



**Weill Cornell
Medicine**

Global Health Education

**Summer 2021
Newsletter**



Notes from the Director



As I write this welcome note, I reflect back over the past 15 months of COVID lockdown. The pandemic and ensuing travel ban upended our global health program in many negative and positive ways. Students in the Class of 2021 who were hoping to take a clinical elective before graduation were disappointed. First year students who hoped to take an international elective over the summer between 1st and 2nd year were disappointed. Despite the lifting of the Weill Cornell travel ban effective July 1st, 2021, in many parts of the world it is still too dangerous to sanction travel for an international summer elective. Students in the Class of 2024 who had hoped to travel abroad this summer will conduct their research under the guidance of the host mentor virtually. While still too soon to open up our international

visiting medical student clinical electives program, we are optimistic that we can be back in business by January 2022 both for the international visiting medical students and the students in the Class of 2022 who are hoping to take an international elective in the Spring term.

On a positive note, the Office of Global Health Education (OGHE) successfully pivoted to a virtual format and by so doing greatly increased the global participation in our seminar series, including Global Health Grand Rounds, and a special Earth Day talk on the need for climate change action. And, the Cornell International Education Network has invited OGHE to join the network, which we gladly accepted. I presented an overview of global health activities at the medical school at the April CIEN meeting.

To a certain extent, COVID-19 has brought us closer to our partners around the world in terms of frequent “checking in” emails and zoom meetings. A short piece ([Expanding educational opportunities virtually in the time of COVID-19](#)) describing the real-time virtual collaboration with our colleagues at the Botucatu medical school of the State University Sao Paulo Brazil was published this Spring in the International Journal of Medical Education. Our colleagues in India, Peru, and Brazil provide us with first-hand accounts of the seriousness of the pandemic in their country. In response, OGHE, in collaboration with students and faculty, is organizing a COVID relief program to send needed supplies to our partner medical schools.

This Summer Newsletter highlights OGHE activities for the first half of 2021. In particular, in recognition of Barbara Slifka’s generosity in supporting global health at WCM, OGHE has established the Barbara Slifka Global Health award to honor a graduating student who has shown consistent leadership and participation in global health activities during medical school. Dr. Elena Beideck ’21 was selected to receive this award at Convocation. As more people in the US and around the world get vaccinated, we are hopeful that Public Health and medical efforts to stem the spread of the virus will enable us to resume our global health activities at the medical school and around the world.

Wishing you a safe, healthy summer.

Madelon L. Finkel, Ph.D.

Professor of Population Health Sciences
Director, Office of Global Health Education
Population Health Science Curriculum Leader



Bidding Dr. Fein Farewell



Oliver Fein, M.D.

Oliver Fein, MD has announced his retirement from Weill Cornell Medicine effective June 30, 2021. Dr. Fein joined the Weill Cornell Medicine faculty in 1995 and was named the inaugural Associate Dean of Affiliations. He holds the rank of Professor of Clinical Medicine and Professor of Clinical Population Health Sciences. During his tenure at Weill Cornell, he was instrumental in creating the Office of Global Health Education, previously named the Office of International Education, as well as in developing the global health curriculum program (Preceptorship in Global Health). In 1998, Dr. Fein, represented Weill Cornell Medicine, partnered with Harvard University and Dartmouth College in the development of a mutli-national medical student exchange program with three E.U. Medical Schools (Ludwig Maximilians University in Germany, Lund University in Sweden, and the University of Copenhagen in Denmark). The program has grown to include medical schools in other European countries: England, Spain, Scotland and Sweden (the Karolinska Institute replaced Lund University).

Dr. Fein has been instrumental in strengthening institutional relationships with domestic and international partners, serving as the liaison between Weill Cornell and its affiliated hospitals. He has made significant contributions to the development of NewYork-Presbyterian's integrated academic healthcare system and was also instrumental in developing the Program in Family Medicine. Crucially, his efforts have helped to diversify the clinical and academic experiences of generations of medical students through affiliations with international and domestic institutions, hospitals, and with physicians who deliver health services to vulnerable populations.

A general internist in the Adult Internal Medicine program, Dr. Fein has focused on health system delivery reform throughout his career. Prior to joining Weill Cornell Medicine, he spent seventeen years developing ambulatory care practices at Columbia University's Irving Medical Center and local communities. He served as a Robert Wood Johnson Health Policy Fellow in the office of then Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell, and has held leadership positions with Physicians for a National Health Program and the American Public Health Association. In 2018 he was honored by the Medicare Rights Center for excellence in patient care, his commitment to medical education, and his passionate fight to ensure that all Americans have access to comprehensive, affordable health coverage.

We wish all the best to Dr. Oliver Fein in his retirement.

OGHE Joins The Cornell International Education Network

The Office of Global Health Education has been asked to join the Cornell International Education Network (CIEN), a network of Cornell-wide staff and faculty who are engaged in various aspects of international education programming, study abroad, and international program administration. Monthly meetings provide the opportunity for Cornell-wide participants to network and share information about opportunities abroad.

On April 15th, Dr. Madelon Finkel, Director of the Office of Global Health Education, gave a presentation to the group, describing the international opportunities offered at Weill Cornell Medicine. Other speakers included the Director of Cornell-Tsinghua Finance MBA Program, Director of Student Services at Cornell Tech, Director of AAP Student Services at Cornell in Rome, and Senior Associate Dean for Population Health at Weill Cornell Medicine Qatar.

CIEN is an excellent means for Cornell-wide global health administrators to stay informed about programs and opportunities, which could lead to collaboration among Departments and global health offices on the Ithaca campus, at the medical schools (in New York and Doha), and around the world.



Global Health Grand Rounds



Art Sedrakyan, M.D., Ph.D.



Eric L. Krakauer, M.D., Ph.D.



Holly G. Prigerson, Ph.D.



Christian Ntizimira, M.D., MSc

Three Global Health Grand Rounds lectures were held in Spring 2021. Dr. Art Sedrakyan, Professor of Population Health Sciences and a trained CT Surgeon, spoke about his international network that focused on medical device safety. Dr. Rebecca Martin, Director of the Global Health Center at the Center for Disease Control (CDC), presented on global health during a pandemic and the impact of COVID-19 on the CDC's global health programs. Dr. Martin's talk gave a review of how the CDC dealt with epidemics in the past and how it is dealing with the current pandemic. The final Global Health Grand Rounds for the 2021 academic year was presented by Dr. Eric Krakauer, Associate Professor of Medicine and of Global Health & Social Medicine at Harvard University, Dr. Holly Prigerson, WCM Professor of Sociology in Medicine and Director of the Cornell Center for Research and End-of-Life Care, and Dr. Christian Ntizimira, Executive Director of the Africa Center for Research on End-of-Life Care. Drs. Prigerson, Ntizimira and Krakauer's presentation focused on the development of a Rwandan-USA research partnership for the study of end-of-life care. Their talk focused on the challenges of providing palliative care in Rwanda as well as the socio-cultural issues that must be considered in providing end-of-life care.

Global Health Career Seminars

The popular Global Health Career Seminar lectures enable MS1 students to meet faculty engaged in global health activities. Dr. Randi Diamond, a specialist in palliative care, led the first Global Health Career Seminar in which she spoke about her work in palliative care in rural Uganda. Dr. Caitlin Hoffman '07, Pediatric Neurosurgeon with a focus on epilepsy and craniofacial surgery as well as global neurosurgery, talked about her interest in global health and the importance of collaboration with others to ensure sustainability. The final Career Seminar lecture for the 2021 academic year was presented by Dr. Cristina Toledo-Cornell '13, Internist and Public Health Director at the Lummi Tribal Health Center in Washington State. She talked to the students about the inspiration that led her to study medicine and the need for a supportive system. She also gave an excellent overview of the joys and challenges of working in a tribal health care center.



Randi Diamond, M.D., F.A.C.P.



Caitlin Hoffman, M.D.



Cristina Toledo-Cornell, M.D., M.P.H.

Earth Day Seminar 2021

In honor of Earth Day 2020, the Office of Global Health Education hosted a special Earth Day seminar to focus on mitigating the effects of climate change. Professor Natalie Mahowald, Irving Porter Professor in Engineering at Cornell University, was the guest speaker and spoke eloquently of the urgency to act now to reduce the production of CO₂. Even if we begin to initiate steps to reduce CO₂, she said it might take at least 20-30 years to begin to see a reduction of CO₂ in the atmosphere. Her talk gave us much food for thought, stressing the urgency to act now so as to realize benefits in the future.



Natalie Mahowald, Ph.D.



Humanitarian Donations

As the pandemic continues to spread in so many places around the world, the Office of Global Health Education decided to take action to address this humanitarian crisis. We organized a student-faculty group to explore the feasibility of providing needed supplies to our partners in Peru and Brazil. We are told that there is a serious shortage of masks and other personal protection equipment in much of Latin America. Reports of young medical doctors being sent to the Andean highlands without masks

and doctors in Brazil who could not find supplies to purchase prompted our decision to send supplies and/or funds to be used for purchase of supplies to our partner medical school in Lima (National University of San Marcos Medical School) and in Botucatu Brazil (UNESP Botucatu Medical School). It is our hope that our gesture can help in some small way alleviate an already serious situation.

Donations to OGHE

To make a donation online please [click here](#).

Under the "About Your Gift, *Designation*," select "Other" and enter "Global Health Education."

If you have questions about making a donation, please contact Dr. Madelon Finkel at

maf2011@med.cornell.edu

or call 646-962-8038

Global Health Curriculum at WCM

COVID-19 pandemic has made it impossible for graduating WCM medical students to take a clinical elective abroad in the Spring 2021 term. Forty-one students in the Class of 2021 had hoped to take an international elective this Spring; however, the COVID-19 travel ban made it impossible for them to do so. Many students in the Class of 2022 already have submitted an application to take an international elective in Spring 2022. Hopefully by that time travel will be permitted.

Ten 1st year students submitted applications to take an international elective during the summer between 1st and 2nd year. As of July 1st, the domestic and international travel ban will be lifted, allowing faculty, staff, and students to travel on WCM business. Should it not be possible to travel to specific countries because of COVID-19, Weill Cornell faculty mentors as well as the host country mentor will oversee the student's work remotely.



Many Weill Cornell students participate in research conducted at a host institution abroad. Working under the guidance of a Weill Cornell mentor as well as the host mentor, our students are afforded a unique opportunity to engage in cutting-edge research as a member of the host institution research team. In the majority of cases, Weill Cornell mentors are collaborating with the host mentor on grant-funded projects. Many thanks to the Weill Cornell mentors who help facilitate placing students in research studies being conducted at the host institution.

A number of WCM medical students are included as co-authors on published papers, and some students are listed as first author. The Office of Global Health Education has compiled a listing of publications by students who took an international research elective during the summer between 1st and 2nd year, as well as by those who conducted their Area of Concentration (AOC) research project at an international host institution and those who took a year off to conduct research abroad.

First-year students are eligible for elective credit through the Office of Medical Student Research's Summer Research Elective Credit (SREC) program, assuming that the project proposal meets the SREC criteria of a hypothesis-driven research study.

Introduction to Global Health Series

The 8-session Introduction to Global Health Series sponsored by the Office of Global Health Education is offered to first-year students interested in Global Health work. The series provides students with an overview of key global health topics and the challenges of working in global health. Seminars focused on cancer screening in LMICs, global blindness, malaria prevention, diabetes in LMICs, global health as a humanitarian crisis, and palliative care in LMICs. The final session was a panel discussion hosted by three MS1 students who worked in global health prior to medical school. Their presentation focused on how they became interested in global health work, as well as the joys and challenges of working in this field.

Based on comments from the post-series survey, students realized their lack of understanding when it came global health and cultural competency. These lectures made them aware that they need to learn to be flexible and adaptive when responding to global health situations. Resources might be limited when it comes to management of ill patients and as such they must learn to adapt. One student commented that when working with patients “you have to consider the medical, social, as well as financial limitations that are often not seen in places like the United States.” Others stated that there are “lots of other factors to consider besides simply just treating the patient and expecting them to adhere to the medications prescribed.” Another student wrote “when it is hard for people to get to screening, try bringing it [screening] to them. Make sure the messaging is appropriate and remember it is NEVER about you.” One student mentioned that it is so important to take the time to listen to patients and to ask thoughtful questions about their values and goals. All realized how important sustainability is in global health work. Students appreciated that medical knowledge was blended into the talks in a “light way” and welcomed the advice given to them about thinking critically about what their role in global health might be.

Global Health Certificates

Congratulations to Sarita Ballakur, Elena Beideck, Andrew Eidelberg, Jennifer Huang, Rohini Kopparam, Ruth Moges, Sophie Mou, Tatiana Requijo, and Annie Yau, members of the Class of 2021 who received a Certificate in Global Health based on their active participation in global health activities throughout their time at Weill Cornell. Student support of our global health program is very important, and OGHE recognizes this by awarding a Certificate in Global Health to those in the graduating class who demonstrated initiative, leadership, and a commitment to global health issues.



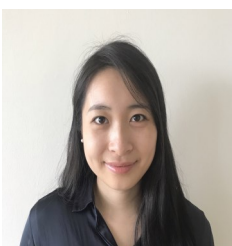
Sarita Ballakur



Jennifer Huang



Ruth Moges



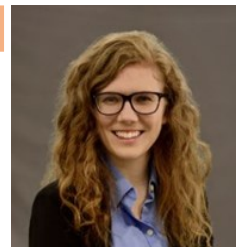
Sophie Mou



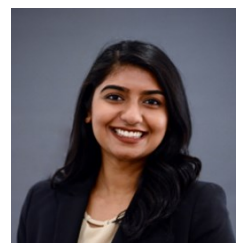
Andrew Eidelberg



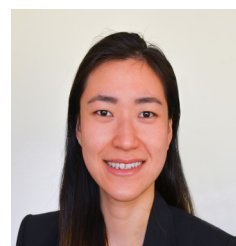
Tatiana Requijo



Elena Beideck



Rohini Kopparam



Annie Yau

The Barbara Slifka Global Health Award

The Office of Global Health Education established The Barbara Slifka Global Health Award to honor Barbara Slifka, a generous supporter of our global health education program. The first recipient of this award is Elena Beideck, member of the Class of 2021. The award, which carries a cash prize, recognizes an individual who showed exceptional leadership in the area of global health throughout medical school. Congratulations to Elena and many thanks to Ms. Slifka for her generosity and support throughout the years.



Congratulations to Our Past GH Teaching Associate



After I graduated Cornell University in 2015, I accepted the job as the Global Health Teaching Associate (GHTA) in the Office of Global Health Education (OGHE). Looking back, I can confidently say that being part of the OGHE staff helped me define my interest in medicine and global public health.

Through my role as the Global Health TA, I implemented curricula for the medical students and visiting international students, planned events, attended conferences, and participated in a research project on cervical cancer screening in India. Dr. Finkel, Dr. Fein, and the OGHE staff were extremely supportive and gave me the opportunity to build my own career path.

After working at OGHE for two years, I matriculated into the MD/MPH program at SUNY Downstate, where I delved deeper into education and global/public health through dedicated elective longitudinal pathways that were in addition to the medical school curriculum. Now, having just graduated medical school a few days ago, I will be pursuing the Internal Medicine - Primary Care/Social Medicine residency at Montefiore Medical Center. I can say confidently that my time at OGHE shaped my outlook on medicine, global health, education, and life. I am so grateful to the mentors, colleagues, and friends I met through the GHTA position and being a part of the Office of Global Health Education.

 *Congratulations!*



Visiting International Students Program

Our Visiting International Clinical Electives Program is an excellent way for foreign medical students to obtain exposure to the world-class medical care provided at Weill Cornell-NY Presbyterian Hospital. Sadly, the COVID lockdown forced the closing of the clinical electives program this past academic year. As the global health education program had to pivot to a virtual platform, the Office of Global Health Education conducted a survey of past participants in the program to see to what extent the program helped them. All indicated that the experience was personally and professionally meaningful.

Five students (4 from India and 1 from Peru) who participated in the International Visiting Students Clinical electives program successfully matched at a US Residency program! One matched in Internal Medicine at the University of Missouri-Kansas City, two matched in Internal Medicine at the University of Rochester, one matched in Pediatrics at Case Western Reserve University/ MetroHealth, Medical Center in Cleveland, Ohio, and one matched in Pediatrics at The Brooklyn Hospital Center. These students considered their time at WCM to be a decisive contributor to their competitiveness in the annual Match.



Rasika Bhamre, M.D. — India

WCM: March 2018

Elective: Pediatric Neurology

Resident Match: **Pediatrics**, Case Western Reserve University/ Metro Health Medical Center, *Cleveland, Ohio*



Vinay Jahagirdar, M.D.— India

WCM: March 2020

Elective: Gastroenterology

Resident Match: **Internal Medicine**, University of Missouri, *Kansas City*



Vidisha Master, M.D. — India

WCM: March 2019

Elective: Gastroenterology

Resident Match: **Internal Medicine**, Rochester General Hospital, *New York*



Rosa Maria Pari Nana, M.D. — Peru

WCM: February 2014

Elective: Pediatric Hematology / Oncology & Dermatology

Resident Match: **Internal Medicine**, Rochester University Hospital, *New York*



Shreya Sodhani, M.D. — India

WCM: March 2019

Elective: Pediatric Hematology / Oncology

Resident Match: **Pediatrics**, Brooklyn Medical Center, *New York*

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Portia Harvey, MBA
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Dianne Young, MPH



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The Office of Global Health
Education (OGHE) was
established by the Dean of
the Medical College to
facilitate student
participation in global
health. OGHE oversees the
international
educational programs at
Weill Cornell. OGHE also
provides visiting
international students
opportunities to take
clinical electives at Weill
Cornell and its affiliates.

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web!](#)

Some Scenes from around the world



The oxygen crisis continue in parts of India. Uttar Pradesh, India - May 7, 2021. Photo: Ahmer Khan



Sketch by Cartoonist, Rabindra Manandhar.



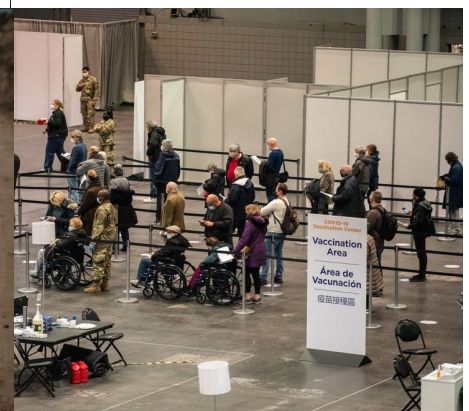
A family member carries a patient having difficulty breathing to a free oxygen support centre run by a Gurudwara, a place of worship for Sikhs, on the outskirts of New Delhi. (Arun Sankar/AFP/Getty Images)



OGHE Staff member, Maritza Montalvo, gets vaccinated.



Neighbors wearing masks to curb the spread of the new coronavirus wait in a line for a free meal at the Villa Maria del Triunfo district of in Lima, Peru. AP - Rodrigo Abd



People stand in line to receive Covid-19 vaccinations at the Jacob Javits Center in New York. Photographer: Jeenah Moon/Bloomberg

The OGHE staff received our COVID-19 vaccine,
DID YOU?

*From the Office of Global Health Education,
stay safe and have a great summer!!!*

