

# Med School Watercooler

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

Wednesday, June 2, 2021

## Medical students create video to answer COVID-19 vaccine questions in Spanish



With a goal of helping to alleviate vaccine hesitancy among members of the Spanish-speaking community, USA College of Medicine students created a video answering frequently asked questions about the COVID-19 vaccine in Spanish.

While more people are being vaccinated across the upper Gulf Coast every day, hesitancy remains. Alabama recently ranked next to last in the nation with fewer than 30 percent of the state's population vaccinated. Only Mississippi reported fewer residents vaccinated.

Elizabeth Hernandez, a third-year medical student at USA, and vice president of the Medical Spanish Interest Group, realized some people may not have enough information to make an informed choice about getting vaccinated.

"When I first found out about the vaccine I was very excited about receiving it and finally seeing some light at the end of this long, dark tunnel," she said. "However, I soon realized how wary some people were about the vaccine when I called home to let my family know that I would be in one of the first groups to receive it."

While she was able to offer her family members facts about the vaccine, she realized there were many others who weren't immediately able to receive this information from trusted sources. So Hernandez contacted Benjamin Estrada, M.D., a pediatric infectious diseases specialist at USA Health, and enlisted his help to create an informative flyer she shared on her social media pages, including Facebook.

Then, with assistance from the Medical Spanish Interest Group, and Juan Torres, cofounder of local immigrants support group BELONG, Hernandez decided to create a video in Spanish to answer frequently asked questions.

"It was such a fun process getting to work on the script with the rest of the group," she said. "We all brought ideas on what information we thought was most

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Medical students create video to  
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pertinent to our target population, especially regarding accessibility, insurance status, and even documentation status.”

The video has been viewed more than 1,500 times since it was posted in May 2021 on the USA Health Children’s & Women’s Hospital Facebook page.


Hernandez said it was important to debunk inaccurate myths swirling on social media about the vaccine: “The Latino population in Mobile continues to grow exponentially, so we hope that our efforts in sharing this information will encourage more people to get vaccinated and form part of the solution to this pandemic.”

Other medical students and faculty who took part in the video included Camila Ochoa, Jerry Garcia, Munsa Manandhar, Claire Johnson and Juan Ochoa, M.D., a neurologist at USA Health who is director of the SouthCEP Comprehensive Epilepsy Center and a professor of neurology in the USA College of Medicine. Torres, from BELONG, also was interviewed in the video.

The video’s introduction was given by Estrada, professor and vice chair of the USA Health Department of Pediatrics and assistant dean for educational strategies and faculty development. Estrada said he’s proud of the students for seeking proactive solutions during a global pandemic.

“We need to promote vaccinations among everyone and we need to make sure Spanish speaking populations are aware of the benefits of the vaccine,” he said. “We are fortunate that within the medical school we have a Medical Spanish Interest Group who were able to explain the benefits of the vaccine while also trying to answer some of the most common questions.”

View the video on Facebook here: <https://fb.watch/5TqLI FoW5/>

Posted by Med School Watercooler at 1:08 PM No comments: 

## Video online: 'Treating the Enlarged Prostate in the Modern Era'

Christopher Keel, D.O, F.A.C.S., adjunct assistant professor of surgery at the USA College of Medicine and a urologist at USA Health University Urology, presented “Treating the Enlarged Prostate in the Modern Era: Minimally Invasive Techniques” at a recent Med School Café lecture.

Watch the video of the presentation on YouTube or below.

Med School Café - Treating the Enlarged Prostate in the Mo...



Posted by Med School Watercooler at 10:05 AM No comments: 

Monday, May 31, 2021

## Meet a Med Student: Isabelle Delplanche

Isabelle Delplanche



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Meet a Med Student: Isabelle Delplanche

Faculty Spotlight: Abu-Bakr Al-Mehdi, M.D., Ph.D.

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**Age:** 23**Class of:** 2024**Hometown:** Portland, Ore.**Undergrad/grad institution:** Springfield**Degrees earned:** Bachelor of Science**Interests, hobbies:** Drawing, oil painting, reading**Something unique about me:** While on a service trip to Guatemala, I climbed to the top tower of the Basilica del Voto Nacional, despite being terrified of heights.**Three of my favorite things:** Coffee of any type, small fluffy animals, going to the beachPosted by Med School Watercooler at [12:35 PM](#) No comments: 

## Faculty Spotlight: Abu-Bakr Al-Mehdi, M.D., Ph.D.

**Abu-Bakr Al-Mehdi, M.D., Ph.D.****Academic title:** Professor of pharmacology**Joined the USA College of Medicine faculty:** January 2002**What does your position in the USA COM entail?**

Teaching, research and service

**What is your favorite or most rewarding part of your position?**

Seeing our medical students achieve outstanding results in their USMLE Step exams. Also, seeing them getting accepted to prestigious residency programs all around the United States.

**Are you involved in research or other initiatives in the College of Medicine?**

I collaborate with other researchers in fluorescence imaging, mentor medical students in the summer research program and advise Ph.D. students in their dissertation committees. In addition, I apply principles of psychometrics in the assessment of medical students' knowledge, skills and attitudes.


**What is your advice for medical students?**

Be curious about mechanisms of diseases and always stay focused on your learning.

**What are your hobbies/interests outside of work?**

Traveling (unfortunately restricted by COVID), gardening and fishing



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## Alumna reflects on groundbreaking career as a Black female gynecologic surgeon

As early as age 6, Patricia Sanders, M.D., knew she wanted to be a physician. Growing up in rural Alabama during the 1950s, though, she understood the odds weren't in her favor.

"During middle school, my principal Mr. Lorenzo McCarthy, saw something special in me," Sanders said. "He felt that my potential would not be challenged enough within a segregated public school system, and he encouraged me to attend a college prep school in Kentucky at the age of 14. So, I did. I moved away to receive a better education at the Berea College Preparatory Foundation School."

That decision set the stage for the rest of her life. Sanders was the first African American female to receive a pre-medical degree with a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa in 1972. Shortly after, she became the first African American female to receive a medical degree from the University of South Alabama College of Medicine in 1977, and ultimately she became the first African American female gynecologic surgeon in the state of Alabama.

Choosing to attend the USA College of Medicine was an easy decision, Sanders said: "Attending medical school as an African American during this time was still quite difficult, but USA offered me a slot and they really wanted me to attend. So I packed my things and went to medical school."

During her time at USA, Sanders said it never really sunk in that she would end up becoming the first female African American graduate at the USA College of Medicine, even though she didn't have any classmates who looked like her. "I was so young, I didn't fully understand the magnitude of what was taking place," she said. "I was just focused on becoming a physician."

Sanders went on to practice gynecologic surgery in Birmingham, Ala., in private practice for more than 35 years until she retired in 2017. While her job was rewarding, especially rendering care to rural patients across Alabama, she is most proud of becoming a mother at the age of 40.


For more than 30 years, she has served on the staffs of Baptist Princeton and Brookwood Medical Centers in Birmingham. She is the recipient of numerous awards including the Alabama Women Achiever's Award from the Southern Women's Archives. She also received the Women of Distinction Award from the Alpha Eta Chapter of the Iota Phi Lambda sorority Inc. She received the Medicine Award from the Omicron Omega Chapter of the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc., and was a recipient of the E.B. Goode Achievement Award from the Gulf Coast Intra-Medical Association. She is a lifetime grandfathered Board-Certified Fellow of the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology and a Diplomate of the National Board of Medical Examiners, and a Diplomate of the American Board of Obstetrics and Gynecology.

Although she retired from patient care, Sanders has no plans of slowing down anytime soon. She is currently exploring the facilitation of creating a modification of laparoscopic pelvic probes for the treatment of endometriosis, polycystic ovaries and pelvic disorders. She is also taking this time to write and publish her



Patricia Sanders, M.D., was the first African American female to graduate from the USA College of Medicine.

first memoir, chronicling her path of being a first Black female gynecologic surgeon in Alabama with its professional and personal challenges.

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