Internal Medicine Residency Program

Your future career in academic medicine
Thank you for your interest in the Internal Medicine Residency Program at Northwestern University. Our goal is to provide residents with outstanding clinical training, a comprehensive educational program and opportunities to participate in research. During rotations at Northwestern Memorial Hospital and the Chicago VA, residents encounter and manage a broad spectrum of conditions. Residents teach medical students, lead conferences and form lasting relationships with dedicated faculty members chosen for their excellence in clinical education. These experiences prepare our graduates well for future careers in academic medicine in either a medical subspecialty or in general internal medicine.

Strengths of our program include a diverse faculty who work closely with residents as teachers, advisers and mentors. The outstanding facilities and clinical experiences in both the inpatient and ambulatory settings are other assets. We offer an environment which fosters professional and intellectual development and provides an excellent clinical and didactic education. What further differentiates Northwestern is highlighted in our residency motto “Nice, Hard-Working, and Smart” which reflects the supportive and congenial atmosphere found in our Department. We are truly proud of our graduates who excel as clinicians and teachers. Their outstanding performance in rigorous fellowships is a testament to the balanced clinical experiences and academic strength of our program.

— AASHISH K. DIDWANIA, MD
Program Director, Internal Medicine Residency Program
Vice Chair for Education, Department of Medicine
Associate Professor of Medicine – General Internal Medicine and Geriatrics
Contact Dr. Didwania: aashish@northwestern.edu
**Top 10 Reasons to Pick Northwestern**

**Welcome to the Windy City!**

**1. Program Support**
Dr. Didwania and our talented core faculty meet regularly with all residents for individual professional development, and they are heavily involved in the educational curricula. We are ALWAYS here to help!

**2. Interdisciplinary Approach to Patient Care**
Our inpatient resident services are geographically localized allowing for incredibly efficient teamwork between residents, patients, and all staff.

**3. Teaching and Simulation Training**
We set a high bar for daily rounds with dedicated teaching attendings, and our board review series has resulted in one of the highest pass rates in the country! We use simulation to teach: ACLS, Central Line Insertion, End of Life Discussions, Handoffs, Paracentesis, Thoracentesis, Mechanical Ventilation and Sepsis and has gained national acclaim with publications in leading education journals.

**4. Educational Innovations**
Examples of system, tech and research innovation are all over Northwestern. We also have courses in social determinants of health and a women’s professional development course to address some of the major issues plaguing health care.

**5. Research Opportunities and Support**
Senior residents select two to three research blocks to work with incredible mentors. Resident Research Day is one example of curriculum teaching abstract presentation skills. We encourage residents to present nationally by paying for the trip if they get their work accepted! Over the last 5 years, the senior class has averaged presenting more than 50 abstracts at national meetings and well over 50 publications.

**6. Fellowship Match**
Each year, 80-90% of our residents match at their top fellowship choice, with an equal percentage matching at a top 25 academic medical center. A real testament to Northwestern’s residency training has been the number of graduates.

**7. Facilities and Support Staff at All Sites**
The bulk of your training will take place downtown at Northwestern Memorial Hospital (NMH) and Jesse Brown VA (JBVA). In the last 5 years, Northwestern has opened an Outpatient Care Pavilion, the PM&R Ability Lab and an ultra-modern research tower. The growth of our ‘state of the art’ campus reflects the highest of quality services for patients and staff. NMH has received national magnet status, recognizing it in the top 10% in the country for nursing staff excellence, and was ranked 10th in the country for overall hospital quality!

**8. Collegiality and Social Events**
Our residency motto is ‘nice, hard-working and smart’ – and nice comes first! At the residency level, everyone is very smart; attitude makes the difference. This philosophy has created a robust and collaborative learning environment that is actually fun! Outside of work the football tailgate, departmental parties, baseball games, and the holiday bake off are some examples of how we foster a great experience!

**9. Quality of Life**
Residents are on night float (NF) for approx. 4 weeks/year so that the rest of the year they get to sleep in their own bed! Our full NF system provides better quality of life – better learning on rounds, and remarkable patient continuity. Work facilities have call rooms and lockers; all conferences have food; and dining options around campus are second to none. Salaries allow most residents to rent apartments near the hospital in beautiful Streeterville, right near Lake Michigan!

**10. Chicago is Quite Possibly the Best City**
Chicago is one of the most incredible cities in the world, and residents enjoy all aspects of it. Some favorites include the lakefront trail, the amazing restaurants in diverse neighborhoods, deep-dish pizza, Cubs/Sox games, concerts at venues large and small, rooftop cookouts during the Air & Water show, and boat cruises on the Chicago River.
“We are intensely invested in both the personal and professional growth of our residents. During their time in our program, we do our best to provide residents with strong mentorship, moments of reflection, and support throughout an exciting time in their lives. Life does not stop when residency begins; our goal is to make this a transformative time in our resident’s personal and professional development.”

— JULIA VERMYLEN, MD, MPH
Wellness Committee Faculty Chair
Contact Dr. Vermylen: julia.vermylen@nm.org

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

INTERN RETREAT: A day-long event with emphasis on wellness, reflection, leadership, and teamwork.

INTERN FIRMS: All interns are assigned to a firm with a chief resident and their faculty mentors. Firms provide regular social events and opportunities for mentorship and check-in’s.

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC WELLNESS COMMITTEE: A committee of residents, faculty, and staff meet to sponsor events and support policies and initiatives related to wellness.

CONFERENCES: Morbidity & Mortality Conferences, MICU Reflection Rounds, Root Cause Analyses, and Intern Reflection all promote collaborative problem-solving, peer support and improvements in care delivery.

FACULTY MENTORS: All residents are assigned a mentor during their intern year to meet with periodically about their experiences and progress in the program over all three years. The mentor meetings are designed as a “check-in” opportunity and to serve and coach the residents.

NEAR-PEER MENTORING: Interns are paired with a senior resident. Senior residents participate in a coaching curriculum to help them develop mentoring skills to help them navigate the ups and downs of intern year.

ANNUAL RESIDENCY PROFESSIONAL AND SOCIAL EVENTS:

- Intern Retreat
- End of Year Intern Sign Out Weekend Social Events
- PGY3 Women’s Professional Development Half-day Retreat
- PGY2 Professional Development Retreat
- Intern Academic Half-day Social Events
Valuing all patients, particularly the underserved and marginalized, requires training and opportunities in health advocacy and equity. Our residency program is embedded in the Chicago community and has a philosophy to address community health.

WHAT IS THE CURRICULUM?

SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH (SDH)
WORKSHOPS: All PGY2s are exposed to dedicated workshops teaching concepts and skills in SDH. Residents with a particular interest in SDH can enroll in a certificate program called the Health Equity and Advocacy Scholars Program.

HEALTH ADVOCACY AND EQUITY CERTIFICATE PROGRAM: The McGaw Health Equity and Advocacy Clinical Scholars Program is a two-year program that is open to all McGaw trainees (residents and fellows) and provides them with the knowledge and skills to identify and address health inequities among their patients and communities.

Conferences in the regular resident noon conference lecture series include topics such as understanding Medicaid and the ACA, translation services, implicit bias and negotiating cultural differences.

CLINICAL EXPERIENCES

Inpatient medicine at Northwestern Memorial Hospital (NMH) and at the Jesse Brown VA Medical Center is often focused on caring for underserved patients in Chicago. NMH has been the second largest provider of charity care in Illinois for over 10 years. Robust social work services help facilitate both efficient patient care and residents’ education in how to advocate for their patients.

Continuity clinic opportunities in community health clinics: Residents with a particular interest in primary care or community health can elect to do their continuity clinic at the Erie Family Health Center in West Town. While learning primary care, systems of care, and getting to develop Spanish speaking skills at these sites is a tremendous education, the value of medicine as a service profession is emphasized. In 2012, NMH formed a clinic for uninsured patients to guarantee outpatient follow-up for 100 percent of patients admitted to our inpatient hospital and prevent them from falling through the cracks in the healthcare system. The clinic is a rich experience for the residents to assist patients of limited means, build on patient education skills and learn from the social workers on negotiating the healthcare system. All residents are exposed to this clinic as a core rotation in their PGY2.

VOLUNTEERISM

- A Saturday morning volunteer clinic at the Community Health Clinic (CHC) in Humboldt Park has been run by the residency since 2007. The culture of our program has boosted the spirits of busy residents who volunteer on weekends. The clinic is incredibly well run and the patients have been an honor to work with.
- The residency regularly volunteers with Keep Your Heart Health, AHA Heart Walk and the Chicago Marathon.
- Hate Has No Home Here is an organization to support immigrants and by supporting HHNHH, our residency has been able to promote the protection of marginalized patients and healthcare providers.
The Diversity and Cultural Affairs Council (DCAC) participates in the teaching mission of the Department of Medicine by sponsoring several Medical Grand Rounds with topics highlighting diversity and cultural affairs.

The DCAC actively recruits for the medicine residency program at several venues each year, such as SNMA and LMSA regional and national meetings, AAMC national meetings, and has visited campuses such as Howard University. In addition to recruitment, the council plans a residency information panel for local students each year to provide comprehensive information about applying to and succeeding in residency.

“One of my favorite quotes is ‘finding out what connects us, reveling in our differences is the process that brings us closer, that gives us a world of shared values, of meaningful community.’ The DCAC serves to carry out the mission of the Northwestern community to celebrate diversity of all forms: culture, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation and age, and to enhance the richness and depth of our community. Our commitment ensures Northwestern provides a thriving and fulfilling environment for everyone.”

— KHALILAH GATES, MD
Co-Director, Diversity and Cultural Affairs Council
Contact Dr. Gates: k-gates@northwestern.edu

“In our Department of Medicine, diversity is not for show. It is central to our mission: to better serve our community we must better reflect those we serve. It is essential for our success: only with everyone at the table will be able to solve medicine’s greatest challenges.”

— MURIEL JEAN-JACQUES, MD
Assistant Professor of Medicine

As the largest residency within the McGaw Medical Center, as well as in the State of Illinois, we look forward to participating in the annual McGaw Residency Showcase and welcoming visiting students from all over the United States!

“The beauty and depth of Chicago lies in the beautiful cultural fabric that has been woven by its past and current residents. I believe it is vital to the continued excellence of Northwestern’s academic mission to continue to recruit trainees from backgrounds that reflect the diversity of our world class city. I am beyond thrilled to serve on the Diversity and Cultural Affairs Council to ensure that we continue to create a vibrant, enriching and welcoming community for students, trainees and faculty alike.”

— JONATHAN MOREIRA, MD
Co-Director, Diversity and Cultural Affairs Council
Contact Dr. Moreira: jonathan.moreira@northwestern.edu

LEARN MORE ABOUT DCAC: medicine.northwestern.edu/about/diversity-council/news-events.html
CONNECT WITH US ON TWITTER: @NU_IntMed
Clinical Scholars Certificate Programs are 1 to 2 year programs designed specifically for residents and fellows to develop additional academic skills. The programs include lectures, workshops, and mentored projects with classroom time off hours so trainees can attend while still on busy clinical services. The following programs have an application process in the spring/summer of each year to help advise applicants on the appropriate fit of the program to the trainee’s career plans. These programs are available at no charge to trainees or their fellowship program.

- **Bioethics Certificate Program**
- **Medical Education Certificate Program**
- **Health Equity and Advocacy**
- **Global Health Certificate Program**
- **Academy for Quality Safety and Improvement (AQSI)**

The department, centered around the residency, has a women’s health track that includes a women’s professional development series. Fellows are encouraged to get involved in the professional development series where there are opportunities to mentor residents or find a faculty mentor.

Finally, there is a 1-year leadership program for chief medical residents and senior fellows run by the Northwestern Center for Leadership. Participation in this curriculum is based on nominations by division chiefs and fellowship directors.

Fellows in the department of medicine, while centered within their division, are able and encouraged to seek these opportunities. Additional information can be requested within the fellowship or by reaching out to Courtney Jones, education coordinator for the DOM, or Dr. Aashish Didwania, Vice Chair of Education, at aashish@northwestern.edu.

**WOMEN’S HEALTH TRACK**

Northwestern offers a large array of advanced degrees in nationally recognized schools. These degrees include tuition typically covered by the student/trainee. All programs include a tuition discount for trainees with the exception of the MBA program. Many of these programs offer a certificate when 50% of credits are achieved. These specific degrees are designed for clinicians by offering evening and weekend classes and transferable credits.

**GLOBAL HEALTH**

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- **Master of Science in Clinical Investigation**
- **Master of Science in Health Service Outcomes Research**
We are continuously improving the training curriculum of the residency program by creating opportunities to learn and practice clinical skills in a safe environment.

All PGY-1 residents participate in bootcamp before the start of clinical training. This innovative training program is two full days of training and assessment in paracentesis, EKGs, MICU patient management, handoffs, radiology, and goals of care communication skills.

During the PGY-2 year, residents spend time with “Cosmo,” our high-fidelity simulator, in the Northwestern Simulation Center. Residents have the opportunity to practice ACLS protocols before serving as a code leader in the hospital. The simulation session gives residents the opportunity to learn procedural and team leadership skills in a safe environment. Northwestern residents are clear about the benefit they have gained from the curriculum and its impact on their ability to run effective codes.

Northwestern’s Internal Medicine residency has gained national acclaim for its simulation-based training, as evidenced by publications in journals such as Chest and Academic Medicine. Dr. Didwania published a study of the five year impact of this training in the Journal of Graduate Medical Education showing skills are retained for at least two years after ACLS simulation-based training.

Northwestern’s simulation program has been expanded to include central venous catheter insertion and other ultrasound-based bedside procedures. This allows residents to practice the procedure prior to rotating in the MICU and other inpatient services. In addition to popularity with the housestaff, this program has shown dramatic benefit to patients in terms of improved quality of care and cost reduction. Northwestern faculty have been invited to many top US medical centers to disseminate these innovations.

“Simulation-based training is one of the major assets of our program. We teach essential skills like paracentesis, thoracentesis, lumbar puncture, goals of care discussions, patient hand-offs, ACLS, and central line placement from experts in a controlled environment so that when residents use these skills with patients they are prepared and confident!”

— DEBI MITRA, MD

RESIDENTS ARE TRAINED THROUGH SIMULATION IN:

- Central Venous Catheter Insertion
- Lumbar Puncture
- Paracentesis
- Thoracentesis
- Mechanical Ventilation, Sepsis and Weaning
- Goals of Care Conversations
- Patient Handoffs
- US Guided Peripheral IV
Simulation-Based Education

Modern approach to resident training

RECENT SIMULATION PUBLICATIONS BY NORTHWESTERN FACULTY:


Northwestern Internal Medicine has been a national leader in teaching residents using Simulation Based Medical Education (SBME) since 2006. See our full bibliography of simulation based curriculum on our residency website under ‘curriculum’ at medicine.northwestern.edu.
WHAT TO DO IN CHICAGO?

The Northwestern campus is located in downtown Chicago. This area is known as “Streeterville” and is known for its restaurants and close proximity to both the Michigan Avenue shopping district and the Museum of Contemporary Art across the street from the hospital campus. The Art Institute of Chicago, the River Walk, Millennium Park, Grant Park, and the Museum Campus are a walk or short cab ride away. The Museum Campus includes the Shedd Aquarium and Oceanarium, Adler Planetarium, and Field Museum. Chicago hosts seven professional sports teams, Broadway shows including Hamilton, and a wide-range of world famous musicians from classical at the Chicago Symphony Orchestra to leading hip-hop and alternative rock groups.

WHERE TO LIVE?

Approximately half of current residents live in the Streeterville area in high-rise apartments on or near the Northwestern campus. This enables them to walk to work as well as to public beaches on Lake Michigan. About one-third live in the Lincoln Park and Lakeview neighborhoods, which are comprised of lovely tree-lined streets, great restaurants, parks, and shops. Lincoln Park and Lakeview are a quick commute to the hospital and easily accessible by public transportation. The remainder of current residents live in other neighborhoods, including the South Loop, River North, Wicker Park, and Bucktown.

From bar nights to bake-offs, our residents love to be social. There are a lot of residency events in this city with incredible arts, sports, restaurants and even the outdoors (the Lake!).

The medical center is in the heart of downtown, a short distance from many eclectic neighborhoods including Bucktown, Andersonville, and Lincoln Park, all with their own unique restaurants, shops, and nightlife.
Campus Map

Find your way
Landsberg Society Member
Graduate Perspective

Rachel Issaka, MD

► Born in Chicago, IL, grew up in Chicago, IL, Minneapolis, MN, and Ghana
► 2013 Alumnus, 2013-2014 Chief Medical Resident
► University of Michigan Medical School, Gastroenterology fellowship at UCSF, started as faculty at the University of Washington in Seattle, WA in 2018
► 2013 Marco Ellis Legacy Award Winner

WHAT DO YOU MISS MOST ABOUT NORTHWESTERN?

Definitely the people! The program leaders care deeply about cultivating excellent physicians and citizens, and impressively select and nurture the best people (program directors, administrators, attending physicians, chief medical residents, residents, staff, I could go on...), to ensure that this goal is met!

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE NORTHWESTERN?

In a word – Exceptional! There are a few places that intentionally and thoughtfully integrate trainees into the fabric of the surrounding city. In doing so, I believe Northwestern trains exceptional clinicians who also become leaders and change agents passionate about improving health outcomes locally, nationally and globally.

HOW HAS NORTHWESTERN RESIDENCY PREPARED YOU FOR YOUR CAREER?

My residency training inspired my desire to build a career that aligned my personal passions with professional pursuits. As a first-generation African-American, first-generation college graduate, a gastroenterologist and health services researcher, I’m excited to bring these unique experiences to providing clinical care, conducting research that decreases colorectal cancer mortality disparities, and mentoring the next generation of great thinkers and problem solvers.
WHY DID YOU CHOOSE CARDIOLOGY?

Cardiology is a remarkable discipline; I consider it the high-touch high-tech field of medicine. A cardiologist must be comfortable at the bedside, attentive to a patient’s concerns and then knowledgeable not only about the disease but also about the myriad of today’s treatment options. I personally love the mix of traditional medicine with the infusion of cutting edge science and contemporary technology.

I view medicine as the most engaging of professions and over the years have become a student of people. I learn most from listening to the experiences of others and working to address the needs of those at risk for or those affected by heart disease. Heart failure is especially attractive as it invokes a major burden on those affected but also leads to significant relief when appropriately treated. We have learned much from clinical trials in heart failure and I am eager to explore new directions in care. I have been in medicine long enough to realize that we have not yet fully achieved health equity, regardless of improving access to care. Arbitrary decisions are made daily that make it clear – as a function of age, gender, race, ethnicity and social circumstances that care patterns differ. We all need to work together to eliminate health care inequalities. These inequalities incur a cost, and if eliminated, would benefit everyone.

WHAT IS THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT DISCOVERY IN THE FIELD OF CARDIOLOGY FROM THE LAST FEW YEARS?

Over the last ten years, heart failure has gone from being a dismal diagnosis for which there was little that could be done to a disease where the expectation now is of improvement. It hasn’t been one advance but the aggregate of all of the new drugs, devices and systems of care that has made the difference for this condition. We still have quite a ways to go but I am very optimistic that we are on the verge of fundamentally changing the heart failure experience.
We hope that the information in this brochure is helpful to you as you begin the interviewing process. Please feel free to contact us directly if you have any questions about our program. We look forward to virtually meeting and learning more about you!

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For more information please visit  
[medicine.northwestern.edu/education/residents](http://medicine.northwestern.edu/education/residents)

Northwestern Medicine® is the shared vision that joins Northwestern Memorial HealthCare and Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine in a collaborative effort to transform medicine through quality healthcare, academic excellence, and scientific discovery.