



Rural Program

SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO

ANSCHUTZ MEDICAL CAMPUS

September 2024

Hello Rural Program Friends,

As we transition into the new academic year, we have some exciting updates and events to share with you.

First, CUSOM hosted our LIC Faculty Appreciation and Awards Dinner on September 19. It was a wonderful evening dedicated to honoring the hard work and dedication of our faculty members, and we were delighted to have some of our Rural Program friends from around the state join us.

Next, we enjoyed what we hope will be a new tradition, a Rural Program Fall Picnic for all four classes of our current students, faculty, and staff. It was great to see so many of our students and for them to have the opportunity to connect.

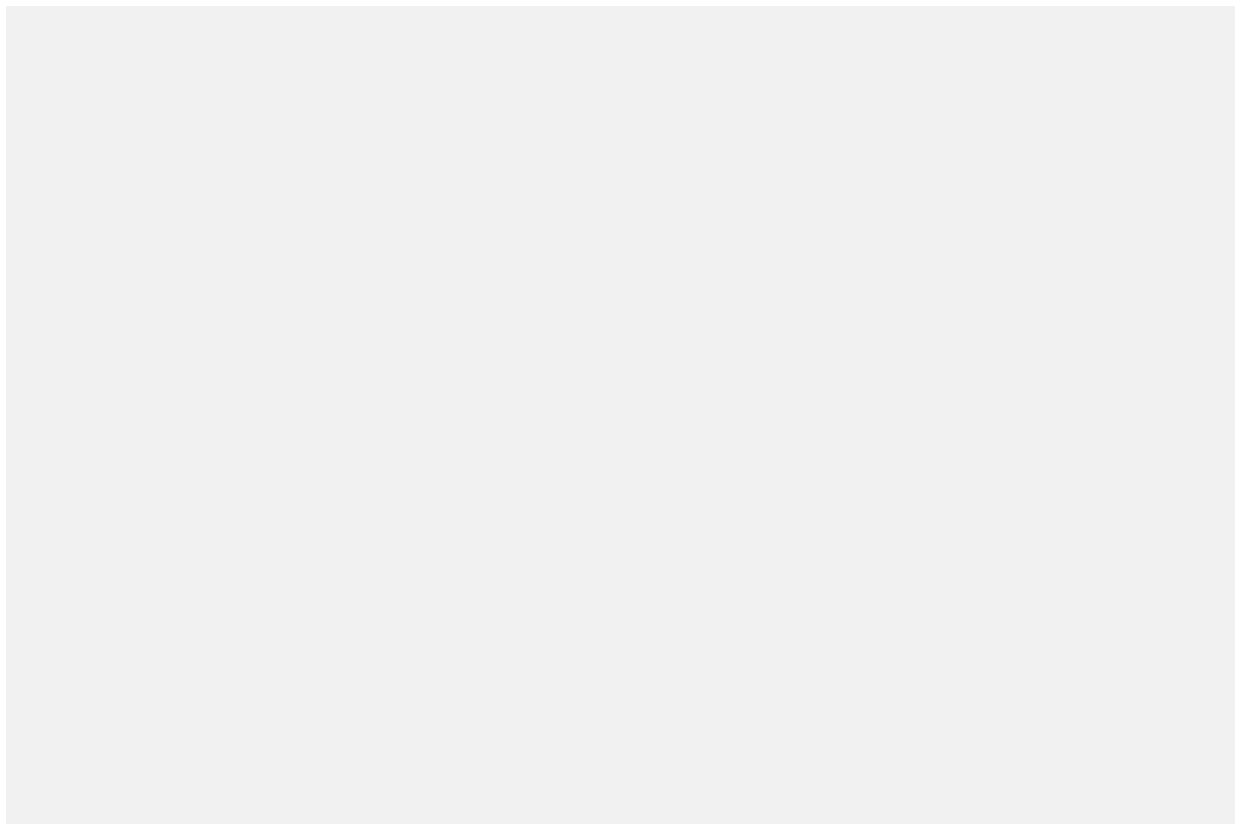
Our new LIC students have embarked on their month of inpatient medicine and psychiatry immersions in Denver before they head off to their rural sites later in October.

For our preceptors who have COPIC insurance, you are eligible for 1 COPIC point per year for participating as an LIC preceptor! See below for details.

Finally, we are excited to share the first of a new series of CUSOM faculty development videos. Check it out below!

All best,

[The CUSOM Rural Program Team](#)





Rural Program Picnic

This month, our four current Rural Program classes, ranging from the newly-matriculated students to the ones now applying for residency, attended a picnic together at Denver's Central Park. They enjoyed good company, barbecue, and country music on the radio - some of them even went line dancing together afterwards!

CUSOM LIC 2024 Teaching Awards

On September 19, CUSOM hosted a Faculty Appreciation and Teaching Awards Dinner, and we are thrilled to announce and celebrate the outstanding achievements of our Rural Program award winners:

Tony Gerck, MD of Sterling - Rural LIC Teacher of the Year
Peg Arnett, RN of Salida - Rural LIC Champion

Thank you to all who were able to join us!



We are also proud to recognize Dr. Brett Hesse of Glenwood Springs and Dr. Vanna Irving of Salida as recipients of this year's Bardsley Foundation Award for humanism in patient care and excellence in teaching. We would like to share excerpts from the student nominations for Drs. Hesse and Irving:

**Bardsley Award Nomination
Brett Hesse, MD - Hospital Medicine**

"The journey to becoming a physician is marked by pivotal experiences and influential mentors who shape our professional identity and personal development. One of these experiences occurred during my second-year hospitalist rotation with my preceptor, Dr. Brett Hesse. During this time, we shared a case that tested not only my medical knowledge but also my emotions, stamina, and resilience. Pushed to my limits, I learned what it truly means to care for another person.

Our patient was a middle-aged man who had collapsed following sudden cardiac arrest... Upon admission to our intensive care unit, the patient was near total brain death with little hope of recovery. The situation was further complicated by the patient's and his family's wishes to donate his organs post-mortem. However, the most unexpected moment of the day came as we discovered the patient was a childhood friend of Dr. Hesse, adding yet another layer of emotional complexity to an already difficult situation.

This case was the most challenging and meaningful experience of my medical training... Throughout the case, I was in awe of how Dr. Hesse handled the situation with grace and compassion. He maintained his professionalism and provided exceptional medical care, yet simultaneously brought both brevity and honesty as a family friend. He took every step to ensure that the family received the best possible support, demonstrating the highest standards of humanism in medicine.

The decision was made to discontinue care and proceed with the organ donation... Dr. Hesse's exceptional care continued as he advocated for the family to be present in the operating room for the patient's final moments, a first in our hospital's history. As the case neared its climax and the patient was taken to the operating room, nearly the entire hospital staff came to line the halls in a silent tribute. Having only just met this man, they joined his family in trying to hold back tears. This act of collective compassion underscored the profound human connection that defines true patient care... Dr. Hesse invited me to stay with the surgical team, allowing me to witness the culmination of the patient's journey and his final act of giving.

This experience taught me the dignity of patient care, particularly in death, and the responsibility that physicians bear to honor and care for patients. Dr. Hesse's mentorship during this

extraordinary experience demonstrated the highest standards of humanism in medicine. His unwavering commitment to compassion, respectful communication, and dedication to honoring his patient's wishes left a permanent mark on my professional and personal development. I was shown that being a physician goes beyond diagnosis and treatment; it necessitates being a source of support for patients and their families during their most vulnerable times."

Bardsley Award Nomination

Vanna Irving, MD - Family Medicine, Obstetrics

"Dr. Vanna Irving has been one of the preceptors most notable in demonstrating the practice of humanistic medicine, not only through the daily clinic encounters but through her work outside the walls of the office as well...

As the foremost physician trained in substance abuse in the area, Dr. Irving began noticing that her medical management in the clinical space only scratched the surface of the required interventions to support individuals in their substance abuse care, which reduced the efficacy of her medical management and put her patients at greater risk of possible relapse and overdose. To combat the gap in the healthcare system, she decided to work with the hospital system to develop a unified center focused on substance use harm reduction through patient care, support, and treatment for community members... In addition to spurring positive change in the community towards increased access to vital substance abuse care while educating the community on the benefits of a harm reduction model, Dr. Irving has inspired a holistic view of patients and societal-level problem solving in myself.

These ideals were on full display while following a patient through multiple visits in the family medicine clinic. This patient came to Dr. Irving seeking help with substance abuse that had led to a hospitalization for overdose in addition to the loss of multiple close friends to the same. This individual had tried multiple times to seek help for his addiction but had failed every attempt. He attributed much of this difficulty to the lack of support system he had, particularly in the rural town where he grew up... Dr. Irving introduced this patient to Suboxone therapy in addition to receiving mental health support to treat his underlying anxiety and depression, connections to local support groups, introduced to a local therapist, helped find stable housing, enrolled in Medicaid for insurance coverage, and signed up for food subsidies benefits. This patient in particular found immense success in this supported treatment plan, even meeting his current wife at a local support group. They are now happily married with their second child soon to be delivered by Dr. Irving herself. Although Dr. Irving's medical therapy was the keystone in this patient's treatment plan, his successful recovery was not possible without the community wide support he received.

Following the inspiration from Dr. Irving, I sought to find a similar project through which I could help positively impact the Salida community... Early in my time in Salida I met a queer identifying teen who struggled with mental health and feeling comfortable their own body. They felt welcome at the clinic thanks to the supportive staff but had never found lasting support throughout the town, which had led to worsening body dysmorphia and depressive episodes. We were also informed that the few other queer identifying individuals that this patient knew struggled to find adequate supportive health care within the community, particularly within mental health and peer support...

Despite the robust public health resources and overall progressive care system in Salida, there is a notable lack of queer and BIPOC specific services... Together we have been collecting input from other local community leaders and providers on resources for the diverse populations that have historically been overlooked in rural areas, primarily focused on both mental and physical health...

Dr. Irving's work in improving access to life-saving substance abuse care has inspired a drive for seeking individual support through community wide interventions. Her inspiration has led me to supporting multiple marginalized communities through resource compilation and support network development in a rural community... As the end of this year quickly approaches, I hope to continue harnessing this eagerness to help in a community-based method while studying in Denver, but more importantly to remember these lessons for my future as a rural physician."

COPIC Point

CUSOM and COPIC are coming together to recognize your teaching and mentorship of our students! Teaching enriches us, sharpens our skills and in turn improves the quality of care we provide to our patients. COPIC also recognizes that teaching has been shown to decrease burnout and protect resiliency.

You are now eligible for 1 COPIC point per year for participating as a LIC preceptor! *If you have COPIC insurance and wish to receive this, please fill out [this link](#) by **September 27th**. COPIC will send you your education point in October. This can be done yearly.*

Faculty Development in 5

Self-Directed Learning by Dr. Chad Stickrath



This series of bite-sized medical education videos is designed to boost your teaching expertise in a snap! Created by experts in the field, these videos offer quick, actionable tips that you can start using in your medical setting today.

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