relationship between an upper-class medical student and entering medical student where the experienced students provide support, friendship, knowledge and skills to assist new students in adjusting to medical curriculum and life in northeast Pennsylvania.

**Learning Communities:** This model aims to support learners through a developmental and proactive approach to maximize their individual and collective potential by providing differential assistance and a community of faculty, interprofessional staff and peers to engage students and their personal and professional identity formation development.

**CARE Team:** The CARE Team engages in proactive and collaborative approaches to provide support and referral services to students experiencing stress as well as to identify, assess and mitigate risks associated with students exhibiting concerning behaviors or thoughts. By partnering with members of the community, the CARE Team strives to promote individual well-being and success while prioritizing community safety.

**Mental Health First Aid (MHFA):** MHFA is a course designed to give members of the public key skills to help someone who is developing a mental health problem or experiencing a mental health crisis.

**Student Health Services (SHS):** SHS supports the educational experience of students and minimizes health-related barriers to learning. The SHS office staff and website provide information and referral to urgent care, primary and specialty care, health insurance and credentialing. SHS mental health and counseling case management provides consultation and referral as needed to teletherapy and local providers.







## Student spotlight



### Stephanie Tilberry, MBS '17 MD Class of 2022

Having grown up in northeastern Pennsylvania, Stephanie Tilberry, MD Class of 2022, knew all about Geisinger's community commitment and the school's grassroots founding. Immersion in community as a medical student, however, proved to be a revelation.

"From the beginning of our first year, students are focused on community," she said. "My family-centered experience, for example, was an eye-opener. Obviously, you must know the science, but engaging and interacting with people in a way that makes them feel cared for is equally important and you aren't born knowing how. You have to practice it, learn it, identify what's important when communicating and how to keep getting better at it."

During her third year, Stephanie had another powerful lesson in the value of keeping humanity in medicine. "I had a preceptor who still did home visits," she said. "He had a patient who was in wheelchair and his wife couldn't lift him in and out of it to get into a vehicle. So, every time they had a medical appointment, they had to rent a special van just to go a few blocks. It cost them hundreds of dollars every time. When my preceptor learned of this, he said, 'That's crazy. I'll just come to you.' And he's been doing it now for years. It gave me a whole new perspective."

These lessons in patient-centered care served to complement a service commitment Stephanie has maintained since high school. For example, she volunteered and rose through the ranks with the Children's Advocacy Center of Northeastern Pennsylvania, serving for more than a decade. By the time she was a student in Geisinger Commonwealth's Master of Biomedical Sciences (MBS) program, she was certified to work as an assistant during forensic exams. Now, as a medical student, she helps with on-call emergencies. "The work is unsettling," she said. "There are a lot of difficult things you can get used to after the first time, but this isn't one of them. We know it's important that a child should only tell a traumatic story once. That's why the physician works together with social workers and law enforcement, all at the same time."

Stephanie said that while her education in community service and interprofessional teamwork has opened her eyes, she believes it will also open doors. "Our focus on the social determinants of health, communication, teamwork — it's all crucial," she said. "My experiences in these areas have made me ready for residency. Geisinger Commonwealth really sets you up for success."



## Faculty

At Geisinger Commonwealth, students encounter excellent instructors and mentors, such as:



**Lauri Andress, PhD, JD, MPH**

*Associate Dean for Equity, Inclusion and Community Engagement  
Associate Professor of Health Equity*

Dr. Andress leads the school's efforts to promote health equity and inclusion and maintain an optimal learning environment suitable for students, faculty and staff.



**John Arnott, PhD**

*Chair of the Department of Medical Education  
Associate Professor of Cell Biology*

Dr. Arnott's research focuses on understanding the signaling mechanisms in osteoblasts that are important for bone formation and fracture repair.



**Joseph Bannon, MD**

*Clinical Associate Professor of Surgery*

Dr. Bannon practices general and colorectal surgery at Geisinger. He serves as associate professor of surgery and program director for the Geisinger Northeast General Surgery Residency program.



**Christian Carbe, PhD**

*Assistant Professor of Medical and Molecular Genetics and Microbiology*

Dr. Carbe participates in interdisciplinary integrated biomedical courses in the areas of human genetics and microbiology as well as facilitates small groups for case-based learning.



**Youngjin Cho, PhD**

*Associate Professor of Immunology*

Dr. Cho co-directs medical science courses for pre-clerkship students and oversees the immunology content delivery throughout the curriculum.



**Kim Kovalick, DO**

*Assistant Chair/UME Lead, Department of Family Medicine  
Assistant Dean, Primary Care Curriculum  
Assistant Professor of Family Medicine*

Dr. Kovalick is a family medicine physician and Geisinger's medical department director for Wyoming County.



**Darrell McBride, DO**

*Assistant Regional Dean of Student Affairs, Central Campus  
Assistant Professor of Medicine*

Dr. Darrell McBride is an infectious diseases physician and medical director of the Ryan White Program at Geisinger.



**Mathangi Rajaram-Gilkes, MBBS, MSc, MS.Med**

*Assistant Professor of Anatomical Sciences*

Dr. Rajaram-Gilkes served as an intensive and critical care physician in India and Grenada.



**James Scott, MD**

*Regional Clerkship Director of OB/GYN  
Assistant Professor of OB/GYN*

Dr. Scott is an obstetrician/gynecologist at Guthrie Corning Hospital in Corning, N.Y.



**Shubhra Shetty, MD**

*Regional Associate Dean for North Campus  
Professor of Medicine*

Dr. Shetty serves as an infectious diseases consultant at Scranton Primary Health Care Center, and is on staff at Moses Taylor Hospital and Regional Hospital of Scranton, both affiliates of Commonwealth Health.



**Christin Spatz, MD, FASN**

*Director of Clinical Advising  
Assistant Professor of Medicine*

Dr. Spatz practices nephrology with Guthrie Medical Group.

## Abigail Geisinger Scholars Program

Geisinger believes that the future of medicine lies in robust primary care — care that anticipates and prevents disease, focuses on wellness and recognizes mental health and well-being as fundamental to stronger, more resilient communities. That's why the Abigail Geisinger Scholars Program focuses on the following specialties:

- Family medicine
- Internal medicine
- Medicine-pediatrics
- Psychiatry

Our scholars program frees medical students from the financial concerns that often derail their dreams. Abigail Geisinger Scholars will:

- Graduate without tuition debt
- Receive a \$2,000 per month stipend
- Become a Geisinger-employed physician in one of the specialties listed above upon completion of residency training. One year of service equals one year of support, with a two-year minimum.

### Interested in applying?

Submit an American Medical College Application Service® (AMCAS®) primary application and Geisinger Commonwealth secondary application.

- Answer “yes” to the first question on the Geisinger Commonwealth secondary application regarding interest in applying for the Abigail Geisinger Scholars Program.
- Complete the question regarding primary care and provide any updates to your experiences that align with the Abigail Geisinger Scholars Program.

Students are selected to participate in this program based on the following criteria: financial need, merit, diversity and likelihood of staying at Geisinger beyond the service obligation. Students not selected for the Abigail Geisinger Scholars Program will also be considered for regular admission into the MD program.

To learn more, visit [Geisinger.edu/AbigailScholars](https://Geisinger.edu/AbigailScholars).

## Student spotlight

### Tiffany Garcia, MBS '17 MD Class of 2022

Abigail Geisinger Scholar

Tiffany Garcia's family first emigrated to New York City from Colombia, later relocating to Reading, Pa. There, Tiffany observed some of the inequities in medicine. Knowing little English, her parents — particularly her mother — struggled to navigate the healthcare system. An undergraduate medical service trip to Honduras proved pivotal. “I found that I loved helping the people, but I didn't like the feeling that we were helicoptering in and would soon be gone. The experience solidified my desire to study medicine, and focus on primary care,” she said. Tiffany's ideas about the centrality of primary care have been reinforced by her LCE (longitudinal clinical experience) at Geisinger's Kistler Clinic. “The team-based care and wide range of services available excited me. I could see myself being part of that,” she said, adding, “Whether inpatient or outpatient, there was always the opportunity to learn about the patient and understand their barriers to health and provide counseling.”





## Apply

### Admission requirements

Students seeking admission to Geisinger Commonwealth's MD program must

1. Complete the following premedical course requirements in good standing:
  - General biology with laboratory (1 year/2 semesters)
  - General inorganic chemistry with laboratory (1 year/2 semesters)
  - Organic chemistry with laboratory (1 year/2 semesters)
  - General physics with laboratory (1 year/2 semesters)
  - English and English composition (1 semester)

Online coursework will not be accepted.  
All pre-requisite course grades must be passing.
2. Be a U.S. citizen or permanent resident of the United States at time of application.
3. Have received their bachelor's degree from an accredited U.S. or Canadian institution prior to matriculation.
4. The student must complete all required criminal background checks and drug screens. Once a student is accepted to Geisinger Commonwealth, Certiphi Screening Inc. will contact the student via email about the criminal background check process. The following checks are required by July 1 of the matriculating year: Criminal Background Check, Child Abuse History, Pennsylvania Access to Criminal History and FBI fingerprinting. Furthermore, applicants accepted to Geisinger Commonwealth must submit and satisfactorily complete a drug screening prior to matriculation and within the timeframe designated by the Office of Admissions. Geisinger Commonwealth's Policy on Criminal Background Check and Drug Screening can be found here : [go.geisinger.edu/BackgroundDrugScreening](http://go.geisinger.edu/BackgroundDrugScreening).
5. Any legal or academic actions taken against the student from the time of application submission to AMCAS and matriculation at Geisinger Commonwealth must be reported to the Admissions Office at Geisinger Commonwealth by the student.
6. The student's attendance at Geisinger Commonwealth's orientation program is mandatory.



7. The student must meet Geisinger Commonwealth's Technical Standards with or without a reasonable accommodation. Any student with a disability must provide medical documentation detailing the disability and the type of accommodation needed to meet Geisinger Commonwealth's Technical Standards. Depending on the need for the accommodation, the Accessibilities Committee will review the information supplied by the student to determine their ability to meet the Geisinger Commonwealth's Technical Standards with reasonable accommodations.

It is the student's responsibility to ensure they have met all of the above requirements. Failure to do so may result in the rescinding of the admission offer.

## Application process

Students interested in applying to Geisinger Commonwealth's MD program should:

1. Complete an application through the online American Medical College Application Service (AMCAS), the national application for U.S. MD programs.
  - AMCAS application completion includes an application fee and all supporting documents as requested.
  - Geisinger Commonwealth will only consider verified AMCAS applications (incomplete applications will not be reviewed).
2. Submit letters of recommendation via AMCAS Letters.
  - All applicants are required to submit one pre-professional/pre-health/committee letter or three evaluation/recommendation letters from faculty who are familiar with the applicant's career goals and academic coursework.
  - The admissions committee will consider additional letters that highlight and support facets of an applicant's application portfolio not previously addressed and are submitted via the AMCAS Letter Service.
3. Complete the Geisinger Commonwealth Secondary Application.
  - For non-traditional students, the admissions committee will consider letters of recommendation written by individuals who have firsthand knowledge of the candidate's strengths, work ethic, abilities and commitment to the field of medicine.
  - All AMCAS verified applicants will automatically receive a secondary application.
  - Application fee is \$100.
  - Candidates in receipt of an AMCAS Fee Assistance Program (FAP) waiver may submit a PDF copy of the form to [admissions@som.geisinger.edu](mailto:admissions@som.geisinger.edu).
4. Take the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) Situational Judgement Test (SJT).
  - GCSOM is strongly encouraging applicants to take the AAMC SJT. We will consider scores as one part of our admissions process.
  - This exam will be free and administered online using remote proctoring for the 2022 application cycle.

## Interviewing

After a review of the application materials, students are notified if they have been offered an interview for the MD program. All candidates will interview virtually using the Multiple Mini Interview (MMI) format.

## Contact us

Call: 570-504-7000  
 Text: 570-904-2084  
[admissions@som.geisinger.edu](mailto:admissions@som.geisinger.edu)  
[Geisinger.edu/GCSOM](https://www.geisinger.edu/GCSOM)

# Geisinger Commonwealth

School of Medicine

525 Pine St.  
Scranton, PA 18509

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Text: 570-904-2084

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[admissions@som.geisinger.edu](mailto:admissions@som.geisinger.edu)



## MD Class of 2025 profile

Pennsylvania  
residents:

**80**

Geisinger  
Commonwealth  
counties:

**42**

Underrepresented in  
medicine:

**21**

Average MCAT 2015:

**511.60**

Number of applicants:

**7,034**

Class size  
(new students):

**114**

Men:

**56**

Women:

**58**

First generation to college:

**24**

Average overall GPA:

**3.72**

