2017 Minority Scholars Award Recipients

Presented by the American Medical Association (AMA) Foundation,
in partnership with the AMA Minority Affairs Section, Pfizer, PhRMA, and Novo Nordisk

Vanessa Armendariz
University of Kansas School of Medicine
2017 National Business Group on Health Ronald M. David, MD Memorial Scholarship Recipient

Vanessa Armendariz is a first-year medical student who is passionate about public health and primary care. Her interests include working with youth and underserved communities while confronting health care disparities. She is involved in the Latino Medical Student Association and Student National Medical Association. She serves as one of the executive directors of BullDoc, a student-run health clinic at a local high school. Armendariz enjoys working with young people and inspiring them to achieve their goals.

Anita Arthur
Michigan State University College of Human Medicine

Anita Arthur is a second-year medical student. She graduated from Oberlin College with a BA in Biochemistry in 2006 and obtained her Master of Public Health degree in Epidemiology from Emory University in 2009. Prior to enrolling in medical school, Arthur was a high school chemistry teacher, a surveillance epidemiologist at the Florida Department of Health and an epidemiologist at the Michigan Department of Community Health. She intends to treat patients and practice public health in an underserved area.

Yvorn Aswad
Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science/David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA

Yvorn Aswad is a third-year medical student who promotes the cause of medicine as social justice. His focus is on the physical and mental health of children who live in poverty. He believes that through strong research, excellent clinical care and insightful policy, the health disparities faced by impoverished youth can be ameliorated. His research with the UCLA Center for Culture, Trauma, and Mental Health Disparities has helped him understand the link between traumatic experiences and somatic symptoms, particularly as they relate to youth in the justice system. Aswad is a cofounder of the UCLA student initiative Health Beyond Bars, and he is currently involved in a research project that explores the health needs of youth post-incarceration.
Rachel Bervell  
**University of Illinois—Chicago College of Medicine**  
Rachel Bervell, a third-year medical student, has made a commitment to partner with others in their most vulnerable times. Her focus on volunteerism, wellness, healthcare delivery research and maternal and infant health has led her to influence others globally and locally. She is the founder of a nonprofit organization, Hugs for Ghana, and she has worked in Tanzanian clinics, administering quality assessments in resource-poor communities. Bervell served on the national board of the March of Dimes and worked in community health centers in Boston helping patients address social determinants of health. Currently, Bervell studies in the Urban Medicine Program and the Patient Centered Medicine Program, where she works with survivors of domestic violence and citizens in need of food resources. Her goal as a future physician is to empower others to take ownership of their wellbeing. She looks forward to becoming a strong patient advocate for those in underserved communities.

Marisela Cardenas  
**UC San Diego School of Medicine**  
Marisela Cardenas is a third-year medical student pursuing a career in primary care and hoping to become an advocate for underserved communities. During her time at UC San Diego, Cardenas has worked closely with patients at the free clinic as a Renal Clinic Manager and nutrition teacher. She has also done medical outreach and served as president of the Latino Medical Student Association. When not in school, Cardenas pursues her passion for traveling and learning about the many rich and vibrant cultures in the United States and abroad.

Elsy Virginia Compres  
**Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine**  
Elsy Virginia Compres is a first generation Dominican-American in her second year of medical school. She is the president of the Latino Medical Student Association and is working to reduce health disparities through global health research and advocacy. Currently, Compres spearheads a multi-center project combining infectious disease, dermatology and global health professionals in the United States and Dominican Republic. During her undergraduate studies at the University of Pennsylvania, Compres was a member of the International Honors Program and traveled throughout West Africa, Southeast Asia and South America conducting anthropological research on resource access among marginalized citizens. She plans to continue her passion for advocating on behalf of disenfranchised communities across the globe throughout her medical career.
Nicole Dinescu
Des Moines University, Osteopathic Medicine
Nicole Dinescu is a rising third-year osteopathic medical student pursuing a career in maternal and fetal medicine. Her interests are in Latino medicine and helping other underserved populations. She was recently recognized as one of Des Moines University’s Diversity Champions for her invaluable support and contributions to diversity and inclusiveness. This past school year, Dinescu was president of the Latino Medical Student Association and secretary of the Student Government Association at her school. In the future, she hopes to be involved with public health and health care policy geared towards minimizing health disparities.

Annyella Douglas
Pennsylvania State University College of Medicine
Annyella Douglas is a third-year medical student committed to bringing quality care to underserved populations. In her first year of medical school, she reestablished the Student National Medical Association organization and served as copresident, which resulted in an increase of minority student attendance to her medical school. As a Global Health Scholar, Douglas spent a summer researching in Ghana and will return in her fourth year to do clinical work. She also created the Inter-Professional Student Organization Health Mentors Program that allows inter-professional students to work in a team to help a community member of an underserved population achieve a health goal.

Joy Abiola Fatunbi
Drexel University College of Medicine
Joy Abiola Fatunbi is a 2019 MD candidate and Health Equity. As a medical student, Fatunbi has been very active on campus, holding chapter leadership positions for American Medical Association and Student National Medical Association. She also works within her local community as an advocate for homeless and displaced citizens through the student-run free health clinic at Prevention Point Philadelphia. In 2016, Fatunbi founded the Pediatric Pal Navigator Program (PPN), a health navigator program that identifies and supports children who have not received recommended vaccines and/or those affected by significant social determinants of health. In fall 2017, PPN will be implemented into the curriculum at Drexel University College of Medicine as part of the Longitudinal Community Care Practicum.

Eutiquio Gutierrez
College of Osteopathic Medicine of the Pacific
Eutiquio Gutierrez is a third-year medical student aspiring to give back to his community as a medical oncologist. He is interested in reducing health care
disparities among the underserved while promoting diversity in medical education. For the duration of his preclinical years, Gutierrez has served as the head coordinator of an organization that provides free medical aid and referrals to the homeless and poor. He has also spoken at various conferences throughout Southern California regarding diversity in healthcare and cancer research. In 2016 he was selected by the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine as an oncology research fellow.

Kevin Jose Guzman  
Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science/David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA

Kevin Jose Guzman is a third-year medical student is working to eliminate health care disparities. As a medical student, Guzman cochaired the Lennox Health Fair, which provides medical services to underserved populations. Interested in advocating for students from disadvantaged backgrounds, he also served as a voting member on the admissions committee for disadvantage students. Guzman has an interest in developing better systems of care internationally, and prior to medical school, he taught physics and worked on community health and education projects as a Peace Corps volunteer in Mozambique. As a medical student, he returned to Mozambique to conduct research on plastic surgery and disease, and he hopes to continue his work locally and abroad in the future.

Ariel Nicole Hart  
Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science/David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA

Ariel Nicole Hart is a first-year medical student who hopes to integrate the tenets of social justice, anti-racism and health equity into her future medical career and the healthcare system as a whole. Her earlier studies at the University of Washington School of Public Health and her experience as a juvenile justice community organizer led her to develop a new elective course on structural racism and public health practice and a graduation competency program on social inequities and racism. Hart received a clinical faculty appointment and Washington State Public Health Association Exceptional Student Award for her work. Currently, she is an active student leader in Medical Students for Choice, White Coats for Black Lives and Student National Medical Association.

Luce Kassi  
University of Arizona College of Medicine–Phoenix

Luce Kassi is a third-year medical student pursuing a career in obstetrics-gynecology with a strong emphasis on global women’s health. Dedicated to her community and serving underserved populations, Kassi has worked extensively in community service, primarily with minority populations at the Wesley Health Center in Phoenix. As part of the certificate of distinction in Global
Health at the University of Arizona College of Medicine–Phoenix, Kassi went on a medical mission trip to the Dominican Republic, where she provided medical care and assistance to patients in rural areas of Santo Domingo. She actively serves on the Diversity & Inclusion Committee of her school and is a member of the Student National Medical Association.

Mark Lorthe
Howard University College of Medicine

Mark Lorthe is a rising second-year medical student pursuing a career in psychiatry and neurology, with a desire to work in public health and health policy. Before enrolling in medical school, Lorthe began his career working as a Registered Nurse for two years, mainly at Montefiore Medical Center in the Bronx, where health care disparities were prevalent. During his first year of medical school, he was part of a team representing Howard University in the DC Public Health Case Challenge, which won the award for “Most Practical” idea. He has been conducting research on PTSD and sleep, as well as Suvorexant and sleep. Currently, Lorthe and a classmate are building a primary care initiative program that is expected to improve patient care through data analysis.

Matthew L. Moreno
University of Kansas School of Medicine

Matthew L. Moreno is a third-year medical student pursuing a career serving underrepresented communities. His interests include research on health disparities and cardiovascular medicine. As a medical student, Moreno researched the treatment of pulmonary arterial hypertension and the role of health disparities in the Latino and African American communities. He is an avid volunteer in his community’s student-run free clinic, Jaydoc, and he hopes to impact health disparities by continuing to do research and inspiring others to take a role in empowering vulnerable populations.

Bellony N. Nzemenoh
Medical College of Wisconsin

Bellony N. Nzemenoh is a rising second-year medical student. Growing up in Cameroon, Nzemenoh encountered a multitude of health disparities that were astoundingly different from the healthcare system she found in America. She has since made a commitment to increasing diversity in healthcare by being an example for generations to follow. Nzemenoh currently serves on the Diversity Planning Committee for the spring Festival of Cultures, which celebrates difference and promotes awareness of inclusion. She also serves as copresident of the American Medical Student Association. Nzemenoh is involved in launching the Student Health Initiative for Pipeline Programs, which will encourage middle, high school and undergraduate students to pursue careers in science and medicine by providing them with necessary training and opportunities to shadow physicians and develop clinical skills. As part of the Student National Medical Association, she mentors a high school student, and this
summer, Nzemenoh will travel to Croatia as a 2017 Global Health Kohler Scholar to conduct research in healthcare systems management.

Chisom Dominic Okezue  
George Washington School of Medicine and Health Sciences  
Chisom Dominic Okezue is a second-year medical student pursuing a career in the field of hematology-oncology. Prior to medical school, he volunteered in undergraduate education pipeline programs, mentoring disadvantaged students in central Brooklyn. As a medical student, Okezue is interested in improving community health, and he is working with a team of colleagues to set up a summer 2017 Community Health Outreach Program in medically underserved wards of DC. Okezue is also an exam room volunteer at the “Healing Clinic,” a student-run clinic for under and uninsured DC and Maryland residents. He works with the Social Justice Interest Group and the “Protect Our Patients” campaign to prevent the repeal of the Affordable Care Act by reaching out to Congress and speaking about his experience caring for impoverished and underserved patients.

Reginald Kwao Amartey Osardu  
Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine  
Reginald Kwao Amartey Osardu is a first-year medical student pursuing a career in emergency medicine and public health with the goal of serving medically underserved populations. He is the only student on the board committee for the Capital Area Health Education Center, a state-wide program whose mission is to optimize access to quality health care for underserved communities. Additionally, Osardu is an academic navigator for Virginia Commonwealth University’s “Dynamic Principles for Professional Development” course, the president of the Student National Medical Association at the Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine and a mentor in the Black Men in Medicine undergraduate organization.

Dominique Prue  
Tufts University School of Medicine  
Currently a first-year medical student, Dominique Prue graduated cum laude from the University of Pennsylvania with a bachelor’s degree in anthropology. Before starting medical school, she worked as an asthma educator with the IMPACT DC Asthma Clinic at Children’s National Health System, where she recognized the importance of patient-centered care and clinical public health. Prue is committed to a career focusing on equitable and humanistic care for all patients, with an interest in practicing in an underserved community. She is a member of the Tufts Student Service Scholars program and has advocated for safe spaces for students to discuss issues of diversity and social justice. In addition, Prue is a member of the
Multicultural Fellows Council, a representative for the student-led Coalition for Diversity & Inclusion and cofounder of Tufts for Social Justice in Healthcare.

Daisy Sanchez
Medical University of South Carolina, College of Medicine
Daisy Sanchez is a rising third-year medical student pursuing a career in surgery. She is a first generation student and hopes to encourage other minority students to pursue their goals, especially in medicine. Throughout her first two years, Sanchez has served on the board for a student-run free clinics as the clinical quality manager and Spanish night coordinator. She has also served as a mentor, tutor and student ambassador at her institution. In the previous year, Sanchez also attended and presented research at local and national medical conferences, including the 2017 Academic Surgical Congress in Las Vegas.

Luis E. Seija
Texas A&M University College of Medicine
Luis E. Seija was born in Austin, Texas and attended the University of Texas at Austin where his passion for caring for marginalized populations was fostered. He promoted health literacy and campus outreach efforts, such as translating and producing Spanish-language materials on birth control and emergency contraception for the Healthy Sexuality Peer Educator program. In medical school, he is engaged in organized medicine through the Texas Medical Association and American Medical Association. As chair of the Minority Issues Committee of the AMA Medical Student Section, Seija led a cohort of socially conscious medical students from across the country, creating meaningful policy and educational programming. He was also recently elected as the MSS Representative on the AMA Minority Affairs Section Governing Council. He regularly contributes to the Association of American Medical College’s “Inspiring Stories and Aspiring Docs” series. For his medical school, Seija is a voting member of the admissions committee, holds leadership positions within the Latino Medical Student Association and the Student National Medical Association and is credited with the revival of the Gay-Straight Alliance.

Quante Singleton
Medical College of Georgia
Quante Singleton is a rising third-year medical student pursuing a career in orthopedic surgery, concentrating on regenerative medical care. His interests are osteoarthritis and degenerative disease. In 2015, Singleton cofounded a free clinic on the campus of the Medical College of Georgia, providing dermatological services for individuals in need. In addition, he served as president of the Orthopedic Interest Group from 2015 to 2016. Prior to medical school, he spent nine years as a fireman/paramedic in an underprivileged neighborhood. In 2013, he and a colleague received Atlanta Fire Rescue’s Medal of Valor for rescuing an elderly Alzheimer’s patient from a burning home.
Derek W. Smith  
University of California, San Francisco, School of Medicine  
Derek W. Smith is a rising third-year medical student aspiring to a career in pediatrics or pediatric surgery. He has been focused on working with children and helping strengthen the voice of the underserved and marginalized. During his first two years in medical school, Smith served as a coordinator of a student-run free clinic in the Mission district of San Francisco, the treasurer of the Student National Medical Association Region I and a member of the medical school admissions committee at his university.

Angela N. Torres  
Keck School of Medicine at the University of Southern California  
Angela N. Torres is a second-year medical student interested in pediatric medicine and helping children build healthy, life-long habits. She founded a chapter of the Health Careers Academy at an underserved high school in South Central Los Angeles to teach students that they are capable of pursuing careers in medicine. Torres continues to develop her passion for music, singing and playing for patients and at her church, and she is grateful for the many sacrifices her family has made to allow her to pursue her education and become a first-generation college graduate.

Octavio Viramontes  
Harvard Medical School  
Octavio Viramontes is a third-year medical student looking forward to building a practice in which he can reduce disparities in health, while improving access to care and the quality of life for every patient. Viramontes is interested in applying innovative technology and entrepreneurship to solve health problems. From 2015 to 2016, he served as cochair of the Harvard Medical School Latino Medical Student Association where he supported Milagros Para Niños, an annual Boston Children’s Gala that raises money for underserved children.
Ka’la D. Drayton, MHIT  
Medical University of South Carolina College of Medicine  

Ka’la Drayton, MHIT, is a rising second-year medical student. She is a 2015 graduate of the University of South Carolina with a Bachelor of Science degree in biological sciences and chemistry with a Leadership Distinction in research. She also earned a Masters of Health Information Technology degree in 2016. Drayton is interested in improving health care disparities within the African American community while fostering a solid foundation for youth as an interventional pediatric cardiologist. Currently, Drayton serves as an ambassador and COM team co-chair for first-year students in addition to serving as co-president of the MUSC Chapter of Student National Medical Association. She is a dedicated volunteer with the Dream Center Neurology Clinic and the MUSC Cares Clinic.

Quincy Alvin Banks  
Wake Forest School of Medicine  

Quincy Alvin Banks volunteers with Delivering Equal Access to Care, Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Winston Salem, Camp Cardiac and Supporting Young Scholars through Empowerment. He has traveled on medical mission trips to Costa Rica, Nicaragua and Haiti to help inform, educate and care for citizens that would not otherwise receive adequate healthcare. He plans to specialize in pediatric cardiology and hopes to enhance the lives of youth while pursuing future medical mission outreach opportunities.