

# Med School Watercooler

NEWS FROM FREDERICK P. WHIDDON COLLEGE OF MEDICINE  
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH ALABAMA

Thursday, January 26, 2017

## Class of 2017 Medical Students Named to Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Medical Society



Top row, left to right: Emily Spurlin, Brenden Ingraham, Sean Carter and Caroline Miller. Middle row, left to right: Ankur Singh, Brian McGrath, Corwin McGee and Kristen Schultz. Bottom row, from left: William Ricks, S. Ansley Smith, G. Patterson Graham and Carter Tisdale.

Twelve senior medical students at the University of South Alabama College of Medicine were named to the USA chapter of the Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Medical Society.

The following students were selected: Sean Carter, G. Patterson Graham, Brenden Ingraham, Corwin McGee, Brian McGrath, Caroline Miller, William Ricks, Kristen Schultz, Ankur Singh, S. Ansley Smith, Emily Spurlin and Carter Tisdale.

Alpha Omega Alpha, a professional medical organization, recognizes and advocates for excellence in scholarship and the highest ideals in the profession of medicine. Members have a compelling drive to do well and to advance the medical profession and exemplify the highest standards of professionalism.

According to Dr. Kelly Roveda, assistant dean of student affairs at the USA College of Medicine and USA AOA chapter councilor, election and membership in Alpha Omega Alpha signifies commitment to not only scholarship but also

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leadership, professionalism and service.

The top 25 percent of a medical school class is eligible for nomination to the society, and up to 16 percent may be elected based on leadership, character, community service and professionalism.

Members may also be elected by chapters after demonstrating scholarly achievement and professional contributions and values after medical school - during their careers in medicine.

The AOA motto is "Be Worthy to Serve the Suffering." To learn more, visit [www.alphaomegalpha.org](http://www.alphaomegalpha.org).

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## USA Medical Students Participate in Medical Spanish Interest Group



From left: Juan Torres, Mary Morgan Weed, Olivia Pinochet and Trevor Stevens participate in the Medical Spanish Interest Group meeting at the USA College of Medicine on Jan. 17, 2017.

The Medical Spanish Interest Group (MSIG) at the University of South Alabama College of Medicine aims to teach students how to effectively communicate with the Hispanic community by exposing students to a different language and culture.

According to Mary Morgan Weed, a third-year medical student at USA and president of MSIG, the interest group serves as a platform for students and members of the Hispanic community to unite and break any language or cultural barriers.

Various Spanish-speaking USA faculty members, undergraduate students and high school Spanish teachers help the students learn the language by acting as patients. Following a script, the volunteers and students simulate medical scenarios on topics ranging from the flu to lung disease.

Weed said Dr. Diego Alvarez, associate professor of physiology and cell biology at the USA College of Medicine, has played an instrumental role in the success of the group. "We would not be able to make this club happen without the help of our Spanish-speakers and our sponsor, Dr. Alvarez, who helped us connect with many of the volunteers," she said.

"It is important to highlight that the medical students took the initiative to organize this interest group," Dr. Alvarez said. "While participating in clinical rotations, many students realized the need for learning how to communicate with the growing number of Spanish-speaking patients visiting our health system."

According to Dr. Alvarez, the Hispanic community is projected to become the

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► 2009 (88)


largest minority population by the mid-2020s, making it important for medical students to learn how to communicate effectively. "There is ample evidence indicating that health literacy and proper communication with health care providers improves the outcome of patients who do not speak English," he said.

The club also volunteers at Belong, a local non-profit organization that provides resources to immigrant families. Trevor Stevens, a second-year medical student at USA and vice president of MSIG, said volunteering with Belong is extremely beneficial to medical students because it serves as an opportunity to build trust between the Hispanic population of Mobile and the health care community.

"At Belong, we help Hispanic students with their elementary school homework, interact with immigrant families, play with the kids and speak English with them," he said. "As a result medical students are able to expand their own experiences and horizons, making Belong beneficial to each volunteer."

MSIG will hold its next meeting on Tuesday, Feb. 7, 2017, at 6:30 p.m. in the Medical Sciences Building first floor auditorium. All USA medical students are invited to join.

For more information, contact Mary Morgan Weed at [mmw1322@jagmail.southalabama.edu](mailto:mmw1322@jagmail.southalabama.edu) or join the USACOM Medical Spanish Interest Group page on [Facebook](#).

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## USA Welcomes Jeanine North, PA-C




Jeanine North, PA-C, recently joined the University of South Alabama Physicians Group as a certified physician assistant and will see patients at the USA Family Medicine Center.

North earned her bachelor of arts degree at the University of West Florida and her master of health science in physician assistant studies at USA.

North is a member of the American Academy of Physician Assistants and the Association of Family Practice Physician Assistants. She is the recipient of multiple awards for academic excellence and community leadership.

To make an appointment with North, call (251) 434-3475.

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**Tuesday, January 24, 2017**

## February Med School Café- What Causes Autism?



The February Med School Café lecture will feature Dr. Hanes Swingle, director of the University of South Alabama Autism Diagnostic Clinic and professor of pediatrics at the USA College of Medicine.

His lecture, titled "What Causes Autism?" will be held on Feb. 10, 2017, at the USA Health Strada Patient Care Center Conference Room on the first floor. Lunch will be served at 11:30 a.m., and the presentation begins at noon.

Dr. Swingle will lecture on autism spectrum disorder, a complex developmental disorder that includes the conditions previously known as autistic disorder, Asperger's syndrome and pervasive developmental disorder not otherwise specified.


Dr. Swingle is board-certified in pediatrics, developmental-behavioral pediatrics and neonatology. His special interests include autism spectrum disorders, public health and the epidemiology of preterm birth.

Dr. Swingle received his medical degree from Duke University School of Medicine in Durham, N.C., and received postgraduate training at the Massachusetts General Hospital and Brigham and Women's Hospital of Harvard Medical School in Boston. He completed a fellowship in developmental-behavioral pediatrics at the Center for Disabilities and Development at the University of Iowa in Iowa City, Iowa.

The Med School Café lecture and lunch are provided free of charge, but reservations are required. For more information or to make reservations, please call Kim Partridge at (251) 460-7770.

Med School Café is a free community lecture series sponsored by the USA Physicians Group. Each month, faculty from the USA College of Medicine share their expertise on a specific medical condition, providing insight on the latest treatment available.

The USA Health Strada Patient Care Center is located at 1601 Center St. in Mobile.

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