
Preparing the Next Generation of Leaders

An Update on Grainger Physician Assistant Scholars

With The Grainger Foundation’s help, future physician assistants, or PAs, are advancing meaningful work to improve healthcare delivery and gaining hands-on leadership experience. The Grainger Physician Assistant Scholarship removes financial barriers to education for aspiring PAs while enabling students to develop fruitful mentorships and plan and implement projects that advance health equity.

Since the scholarship’s inception, three scholars have graduated, two are in the implementation phase of their projects and two are planning projects. Below, we are proud to report on the scholars’ work and the impact of The Grainger Foundation’s investment in their education.

Program Graduates

Zebedee D. Cluff, MS, PA-C

Using PA Education to Improve Access to Care for LGBTQ+ Patients

This project aimed to examine the status of current LGBTQ+ education integration in RUSH’s PA Program by surveying graduates’ readiness to treat and attitude towards LGBTQ+ people. Cluff analyzed survey responses to determine program strengths, weaknesses and opportunities. The study found the program provided students with comprehensive training for LGBTQ+ patient care but had opportunities to incorporate discussions of sexual orientation and gender identity data collection, trauma-informed exam training, and enhancement of gender-affirming care.



“Thank you for your generous scholarship and for giving me the opportunity to pursue this project,” Cluff said. “This experience has allowed me to further my leadership and project development skills which will continue to serve me throughout my profession.”

Dominique Goodman, MS, PA-C

Talking to Minority High School Students About Healthcare Careers

This project aimed to inspire and educate students from high schools on Chicago’s West Side about healthcare professions and particularly the role of PAs. It aimed to address the underrepresentation of minorities in the PA profession and improve health equity. Goodman delivered presentations to students at Richard T. Crane Medical Prep High School and Providence St. Mel School. Goodman also conducted pre- and post-presentation surveys to evaluate students’ interest in healthcare careers. Data revealed the presentations increased students’ understanding of PAs and interest in obtaining a graduate degree. The project reaffirmed the importance of mentorship, outreach and education in diversifying the medical field.



“I extend my gratitude to the Grainger Foundation for the incredible opportunity they have provided,” Goodman said. “This scholarship has been an immense privilege and a pivotal

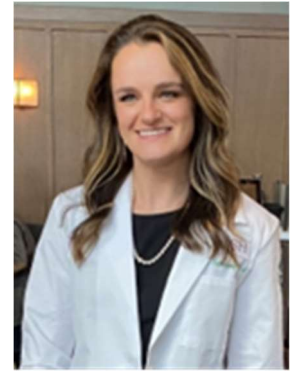
moment in my PA graduate student journey. It has allowed me to pursue my educational and professional goals and make a tangible impact on underserved minority populations.

“As I move forward in my journey, I will remain dedicated to bridging the gap in healthcare disparities and continuing to diversify the medical field. The Grainger Foundation's generosity has inspired me to reach higher, dream bigger, and make a lasting difference in the world of healthcare.”

Katherine Satterberg, MS, PA-C

Connecting Patients with Substance Use Disorder with Primary Care

This project aimed to connect patients of the Haymarket Center, a substance use and mental health treatment center, with primary care. Satterberg planned to partner with RUSH University student volunteers to help interested Haymarket Center patients set up a primary care appointment with an in-network provider for preventive care and management of comorbidities. Due to time constraints, as RUSH's legal team worked on a formal agreement with the Haymarket Center, Satterberg was unable to complete this project as proposed. However, she collected demographic information from the Haymarket Center and assessed the project's potential impact to set a subsequent student up for success to continue the project in the future.



“I want to thank the Grainger Foundation for allowing me the opportunity to pursue this project and give students an avenue to give back to our community,” Satterberg said. “Their generosity has allowed me to grow in my leadership skills as well as given me the chance to better understand the needs of those around me.”

Second-Year Students

Bristi Basu, PA-S2

PrideWorks at TaskForce Chicago

Basu is expanding on a program called PrideWorks, piloted by RUSH alum Sharice Hall, MD, in collaboration with TaskForce Chicago, an organization that serves young LGBTQ+ adults. Basu is recruiting guest speakers to provide vocational training and job skills workshops at TaskForce Chicago in spring 2024. The workshops will aim to inform participants about workplace rights, career paths, resume-building, interviewing, salary negotiation, searching for a job, navigating microaggressions in professional settings and networking.



“I firmly believe in the power of cultivating trust and forging robust partnerships with the communities I aim to impact, particularly as an outsider to Chicago,” Basu said. “I aspire to refine my active listening skills, assimilate the unique experiences of LGBTQ+ speakers and individuals to gain an authentic understanding of their strengths and needs, and critically examine my own privilege when it comes to workforce opportunities and personal growth.”

Carole Fulton, PA-S2

Educating Older Adults About Naloxone Use

With opioid overdose deaths increasing in people 65 and older, Fulton aims to provide education to older adults about opioid overdoses and the use of naloxone to reverse overdoses. Fulton partnered with the Chicago Recovery Alliance to obtain naloxone to distribute at presentations. She is now working with the RUSH Center for Excellence in Aging to establish locations to deliver trainings and recruit participants.

“As the older population is at increased risk for accidental opioid use overdoses, there is a need to provide proper education about the use of naloxone as life-saving treatment,” Fulton said. “My target population will be those wanting to be educated or those directly affected by such public health issues.”



First-Year Students

Alyssa Hrobat, PA-S1, RDN, LDN

Addressing Food Insecurity and Chronic Disease Management Through Food Delivery and Diet Education

This project will aim to address chronic disease management for individuals who identify as food insecure. RUSH’s Food Is Medicine program provides fresh, nutritious food deliveries to patients who struggle to access food. Having nutritious food can help people manage chronic diseases and improve health outcomes. Hrobat hopes to implement a medically tailored meal delivery service by utilizing the existing resources of Food Is Medicine.

“Through this project, I hope to bridge the gap between food access and health education to address chronic disease management from a multifaced approach,” Hrobat said.



Ionela Turcin, PA-S1

Improving Access to Care for Chicago Area Immigrants and Refugees through Health Literacy and Education

This project will aim to create a healthcare referral system for immigrants and refugees who have newly arrived to the Chicago area. This will include offering health education classes to provide culturally competent guidance on available health services. Turcin will partner with RUSH programs, like the RUSH Human Rights Program and RU Caring, and community medical centers and clinics.

“The majority of newly arrived immigrants and refugees are low-income, work physically demanding jobs and live in poor conditions,” Turcin said. “Moreover, they may not know the services available to them, have limited English proficiency and lack proper health education. This collectively results in a lack of ongoing preventive care and overall poorer health outcomes, which I hope this project addresses.”

