

Med School Watercooler

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

Wednesday, January 3, 2024

Meet a Med Student: Avery Silar

Avery Silar

Age: 24

Class: 2025

Hometown: Lafayette, Louisiana

Undergraduate education: B.S. in biomedical sciences, Auburn University

What do you enjoy most about being a medical student at the Whiddon College of Medicine?

I love the small class size. It allows for the opportunity to get to know everyone fairly well and creates a real sense of community.



Are you involved in any research, organizations or other initiatives at the Whiddon College of Medicine?

I am one of the M3 A&E student representatives to the curriculum committee, as well as chair of the student subcommittee of the curriculum committee. I also serve as vice president of the Family Planning & Reproductive Health Interest Group, and I recently became one of the M3 Peer Academic Leaders (PALs).

What are your interests and hobbies?

Reading, walking, yoga, thrifting

What is something unique about you?

I rode horses competitively throughout my childhood/teenage years and was even homeschooled for a while to be able to travel to more competitions throughout the year.



Pediatric ear, nose and throat specialist joins faculty

USA Health is expanding its ear, nose and throat division with the addition of Douglas K. Holmes, M.D., a board-certified otolaryngologist with decades of experience in military and academic medicine, as well as private practice.

Holmes will serve as director of [pediatric ENT surgery at USA Health](#) and associate professor in the departments of surgery and pediatrics at the Whiddon College of Medicine. While he will provide a wide range of ENT care, Holmes will specialize in complex pediatric ENT medicine and surgery. This includes upper airway and breathing problems, neck masses (including deep neck abscess), and pediatric otology (ear disorders and infections, hearing loss, and implantable hearing aids including cochlear implants).

"My goal is to direct, grow and sustain an academic otolaryngology division while providing comprehensive, state-of-the-art pediatric ENT care," he said. "We recognize there are many excellent ENT surgeons in our community doing very nice work. We wish to be a resource for those complicated cases needing the resources of an academic health system."

Holmes said he also seeks to provide an ENT home for USA and USA Health employees and to be a readily available source for referrals from medical colleagues at USA Health. "We also hope to support those colleagues as necessary with their ENT needs in combined procedures," he said.

Ear, nose and throat specialists care for patients with conditions such as ear infections, tonsillitis, sinusitis, obstructive breathing, neck masses, and chronic hoarseness.

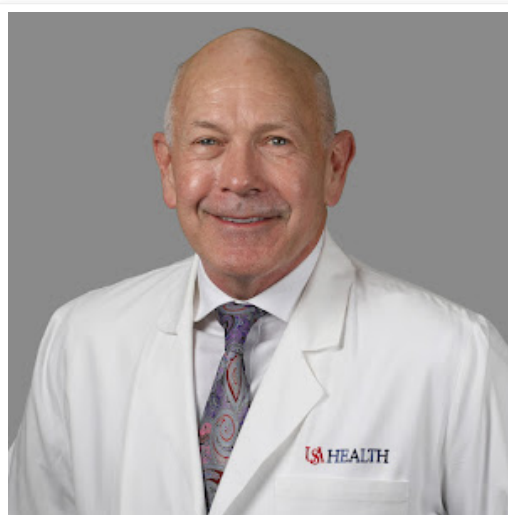
"Dr. Holmes' expertise and years of experience will help us grow our ENT services as an academic health system," said William O. Richards, M.D., professor and chair of surgery at the Whiddon College of Medicine. "He also brings a passion for educating future physicians and preparing them to be successful in the field."

Holmes said he looks forward to teaching and mentoring medical students during all four years of their educational experience. "I want every medical student to graduate with the experience and background to be able to diagnose and take care of routine ENT problems and to recognize ENT urgencies and emergencies so as to enlist help from their ENT consultants," he said.

Holmes said the division's long-term goals are to recruit other fellowship-trained ENT surgeons in all areas of the specialty and to eventually start an ENT residency program.

He most recently worked in private practice in Raleigh, North Carolina, and served as an assistant professor of otolaryngology at the UNC School of Medicine in Chapel Hill. He previously was director of the Department of Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery at Wake Area Health Education Center/Wake Medical Center in Raleigh.

Holmes also served eight years in active duty in the U.S. Air Force and 22 years in the Air Force Reserves. He was commander of the 916th Aerospace Medicine Squadron at Seymour Johnson Air Force Base in North Carolina, retiring with the rank of colonel.



Douglas K. Holmes, M.D.

He previously served as chief of Head and Neck Oncology and Pediatric Otolaryngology at David Grant USAF Medical Center at Travis Air Force Base in California. Prior to that appointment, he was chief of Otolaryngology Services at USAF Regional Hospital at Elmendorf Air Force Base in Alaska and a consultant otolaryngologist at the Alaska Native Medical Center in Anchorage.

Holmes earned his medical degree from the UNC School of Medicine in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. He completed a general surgery internship and ENT residency at the University of Iowa Hospital and Clinics, where he trained in the nation's top-ranked program. Holmes also completed an intensive fellowship year in pediatric otolaryngology at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center.

He is a member of the American College of Surgeons and the American Academy of Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery.

Holmes will have office hours for clinic visits at [USA Health Midtown](#). He also will have privileges at USA Health Children's & Women's Hospital to perform consultations on inpatients with complex ENT problems and elective outpatient surgery.

Posted by [Med School Watercooler](#) at [10:08 AM](#)



Brewer returns to Whiddon COM as interim chair of orthopaedic surgery

Jeffrey L. Brewer, M.D., has returned to USA Health, where he serves as interim chair of the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery and an associate professor of orthopaedic surgery at the Whiddon College of Medicine.

A board-certified orthopaedic surgeon, Brewer served as an attending physician at USA Health from 2015 to 2022 and directed the orthopaedic surgery residency program from 2019 to 2022.

"My vision for the department is to provide high-quality patient care and to continue to grow our services," Brewer said. "This is an opportunity to come back to Mobile and help people in the community."

Brewer most recently was an assistant professor of orthopaedic surgery at the University of Miami's health system, UHealth, where he served on the Orthopaedic Residency Curriculum Competency Committee and the Leadership Steering Committee for the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery.

"As an academic health system, USA Health's mission is to not only provide excellent healthcare for our community but also to nurture the next generation of physicians," said John V. Marymont, M.D., M.B.A., vice president for medical affairs and dean of the Whiddon College of Medicine. "Dr. Brewer brings demonstrated skills both as a leader and a mentor."

Owen Bailey, MSHA, FACHE, USA Health chief executive officer and senior associate vice president for medical affairs, welcomed Brewer back to USA Health. "We look forward to working with him as we build upon the growth of orthopaedic surgery and the health system in general," he said.



Jeffrey L. Brewer, M.D.

Brewer earned his medical degree from the University of Kansas School of Medicine in Kansas City, Kansas, and completed an internship in general and orthopaedic surgery. He finished his residency in orthopaedic surgery at SUNY Stony Brook University Hospital in Stony Brook, New York, where he was named the department's Resident of the Year for 2011-2012. He also completed a fellowship in orthopaedic trauma at the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston.

Brewer is an author of several academic journal articles and book chapters. He has presented research at numerous conferences, including when he served as a mentor to orthopaedic surgery residents at USA Health.

Posted by Med School Watercooler at [10:01AM](#)



Group to focus on climate and health in Alabama

Walker Plash, M.D., an assistant professor of emergency medicine at the Whiddon College of Medicine, is working with the [Medical Society Consortium on Climate & Health](#) to establish a professional group in Alabama focused on climate change and health in the state.



The mission of the consortium is to mobilize and amplify the voices of doctors in the United States, in partnership with public health experts and other health professionals, to successfully advocate for equitable climate solutions that protect and promote the health of all people.

"We are still deciding exactly what the Alabama chapter will look like, but ultimately, we want to improve the health and well-being of our patients through education and advocacy," Plash said.

The group plans to meet in January to discuss its goals and objectives, what has been done so far, and what the next steps should be. If you are interested, [fill out the Google form](#) with your availability and the level of involvement in which you are interested.