



**TO:** University Senate  
**FROM:** William Wertheim, MD, MBA  
Executive Vice President for Stony Brook Medicine  
**DATE:** April 7, 2025  
**SUBJECT:** SBM EVP Report

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## ACADEMIC UPDATES

### **Renaissance School of Medicine Hosts Women in Medicine and Science Research Day**

The RSOM's Office of Faculty Affairs and the Group for Women in Medicine and Science hosted the 19th annual Women in Medicine and Science (WIMS) Research Day at the Health Sciences Tower on March 5. Organized with the aim of celebrating basic, translational, and clinical research in medicine and science; strengthening collaboration; and providing a venue for interaction and camaraderie for women physicians and scientists, the event was tremendously successful and extremely well-attended. Keynote speaker Merit Cudkowicz, Chief of Neurology at Massachusetts General Hospital, Director of the Sean M. Healey & AMG Center for ALS, and Julieanne Dorn Professor of Neurology at Harvard Medical School, presented "ALS 2025—New Insights in Biology and Treatments," a hybrid presentation that was viewed by more than 200 people online. In addition, Dr. Cudkowicz was part of a robust discussion on "Connecting and Supporting" with other RSOM panelists, and 113 abstracts in seven categories were submitted by faculty, staff, fellows, residents, postdoctoral associates, and graduate, medical and undergraduate students.

### **School of Health Professions Hosts Women in Healthcare Alumni Panel Event**

SHP hosted the Women in Healthcare Alumni Panel, "Impact of Women in Healthcare," a collaboration between the SHP Alumni Relations Committee, SBU Alumni Association, and SHP Office of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging. The panel featured three women alumni from SHP who have made notable impacts in the healthcare space—clinical practice, education, research or healthcare administration:

- Lynn Keil '93; Physician Assistant; Lead Provider, Hudson Headwaters Health Network
- Melissa H. Molina-Trinidad '09; Senior Program Coordinator, General Surgery Residency and Pediatric Surgery Fellowship, Columbia University Irving Medical Center
- Tobi Owotomo '22; Physical Therapist/Athletic Trainer, Oklahoma City Thunder (NBA)



### **Renaissance School of Medicine Celebrates Successful Match Day**

The RSOM celebrated an outstanding 2025 Match Day on March 21 in the Baumann Center for Leadership and Service. This cherished annual tradition, observed simultaneously by medical schools nationwide, saw 130 graduating students open their envelopes to discover their residency placements. From this impressive 99% match rate, the School's students matched to residency programs in 18 states, with more than half (55%) staying in New York and 14% continuing their training at Stony Brook Medicine. Notably, 27% of students matched in primary care specialties—an ongoing RSOM match trend that helps address a critical community need.

It was also a remarkable match for the School's residency programs. All 158 positions offered in the categorical residency programs at Stony Brook University Hospital, Stony Brook Children's Hospital and Stony Brook Southampton Hospital were filled - a 100% fill rate that underscores the exceptional quality of Stony Brook's residency programs and the deep commitment of faculty, staff and learners to graduate medical education.

### **Renaissance School of Medicine Rises in NIH Funding Rankings**

The RSOM's national ranking in NIH funding increased by seven positions this year, reflecting a 27% increase in awards and totaling up to a substantial \$61.1 million in funding. In addition to being the top-ranked public medical school in New York State and ranking in the top 50 among US public universities, the departments of Anesthesiology, Microbiology and Immunology, and Biochemistry and Cell Biology ranked above the 50th percentile nationally, while the departments of Psychiatry and Behavioral Health and Pharmacological Services ranked nationally in the 55th and 52nd percentiles, respectively.

### **Medical Humanities, Compassionate Care, and Bioethics Program Recognized**

The Master of Arts in Medical Humanities, Compassionate Care and Bioethics program has been ranked #7 nationally in the 2025 Best Bioethics/Medical Ethics Master's Degree Programs by College Factual. This recognition highlights the program's continued excellence and the dedication of its faculty and staff. Under the leadership of Founding Director Stephen G. Post and Associate Director Maria Basile, the program has grown into one of the top-ranked in the country. This May, the program will celebrate another significant milestone, with 16 students graduating with the MD-MA joint degree and an additional dozen earning the MA alone—an achievement that reflects its increasing impact.

### **Clare Whitney Named 2025 Macy Faculty Scholar**

Dr. Clare Whitney, assistant professor in the SON and affiliated faculty member in the RSOM's Center for Medical Humanities, Compassionate Care and Bioethics, has been named a 2025 Macy Faculty Scholar. Selected as one of five nationwide, she will receive mentorship and professional development to enhance her leadership in nursing education. Her work focuses on

reducing healthcare professional burnout and improving well-being. Her Macy project centers on developing and evaluating the Alda Healthcare Experience for Nursing (AHE-N), an interprofessional communication skills training program. The Josiah Macy Jr. Foundation supports projects aimed at improving education in the health professions.

#### **Jim Liu Receives \$2.6 million NIH Award to Explore Hemorrhagic Stroke**

The National Institutes of Health has awarded Ke Jian “Jim” Liu, PhD, Associate Director for Basic Science at Stony Brook Cancer Center and Professor in the RSOM’s Department of Pathology, a grant of more than \$2.6 million to lead his study, “Endogenous zinc protoporphyrin in intracerebral hemorrhage.” Supported by the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, Dr. Liu’s research investigates a novel molecular mechanism of brain damage induced by hemorrhagic stroke and explores the potential repurposing of FDA-approved cancer drugs as a treatment for this disease. The study began last year on December 1 and will continue through November 30, 2029.

#### **Maurizio Del Poeta and Team Awarded \$750K NIH grant to Explore Infection Prevention**

Maurizio Del Poeta, Professor for the RSOM’s Department of Microbiology and Immunology, has been awarded a \$749,594 NIH grant to lead a team of Stony Brook co-investigators in the study “Sphingosine kinase and cryptococcal granuloma.” Dr. Del Poeta’s research team includes departmental colleague Brian Sheridan; Iwao Ojima, Distinguished Professor and Director, Department of Chemistry at Stony Brook University; Michael V. Ariola, Assistant Professor, Department of Biochemistry and Cell Biology; Chiara Luberto, Associate Professor, Department of Physiology and Biophysics; and Robert Rizzo, Professor, Applied Mathematics & Statistics. Together, they will investigate the sphingosine kinase 1 (SK1) pathway and its role in controlling *Cryptococcus neoformans* (Cn) infections during immunodeficiency. Dr. Del Poeta’s research aims to identify potential therapeutic targets to prevent infections in the immunocompromised.

#### **Linda Mermelstein Designated Long Island Health Collaborative Community Champion**

Linda Mermelstein has [received the Long Island Health Collaborative \(LIHC\) 2nd annual Community Champion designation](#) during its quarterly meeting last December. Recognized for her outstanding contributions to community health, Dr. Mermelstein has played a vital role in health-needs assessments, educational programs like “Walk With a Doc,” and various LIHC initiatives. As Associate Director for Community Outreach and Engagement at Stony Brook Cancer Center, Dr. Mermelstein continues to make a significant impact on improving health outcomes across Long Island.

#### **Community Impact: Dr. Ginex's Medical Mission in Comayagua**

Dr. Pamlea Ginex joined a medical mission in Comayagua, Honduras, providing care to approximately 500 people. The team, including nurses and physicians, focused on women and



children at a local clinic, with Dr. Ginex working in triage. The mission, organized by Shelter Rock Church and associated with the Guardian Angels Family Crisis Center, also included construction and children's activity teams. Serving a community with high poverty rates, the mission emphasized community service and follow-up care.

#### **Renaissance School of Medicine Hosts Academy of Clinical & Educational Scholars Retreat**

The RSOM's Office of Faculty Affairs hosted the 2025 Academy of Clinical & Educational Scholars (ACES) Retreat on March 27 at the Stony Brook Hilton Garden Inn. The event featured keynote speaker Dr. Anish Agarwal, Assistant Professor and Chief Wellness Officer of Emergency Medicine at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania, and deputy director of the Centre for Insights to Outcomes at Penn Medicine. Dr. Agarwal, whose research explores the intersection of digital and mobile health and acute care delivery, presented his lecture "Human-Centered Health Care: Engaging Patients and Clinicians to Improve Care in a Digital World." Since its founding by Drs. Miriam and David Donoho in 2014, ACES has been dedicated to enhancing the educational mission of the Renaissance School of Medicine.

#### **School of Social Welfare Program Hosts Annual Human Rights Day**

As a major component of two core social work courses: Community Learning and Professional Preparation, the SSW [hosted its annual Bachelor of Social Welfare program Human Rights Day](#), bringing students, faculty, and guest speakers together to explore the theme of Economic Justice: A Cornerstone of Universal Human Rights and brought this critical topic to the forefront of campus conversation. The day's events included interactive workshops, and opportunities for students to engage in meaningful conversations about income inequality, community participation, and social programs that promote economic justice, and a thought-provoking keynote address by Dr. Savi Bisnath, Senior Director of Global Policy, Institute on Race, Power, and Political Economy at The New School.

#### **School Of Nursing Honor Society Chapter Recognized for Outstanding Community Service**

The SON's Sigma Theta Tau Kappa Gamma Chapter has been honored with the North America Region 14 Sigma Chapter Excellence Award, recognizing their outstanding community service. This prestigious award celebrates the chapter's unwavering dedication and impactful initiatives. Sigma Kappa Gamma has demonstrated a profound commitment to positive change. Their countless endeavors have made a significant difference in the community, reflecting the chapter's desire to serve with excellence.

#### **Rachel Gmelin '26, Occupational Therapy, Receives American OT Foundation Scholarship**

Rachel Gmelin '26 was the proud recipient of the 2025 Carolyn Kohn Memorial Scholarship from the American Occupational Therapy Foundation. Rachel's outstanding scholarship and leadership, both in and out of the classroom earned her this prestigious honor. Rachel's [most](#)



[prominent aspiration](#) is to work as a hand therapist, making a tangible impact on peoples' lives by helping them to regain functional use of their hands following an injury or diagnosis.

### **School of Social Welfare Celebrates Social Work Month and Women's History Month**

In honor of Social Work month and Women's History month, the SSW planned events and special programming including a social media campaign spotlighting faculty and staff sharing some of their experiences and accomplishments and reflecting on what Women's History Month and Social Work month mean to them. Snacks and social events focused on self-care and a speaker series with experts in addiction, trauma, and scholarship/fellowship opportunities were held throughout the month. SSW student organizations hosted food and clothing drives, and a Bachelor of Social Work class social action project focused on supporting incarcerated individuals transitioning back into society.

### **"So, You Want to Attend Medical School?"**

On Friday, April 11, the RSOM and the Office of Diversity, Inclusion and Intercultural Initiatives (DI3) will sponsor their annual free, all-day conference for pre-medical students, "So, You Want to Attend Medical School?" in the MART Auditorium. Medical faculty and students will lead discussions and panels covering the application process, preparation strategies, financing options, research opportunities and more. Breakfast and lunch will be provided during the conference, which welcomes students from SBU, Suffolk County Community College, Hofstra University, St. John's University and SUNY Old Westbury.

### **Interprofessional Event Trains Students in Collaborative Care**

School of Social Welfare Associate Professor Kathleen Monahan was a featured presenter at the School of Nursing on the topic of responding to disasters and emergencies and the collaboration among healthcare professionals. Dr. Monahan discussed psychological first aid and collaborations between nurses and other responders.

## **CLINICAL UPDATES**

### ***Outreach:***

- **Advocacy in Albany:** Dr. Wertheim was in Albany in February to advocate to legislators about Stony Brook Medicine's priorities in the state budget. They include:
  - Capital debt service which is in good position to be secured again this year. The SUNY academic campuses are not charged capital debt service, but the hospitals are. Each year we have to ask if it can be waived, and we've been successful for the past few years getting it forgiven, freeing up about \$23M each year.
  - Research capital
  - DSH funding.



- FEMA-reimbursement.
  - Impact of NIH A&F funding cuts.
- Dr. Wertheim has been conducting outreach to town supervisors to educate them about how Stony Brook Medicine provides health care access to their residents. He also discussed local needs for access and areas SBM seeks to grow. Other discussions include workforce housing needs and partnerships with local school districts for student mental health care support.
  - East Hampton Town Supervisor Kathee Burke-Gonzalez: Discussion also included an update on the East Hampton Emergency Department scheduled to open in the Spring of 2025. Supervisor Burke-Gonzalez invited Dr. Wertheim to an upcoming board meeting to provide an overview of SBM's efforts on the South Fork. The Board meeting will be aired across the Town of East Hampton. (Emily Mastaler, Chief Administrative Officer, Stony Brook Southampton Hospital and Dr. Todd Griffin, Vice President Clinical Affairs/Vice Dean Clinical Services joined Dr. Wertheim at this meeting.)
  - Islip Town Supervisor Angie Carpenter: As a result of this meeting, Supervisor Carpenter requested that Dr. Wertheim and Dr. Griffin meet with the Town of Islip Commissioner of Planning who is coordinating the Town's new master plan. The Commissioner is seeking Stony Brook's input on healthcare access needs in Islip.
- **National Doctors Day** was celebrated on March 30<sup>th</sup>. SBM is proud of the dedication, expertise, and compassion of our physicians and the ways they make a lasting impact on our patients and communities.

#### ***Stony Brook University Hospital Quality Assessment Review Board (QARB)***

- Dr. Wertheim welcomed Hon. Paul Tonna and Ms. Christina Vargas as new members of the Board. They attended their first meeting on March 28, 2025. The QARB meets quarterly.
- The March agenda included updates on government advocacy on the federal, state and local levels along with a mid-year goals report update for SBM. A quality report was provided by Dr. Eric Morley, Chief Quality Officer.

#### ***Joint Advisory Councils***

- Both the Stony Brook Eastern Long Island Hospital and Stony Brook Southampton Hospital Joint Advisory Council's met in February. Both received an update on budget issues and mid-year goals.

#### ***AWARDS, ACCOLADES & NEWS:***

- Stony Brook University Hospital's Emergency Department (ED) has received Level 1 Accreditation for Geriatric Emergency Care by the American College of Emergency





Physicians (ACEP), one of only two hospitals in Suffolk County to achieve this status.

Hospitals earning a Level One Gold accreditation deliver the highest-quality, person-centered care, within the ED and throughout the institution, to older adults in their community, through geriatric-specific initiatives tied to policies, guidelines, procedures, and staffing.

Data from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey shows the senior citizens population is continuing to grow on Long Island. Between 2019 and 2023, an estimated 36.9 percent of total households included one individual who was 65 or older in Suffolk County, an increase of 3.4 percent compared to the five-year period ending 2018. The median age in the county, 42 years, is 10 percent higher than the national average.

Stony Brook's ED has developed several policies, standards and evidence-based practices with an emphasis on delivering age-appropriate care. Some of these initiatives include comprehensive fall assessment and prevention protocols, pain management focused on geriatric-specific pain control measures and alternatives to minimize use of urinary catheters. In addition, the ED promotes access to nutrition 24/7 for older adults, has developed standardized discharge protocols addressing age-specific communication needs and has limited the use of physical restraints by incorporating trained companions/sitters.

The Renaissance School of Medicine at Stony Brook University expands the institution's mission of providing seniors with the opportunity to live healthy, fulfilling lives. In 2023, the Stony Brook Center for Healthy Aging (CHA) was created to develop a better understanding of the biology, physiology, sociology and psychology of aging through research and innovation. Bringing together Stony Brook researchers conducting studies related to aging, the mission of the CHA is to improve methods for earlier interventions so seniors can age in their own homes and with a high quality of life. It also aims to develop new treatments – including potentially utilizing robots – to ensure Long Island's seniors receive the highest quality care.

- Stony Brook University employees who marked milestones of 25 years or more of service in 2024 were honored with a Service Recognition Luncheon on February 27<sup>th</sup> at the Bauman Center for Leadership and Service. The annual event celebrated the commitment and contributions of 465 employees, whose dedication has helped shape the university into the top-ranked public institution in New York. Among them, three employees celebrated an incredible 55 years of service. Interim President Richard L. McCormick expressed his gratitude to the honorees, emphasizing their role in Stony Brook's continued growth and excellence.
- Stony Brook Medicine was recertified with the SOAP Center of Excellence (COE) designation. The COE Subcommittee recognized Stony Brook University Hospital as



meeting COE standards established by SOAP for tertiary/referral centers. The goal of the SOAP Centers of Excellence is to recognize institutions and programs that demonstrate excellent obstetric anesthesia care. SBUH presented this unique SOAP initiative that aims to acknowledge and promote excellence in the provision of safe and effective obstetric anesthesia care. The designation is based on current clinical practice or proposed changes as presented in your application, including any clarifications submitted in response to the reviewer's recommendations. Continued, ongoing education in obstetric anesthesiology is an important part of SOAP Centers of Excellence. Applications were subject to a rigorous and transparent review process. Two reviewers drawn from the SOAP COE committee independently evaluated each re-certification, scoring each of the criteria for COE designation as well as providing comments regarding areas for improvement. These reviews were subsequently discussed by the full SOAP COE subcommittee. Centers deemed to have deficiencies in key COE criteria were allowed to clarify their practices and/or provide plans for immediate improvements. All clarifications were further discussed, and final decisions were made, reaching a consensus within the SOAP COE subcommittee. Stony Brook University Hospital will be presented with a supplementary plaque to commemorate receiving the SOAP Center of Excellence designation recertification.

#### **OPERATIONAL UPDATES:**

##### **Emergency Medicine:**

- On Friday, February 28, 2025, Paramedic Supervisor Jason Hoffman was honored by the Long Island Business News as one of this year's Health Care Heroes. He was presented with an award for his work with Stony Brook Medicine's Mobile Stroke Unit. This specialty care ambulance provides lifesaving assessment and care to patients experiencing strokes throughout Suffolk County.
- In anticipation of the opening of the Stony Brook East Hampton Emergency Department, the EMS department is working closely with police and EMS agencies on the South Fork. While the new emergency department will be a full service, 24/7 department, there are several clinical conditions, such as trauma and stroke, which ideally will continue to be brought by ambulance to the Stony Brook Southampton Emergency Department. We are providing educational sessions to the EMS providers in the region to properly identify the most appropriate destination decisions for all patients.

##### **Nursing:**

- Michael Davison, MS RN NEA-BC, Assistant Vice President of Nursing for Surgical and Procedural Services had an abstract accepted for presentation at the Eastern Nursing Research Society (ENRS) 37th Annual Scientific Sessions in April in Philadelphia. ENRS is dedicated to creating a community of researchers and scholars interested in advancing nursing science in the eastern region of the United States. The title of the presentation





is “The Challenges of Co-Morbid Mental Illness on the Nursing Care of Acute Cardiac Inpatients: An Integrative Review.”

- Two abstracts have been accepted for presentation at the upcoming Magnet Conference. John Poma, RN has been selected to present “Ease the Pressure! The Impact of QR Code-Based Low Air Loss Mattress Education on Staff Knowledge and Pressure Injury Rates” at the 2025 Pathway to Excellence and Magnet Conference in Atlanta, Georgia this fall. A second Abstract was accepted titled “Believe in Zero: Clostridium Difficile Infection Prevention Cleaning Bundle on a Bone Marrow Transplant Unit.” The authors of this abstract were Josephine Beaudry CNS and Taylor Andrews, NM for the Bone Marrow Transplant Unit.

#### Quality:

##### Sepsis Workgroup

- The Sepsis Workgroup reviews Severe Sepsis and Septic Shock cases for CMS SEP-1 bundle compliance. Stony Brook University Hospital CMS SEP-1 compliance to the sepsis bundle elements has been trending down - challenged with the blood culture bottle shortage in Q3 and Q4 2024.
- Clinical Documentation Integrity reviews all sepsis cases for documentation opportunities and real-time validation of cases.
- The Septic Shock addendum Powernote was revised to match new guidance from CMS and to standardize documentation related to fluid resuscitation and septic shock management.
- Sepsis Powerplan updated with reference text related to the sepsis management bundle and added the blood culture powerplan and the urinalysis with reflex to culture order.
  - Ongoing education: Sepsis Education reaching participants via The Pulse, LMS & core outreach.
- Adult and Pediatric Severe Sepsis asynchronous education distributed by The Pulse.
- Implemented annual learning management modules (LMS) for Licensed Providers (LIPs), Nurses and Pharmacy staff.
- Resident training on the recognition and treatment of severe sepsis and septic shock for all incoming Residents.
- Severe Sepsis Septic Shock Education extended to SBSH and SBELIH with monthly CMS SEP-1 data discussion.
- MD-Notify MD Suspicion of Sepsis Nurse education incorporated in Nursing Orientation.
- Sepsis education published “Click and learn: a longitudinal interprofessional case-based sepsis education curriculum” BMJ Open Quality 2024;13: e002859. doi:10.1136/bmjopen-2024-002859.

- Sepsis Education poster presentation at IHI Forum 2024.

### Readmissions Workgroup Accomplishments

#### Recent Initiatives:

- **Post-Discharge Call Center:** A formal process was initiated to build a centralized post discharge call center (DCC) to serve as a hub upon which to link additional transition of care initiatives.

The DCC succeeded in standardizing post-discharge phone calls, delivering high-quality high-reliability calls paired with robust real-time data collection. More than 5000 patients have been called with an 80 percent contact rate since the inauguration of this DCC in August 2023. The DCC maintains a robust real-time scorecard on all patients contacted, which captures discreet information about each of the four categories covered in the call including health status, medication management, discharge instructions/follow up recommendations, and home services. This score card is central in allowing important real-time feedback on additional initiatives addressing transition of care.

- The data collection model of the DCC has served as a template for other QI projects developed by the Readmissions CQI group, specifically an intervention incorporating clinical pharmacists in the discharge pathway. The clinical pharmacist interventions of the medication reconciliations are being collected real time on a score card that has proven to help reduce readmissions.
- **Integration of Clinical Pharmacist into discharge of high-risk patients:** A pharmacist has completed medications reconciliation on over 900 patients in 2024. Identifying and resolving many social and medicine related issues which eventually contributed to improved readmissions rate.
- **Improved Utilization of Hospital Observation:** Case management is working on improving the utilization of hospital observation status correctly. The goal is to admit or discharge hospital observation encounters within 48 hours. From January 2024 till January 2025, we have improved our Hospital observation measure per month of discharge from 63 percent to 74 percent.

#### Collaboration with Disease-Specific Readmissions group:

- **Heart Failure:** Readmissions workgroup collaborated with the Heart Failure group allowing them an opportunity to share their accomplishments and work to improve heart failure related readmissions at the monthly meeting.
- **Pneumonia:** This group meets bimonthly and has developed targeted outreach to patients at SB Primary Care Center to expedite contact and follow up office visits for PNA patients' post-discharge. Currently working on developing a standardized readmit audit tool.



- COPD: This workgroup meets monthly and developed educational tools and discharge instructions for the patients. They have a 75 percent completion rate for the educational consults order placed from June 2023 till Dec 2024 for inpatient referrals. They coordinated with DCC to extend education post discharge and promoted use of formal