

Med School Watercooler

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

Thursday, October 8, 2020

White chosen for AMA Foundation leadership program



Zachary B. White II, a fourth-year medical student at the University of South Alabama College of Medicine, is one of 11 students participating in this year's American Medical Association Foundation Leadership Development Institute.

The year-long national program is dedicated to cultivating a diverse cohort of aspiring physician leaders who are committed to serving the needs of their communities and improving the nation's health one patient at a time. Participants receive professional development opportunities and mentoring throughout the course of the program year.

"I applied for this program because I want to one day be a physician leader who makes a difference in the community I

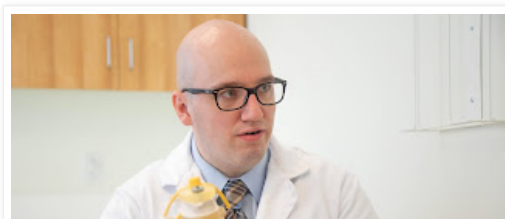
serve," said White, who is the USA College of Medicine's first Black class president. "This year-long opportunity with the AMA will allow me to further enhance my leadership skills, and I hope to bring what I've learned from the program back to other future leaders here at South Alabama."

The program's recent webinar focused on communication and presentation skills for participants. "We learned how it's important to limit distractions, have adequate lighting, look directly in the camera when speaking and avoid fillers," White said. "It is also vitally important to dress from head to toe during virtual interviews because it creates a mentality to take it seriously. Lastly, we were advised to have a concise message when speaking."

The Birmingham native plans to become a radiation oncologist and practice in an academic medicine setting. White said his career choice was informed by his mother's experience with breast cancer.

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Med School Café to address spine care



Richard Menger, M.D., M.P.A., assistant professor of neurosurgery at the University of South Alabama College of Medicine and chief of complex spine surgery with USA Health, will present

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Blog Archive

- ▶ 2023 (11)
- ▶ 2022 (249)
- ▶ 2021 (269)
- ▼ 2020 (191)
 - ▶ 12/27 - 01/03 (1)
 - ▶ 12/13 - 12/20 (6)
 - ▶ 12/06 - 12/13 (2)
 - ▶ 11/29 - 12/06 (5)
 - ▶ 11/15 - 11/22 (3)
 - ▶ 11/08 - 11/15 (5)
 - ▶ 11/01 - 11/08 (5)
 - ▶ 10/25 - 11/01 (5)
 - ▶ 10/18 - 10/25 (6)
 - ▶ 10/11 - 10/18 (5)
 - ▼ 10/04 - 10/11 (3)
 - White chosen for AMA Foundation leadership program
 - Med School Café to address spine care
 - New breast surgical oncologist joins surgery facult...
- ▶ 09/27 - 10/04 (6)
- ▶ 09/20 - 09/27 (3)
- ▶ 09/13 - 09/20 (1)
- ▶ 09/06 - 09/13 (4)
- ▶ 08/30 - 09/06 (3)
- ▶ 08/23 - 08/30 (5)
- ▶ 08/16 - 08/23 (4)
- ▶ 08/09 - 08/16 (3)
- ▶ 08/02 - 08/09 (4)
- ▶ 07/26 - 08/02 (6)
- ▶ 07/19 - 07/26 (3)
- ▶ 07/12 - 07/19 (2)
- ▶ 07/05 - 07/12 (5)

"Back Pain: From Conservative Therapy to Giant Surgery" at the Med School Café lecture on Tuesday, Oct. 20, at 11 a.m. The event will be held virtually.

Menger has a specific focus on complex spinal reconstructions for spinal deformity in children and adults. He performs minimally invasive spinal procedures and has a special expertise in the entire spectrum of state-of-the-art surgical and conservative management of pediatric scoliosis.

Menger is a fellowship-trained neurosurgeon with training in neurological and orthopedic spine surgery. He completed the advanced pediatric spinal deformity orthopedic fellowship at Columbia University Medical Center in New York. During his neurosurgery residency at Louisiana State University, he received additional training with an enfolded fellowship in pediatric spinal deformity at Shriners Hospital for Children.

To further his research mission, Menger received a Master of Public Administration from the Harvard Kennedy School of Government. His research focuses on operative techniques, clinical outcomes, and the intersection of policy and economics on the delivery of spine surgery.

To register for the lecture, use the [Zoom sign up link](#) or contact Kim Partridge at kepartridge@health.southalabama.edu.

Med School Café is a free community lecture series sponsored by USA Health. Each month, faculty and physicians share their expertise on a specific medical condition, providing insight on the latest treatment available.

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New breast surgical oncologist joins surgery faculty at USA College of Medicine



For Rachel Hunter, M.D., a love for science and service combined with a passion for women's health led her to a field where she now empowers her female patients to make decisions about their cancer care. After completing a residency at USA Health in general surgery in 2019, she now returns as a breast surgical oncologist and will offer several unique techniques to her patients.

Hunter, who is also an assistant professor of surgery at the University of South Alabama College of Medicine, earned a medical degree from the Texas A&M College of Medicine before beginning her general surgery internship at Houston Methodist Hospital. She then transferred to USA Health to finish her residency when her husband, John Hunter, M.D., a colorectal surgeon, became an assistant professor at USA. She recently completed her breast surgical oncology fellowship at Vanderbilt Medical Center in Nashville.

Hunter knew she wanted to be a doctor from a young age and found herself drawn to surgery while in medical school. After playing sports as a child, her

- ▶ 06/28 - 07/05 (2)
- ▶ 06/21 - 06/28 (4)
- ▶ 06/14 - 06/21 (3)
- ▶ 06/07 - 06/14 (2)
- ▶ 05/31 - 06/07 (3)
- ▶ 05/24 - 05/31 (4)
- ▶ 05/17 - 05/24 (2)
- ▶ 05/10 - 05/17 (5)
- ▶ 05/03 - 05/10 (3)
- ▶ 04/26 - 05/03 (3)
- ▶ 04/19 - 04/26 (2)
- ▶ 04/12 - 04/19 (5)
- ▶ 04/05 - 04/12 (4)
- ▶ 03/29 - 04/05 (3)
- ▶ 03/22 - 03/29 (3)
- ▶ 03/15 - 03/22 (3)
- ▶ 03/08 - 03/15 (2)
- ▶ 03/01 - 03/08 (6)
- ▶ 02/23 - 03/01 (6)
- ▶ 02/16 - 02/23 (4)
- ▶ 02/09 - 02/16 (3)
- ▶ 02/02 - 02/09 (5)
- ▶ 01/26 - 02/02 (4)
- ▶ 01/19 - 01/26 (5)
- ▶ 01/12 - 01/19 (6)
- ▶ 01/05 - 01/12 (4)

- ▶ 2019 (245)
- ▶ 2018 (236)
- ▶ 2017 (231)
- ▶ 2016 (206)
- ▶ 2015 (205)
- ▶ 2014 (241)
- ▶ 2013 (232)
- ▶ 2012 (245)
- ▶ 2011 (262)
- ▶ 2010 (247)
- ▶ 2009 (88)

experience working with teammates to achieve a common goal made being a surgeon in the operating room seem like a natural fit, she said. During residency, she focused even more on breast surgical oncology because it embodied everything she was searching for in a surgical profession.

"I have always been passionate about women's health," Hunter said. "As a woman, I feel that I can connect on a personal level with my patients and have a fundamental understanding of their needs and goals."

In conjunction with providing oncologic resections to her breast cancer patients, Hunter said she strives to implement the hidden scar technique whenever applicable to give the most aesthetic results.



She will also be providing a pectoral nerve block for patients undergoing a mastectomy – her skill set in this technique is new to USA Health and allows patients to have better pain control during and after surgery, which also helps patients use fewer narcotics.

"As an academic institution, we strive to provide the most up-to-date treatment modalities and stay current with the latest research," Hunter said. "The breast center at USA Health is expanding and pioneering the way for comprehensive breast care in the Mobile area."

In the breast care field, Hunter will work with a multidisciplinary team of medical and radiation oncologists and plastic surgeons to create an individualized plan for patients.

"When a new cancer patient comes to my clinic, my goal is that when they leave they will have an understanding of their diagnosis and prognosis, a plan in hand and all their questions and concerns answered," she said.

Hunter will also provide surgery services for benign breast disease.

Originally from Mineral Wells, Texas, she attended Tarleton State University in Stephenville, Texas, before attending graduate school at the University of North Texas Health Science Center Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences.

The Hunters live in Mobile with their dog, Remi. Her hobbies include working out, reading, attending concerts, being outdoors and traveling.

Hunter is accepting new patients. Call 251-660-5763 to schedule an appointment.

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