2024-2025 Golden Stethoscope Nomination

Nominated for: Outstanding Role Model

Name of Nominee Dr. Claire Schmitz

I am writing with great enthusiasm to recommend Dr. Claire Schmitz for the “Outstanding Role Model” award. During my clinical rotation under her supervision, I have witnessed and personally benefited from her exceptional dedication to education, mentorship, and patient care. She exemplifies what it means to be a compassionate and effective educator, and her commitment to developing the next generation of clinicians is nothing short of inspiring.

Dr. Schmitz consistently creates an environment that fosters active learning and critical thinking. She provides me the space to interview patients first and take the time I need to think through their presentation before discussing the case. After I present the patient, she asks thoughtful, guiding questions that lead me to re-examine my reasoning. Afterward, she walks me through the entire clinical decision-making process from the moment the patient was picked up by EMS, to their arrival in the ER, all the way through to our hospitalization plan. This level of detail has taught me how to approach cases from the perspective of physicians of different specialties. Furthermore, she encourages me to review imaging studies and form a differential diagnosis before she offers her own interpretation. This has not only sharpened my clinical reasoning but has also given me the confidence to trust my instincts while being open to learning.

Moreover, Dr. Schmitz has taken the time to teach me nuances of patient care that are rarely addressed in formal medical education. For example, she’s demonstrated how to gently and effectively wake patients during overnight shifts to obtain necessary information, and how to have difficult but essential conversations with patients and families about code status and end-of-life care. Her example has helped me navigate these encounters with sensitivity and professionalism.

She also pushes me to refine my interviewing skills, especially when patients present with vague or non-specific symptoms. Her feedback is constructive and specific, helping me identify key questions and phrasing that uncover crucial clinical details. Throughout all of this, she consistently encourages me to think deeply, act with integrity, and bring my best effort to every patient encounter.

Dr. Schmitz has shown me the type of doctor I would love to be in the future. She has left a lasting impact on my medical education, and I know I am far from the only student who has been profoundly shaped by her mentorship. I wholeheartedly and without reservation recommend her for this honor.

Written by: Danielle Pham

University of Colorado
Anschutz Medical Campus