2024-2025 Golden Stethoscope Nomination

Nominated for: Fostering Curiosity

Name of Nominee Dr. Sophia Ambruso

It is with tremendous respect and heartfelt enthusiasm that I nominate Dr. Sophia Ambruso, DO, an Associate Professor of Medicine - Renal Med Diseases / Hypertension Specialist at Rockey Mountain Regional VA Medical Center and the University of Colorado School of Medicine, for the 2024–2025 Golden Stethoscope Award in Fostering Curiosity.

As my clinical preceptor during my first year at the University of Colorado School of Medicine, Dr. Ambruso played a defining role in shaping my approach to learning and inquiry in the clinical setting. Her deep-rooted passion for medical education radiates through her teaching, inspiring students like myself not just to learn, but to question, explore, and engage with medicine in a profoundly curious way. Her passion to engage and educate medical students, residents, and fellows, has been specifically exemplified through her research in medical education and recent grant award to develop an online kidney physiology learning tool, "ABC Kidney", which our class was the first to experience and utilize during our Renal Course earlier this year!

Dr. Ambruso's exceptional ability to transform clinical encounters into meaningful learning experiences was nothing short of transformative. She never missed an opportunity to turn a simple patient interaction into a teachable moment, encouraging me step out of my comfort zone and to dig deeper and think critically about physiology, pathology, and patient care. This trust in me and my abilities, as well as her safe learning environment, helped me grow into a medical student ready to take on clerkships and the clinical space next year. Her teaching methods and questions invited investigation, dialogue, and active learning and this environment of curiosity fostered a genuine excitement within me around medicine that I am sure will stay with me throughout my career.

Additionally, what truly distinguishes Dr. Ambruso is her seamless integration of teaching and compassionate care. Her dedication to the veteran population she serves goes beyond exemplary clinical practice. She embodies a model of shared decision-making, empowering patients through education and ensuring they understand their health and treatment options. Watching her engage with patients as clinician, teacher, and shared-decision maker, underscored how curiosity doesn’t just live in lecture halls or textbooks — it thrives in the clinic and at the bedside.

Dr. Ambruso is beloved by her colleagues and patients alike, and it’s clear why. Her intelligence is matched only by her empathy, and her devotion to mentoring the next generation of physicians is tireless. The foundation of curiosity she helped me build has influenced how I interact with patients, how I think through clinical problems, and how I continue to seek out opportunities to learn and teach the future generation of trainees and patients.

Dr. Ambruso’s unwavering commitment to nurturing curiosity, elevating patient-centered care, and teaching and inspiring future physicians makes her a more than deserving candidate for of the Golden Stethoscope Award in Fostering Curiosity.

Written by: Ashley Pietra, CUSOM MD Class of 2028

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