

LEAHP Scholar Bios, 2021-2022

Khaalisha Ajala, MD, MBA



Dr. Khaalisha Ajala, M.D., M.B.A, is an Assistant Professor of Medicine at Emory University School of Medicine, academic hospitalist and core faculty at the J. Willis Hurst Internal Medicine Residency Program. She completed her internal medicine residency at Morehouse School of Medicine and medical school at American University of Antigua College of Medicine. She is the Associate Site Director of Education and founder of the DEI special interest group for Hospital Medicine at Grady Memorial Hospital. She serves as clinical educator for Emory Health Against Human Trafficking (EHAHT), which travels yearly to Chiang Saen, Thailand to offer annual physical exams at Ban Kru Nam Home. She is also a clinical educator for the Global Health

Scholars Residency Program, which travels to Black Lion Hospital in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. She is founder of Heartbeats & HipHop, Inc., which is a health education nonprofit that seeks to address health inequities in Black communities.

Currently she is member of the Society of Hospital Medicine's DEI Taskforce. She was awarded the Society of Hospital Medicine's 2020 Excellence in Humanitarianism Award, OKAY Africa 100 Women 2020, Emory University's Division of Hospital Medicine's Advocacy Award and Leading Ladies of Africa's 100 Most Inspiring Nigerian Women 2021 for work in community health, advocacy and Global Health. Dr. Ajala seeks to become a leader in health policy in order to help educate students, residents and her colleagues in hospital medicine on how advocacy at the bedside can translate to shaping policy that affects the community at large.

Elisabeth Askin, MD



Elisabeth was born and raised in Texas. She studied history in undergrad and didn't consider medical school until after graduating – when she got interested in medicine first from the standpoint of policy and politics. In medical school – at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis – she bonded with another student about how difficult it was to learn about this vast and complex world of U.S. health care. They decided to write a short intro for fellow students, and ended up writing a 250 page book called *The Health Care Handbook*. She is currently working on the third edition and keeping students involved for a fresh eye.

Elisabeth completed her internal medicine training at UCSF and stayed on to work as a primary care physician in the Division of General Internal Medicine. In addition to seeing patients and teaching students and residents, she has roles supporting population health management in terms of risk capture and resident panel management.

Elisabeth joined SGIM's LEAHP in hopes of making connections to the broader network of clinicians interested in policy, as well as to further investigate her interests in diagnosis coding, documentation, and risk capture, and how these can be used to support clinical care without burdening clinicians.

Anthony Davis-Maxwell, MD



Dr. Tony Davis-Maxwell is an Assistant Professor in the Division of General Internal Medicine at the University of Wisconsin in Madison. He practices academic primary care and hospital medicine. Originally from Milwaukee, WI, he completed his medical school and residency at the University of Pittsburgh.

Tony is interested in medical education and has been active in promoting training in health policy and advocacy since he was a medical student, when he helped lead policy interest groups and organize policy conferences for other students. Tony's passion for health policy continues to be fueled by the systemic barriers he sees his patients face as they try to access health care, and Tony views advocacy work as a natural extension of his clinical practice.

Robert Doolan, MD



Dr. Robert Doolan is a primary care physician at the University of Colorado. He completed medical school at Wayne State University and residency training at the University of Colorado. After being in private practice from 2002-2015 he led the integration of his practice into the University of Colorado system. He has been involved in all levels of clinical leadership and is currently an Associate Professor of Clinical Practice and the Medical Director for Primary Care in the Division of General Internal Medicine at the University of Colorado School of Medicine.

Interest in healthcare policy has developed over time driven by the impact that healthcare policy and advocacy can have in the practice of medicine. Particular areas of interest include providing access to care, continued work on value based models for primary care reimbursement, and the need to prioritize quality improvement as an ongoing and continuous process. A major goal of participating in the LEAHP program is to better understand how to advocate for the goal of having healthcare treated as a right of all Americans and not as a privilege.

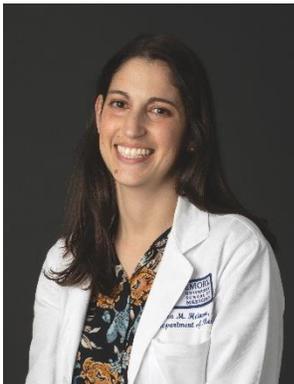
Kathryn Guinn, MD



Dr Kathryn Guinn is a Chief Medical Resident at the University of Colorado Internal Medicine Training Program. Kathryn grew up mostly in Montana and started medical school at the University of Colorado with the Rural Medicine Track. During Internal Medicine residency at the University of Colorado, she quickly learned most of the challenges providing equitable, accessible, and effective patient care need to be addressed at a policy level to make lasting change. After attending a state and national hill day events, her curiosity and dedication to health care policy advocacy was solidified.

Through the LEAHP program she hopes to develop a workshop to empower residents to communicate with their local legislators to entice other residents to learn more about health care policy. She hopes to share the lessons learned from the LEAHP program back to her home state of Montana help rural providers elevate their stories and voices to improve the health care of rural patients.

Erica Heiman, MD, MS



Erica Heiman grew up in New York City and transplanted herself to California as soon as she hit adulthood. She always foresaw advocacy as a part of her career, starting from her undergraduate career and continuing into her Peace Corps service in Mozambique. While she initially planned to work towards improved reproductive health worldwide, she learned more about inequities in health care within the US during medical school and shifted her advocacy focus to domestic access to care. She has been involved with local chapters of Physicians for a National Health Program ever since.

Erica has now moved into new territory in the South and is a Primary Care Internist and Assistant Professor of Medicine based at Grady Hospital in Atlanta, Georgia. Her clinical and research interests include substance and alcohol use disorders. She continues to advocate for Single Payer health care, and hopes to bridge the divide between the Single Payer movement and other movements, and build coalitions aiming to improve access to care and increase health equity.

Koushik Kasanagottu, MD



Koushik Kasanagottu is from Birmingham, Alabama. After completing medical school at University of Alabama at Birmingham, he went to Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center for internal medicine residency. He also worked as a health policy fellow for US Senator Doug Jones and Maryland Senator Clarence Lam. His research interests revolve around innovative primary care models (Community Health Workers, Telemedicine, High Utilizer Primary Care Clinics) to improve and prevent chronic diseases for populations. He also founded Diabetes Education Team, which is a non-profit organization that trains undergraduate students as health educators for rural Alabama. He will be pursuing a General Internal Medicine fellowship at Harvard in to establish a career in health policy research as an Academic General Internist.

Afifah Khan, MD



Afifah Khan grew up in the Virginia suburbs of D.C. and she attended the College of William and Mary and Eastern Virginia Medical School. After college, she interned at a science policy think tank and worked in healthcare consulting in the D.C. area, which sparked her interest in health quality improvement and policy. In medical school, she served on the leadership board for the Institute for Healthcare Improvement group and participated in the Health Innovations Scholars Program through the University of Colorado. Her particular interests are: advocating for underserved patients, reducing provider burnout, and creating systems level policy change. She's currently a first-year internal medicine resident at Medical University of South Carolina with plans to complete a fellowship in palliative care.

Evan Manning, MD, MPP



Dr Evan Manning was born and raised outside of Denver, Colorado. Growing up in a state with a large rural-urban divide and watching that divide grow and evolve first-hand inspired him to pursue an advanced degree in public policy at the University of Denver. His graduate school studies introduced him to the dynamic field of healthcare policy with the recent passing and implementation of the Affordable Car Act. Dr Manning completed his capstone policy memorandum exploring disparities in heart disease mortality in rural communities.

Once in medical school at the University of Colorado, Evan became involved in organized medicine through the Colorado Medical Society where he served as the president of the medical student section and represented the interests of medical trainees on the Society's board of directors. He was selected to a special advisory committee on Amendment 69, a bill exploring universal state-run healthcare in Colorado, and helped develop and draft policy analysis and recommendations for Colorado's physicians. Now in internal medicine residency, Dr Manning remains on the CMS board of directors and has written editorials on current health policy issues for Colorado Medicine magazine.

His professional interests include health systems and health outcomes research particularly around access to care and quality of care for rural and other disadvantaged populations. Dr Manning's current work focuses on evaluation of Electronic Consultation programs as a means of improving access to care, identifying populations that are undertreated for high-risk medical conditions, and evaluating health systems innovations aimed at improving care quality and reducing cost.

Amir Meiri, MD, MPH



Dr. Amir Meiri earned his medical degree at The George Washington University School of Medicine in Washington, D.C. where he was also in the Health Policy Track, and completed his internal medicine residency at Boston Medical Center in Boston, MA, focusing on quality improvement. Following residency, Dr. Meiri completed health services research and administrative/operations-focused fellowships in General Internal Medicine and Delivery System Science at the Harvard Medical School's Department of Population Medicine and Atrius Health and also obtained a Master's in Public Health at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. During fellowship, Dr. Meiri conducted research on implications of pharmaceutical drug policy, focusing on insulin costs and insurance benefit design. While at Atrius Health, he worked on healthcare delivery redesign, concentrating on improving clinical care for patients with diabetes through the lens of Primary Care. Following fellowship, Dr. Meiri joined the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) at the Washington DC VA Medical Center as a hospitalist where he cares for veterans and educates residents and students. At the VA he also contributes towards quality improvement and hospital workflow redesign initiatives with an interest in improving transitions of care and preventing readmissions.

Dr. Meiri's interests encompass improving healthcare delivery through policy and on-the-ground workflow redesign. Dr. Meiri was drawn to medicine not only to impact individual patients but also populations and communities and has learned how evidence-based and sound policy can tackle many upstream problems. Through the SGIM LEAHP Program, Dr. Meiri aims to build on his broad fellowship training and clinical experience to improve healthcare delivery at the VA through policy, advocacy, and system redesign.

Ayan Nasir, MD



Dr. Ayan Nasir is a first year internal medicine resident at Mayo Clinic Florida in Jacksonville, Florida. Previously, he attended the University of Central Florida College of Medicine for medical school. He also has a B.S. in Financial Engineering from Columbia University and has extensive experience working in international finance prior to transitioning to a career in medicine.

Dr. Nasir has always had an interest in policy and economics, specifically in helping analyze current healthcare systems in terms of stakeholders, drivers, and potential areas for change. He has previously been a Healthcare Policy Fellowship Initiative Fellow where he worked with the Florida Medical Association on developing key research to track healthcare practice structures, employment, and Accountability Care Organizations. He has also worked in healthcare advocacy through his work in free clinics, both as a finance director of his local KNIGHTS Clinic at UCF and as finance chair for the Society of Student Run Free Clinics. He has a special interest in using data science to understand healthcare systems and develop solutions to support improved outcomes for the patients we serve. He has developed multiple software packages focused on improving EMR data completeness and integrity and to find areas of inequities with potential strategies for improvement.

In his free time, Dr. Nasir enjoys traveling, sports (basketball, football, and cricket), and music.

Kathleen Pollard, MD



Katie Pollard is a primary care physician, clinician-educator and Assistant Professor of Medicine at Vanderbilt University Medical Center. She is originally from Chicago, but moved south and studied political science and American Studies at the University of Virginia. She then served as an Americorps volunteer working at a grammar school on the south side of Chicago. She completed a Community & Urban Health concentration during medical school at George Washington University, studying issues of health equity and social determinants of health.

Her time in Washington, DC, gave her exposure to many clinicians who built careers blending primary care and advocacy, and inspired her to become a primary care doctor committed to improving health systems to better serve patients. She completed her internal medicine residency training at Duke University in 2020, and participated in the Advocacy in Clinical Leadership Track. Through this program, she was able to meet with state lawmakers to advocate for Medicaid expansion in North Carolina and advocated for policies in federal COVID relief bills that would benefit underserved patient populations. She is excited to participate in LEAHP, and is looking forward to an educational year!

Apoorva Ram, MD



Apoorva is an internal medicine resident at the University of Colorado. Her interest in health policy first took root at Washington University in St. Louis, where she studied Anthropology and Global Health, but also learned from the many demonstrations and societal implications of the Black Lives Matter movement as it gained speed in Ferguson and as political protests and advocacy swelled at Wash U. When she went to medical school at Northwestern University, she became interested in the intersection of medicine, society, and social change as a means to improve health outcomes and delivery. Now embedded in the process of becoming a doctor, it's become ever more clear that for meaningful change on a population level, policy changes—informed by sociology, business, economics, and medicine—are a must.

Growing up as an immigrant from India and becoming a citizen when she was 16 years old, she feels particularly drawn to working with refugee communities and immigrants. Though she is at the start of career, she hopes to use the knowledge she already has and the knowledge to come through the LEAHP Program to work on 1) access to affordable health care, especially among immigrant and incarcerated communities; and 2) expand coverage for mental health and substance use disorder treatment among underserved populations.

Leslie Suen, MD



Dr. Leslie Suen (she/hers) is a board-certified primary care internist and a current VA Internal Medicine fellow in the UCSF National Clinician Scholars Program (formerly known as the Robert Wood Johnson Clinical Scholars Fellowship). She completed her medical school and Primary Care Internal Medicine (UCPC) residency training at UCSF. Before medical school, she worked at the San Francisco Department of Public Health and Tom Waddell Urban Health Center, where she helped develop quality improvement programs to improve care for patients experiencing homelessness. Her research focuses on using mixed methods research and implementation science to improve health systems, policies, and outcomes for people living

with substance use disorders.

Quratulain Syed, MD



Quratulain Syed, MD is an internist and a geriatrician, practicing at JenCare Senior Health Center, in Metro Atlanta. She is also an adjunct Assistant Professor at Emory University School of Medicine. Her clinical and research interests include driving and firearm safety in cognitive disorders, health disparities, polypharmacy and deprescribing. She serves as a member of Health Equity Commission at the Society of General Internal Medicine, the public education committee at the American Geriatric Society, and the Driver's License Advisory Board of the Georgia Department of Driver Services. She also serves as associate editor for Aquifer Geriatrics, a resource for online medical education curriculum.

Divya Venkat, MD



Dr. Divya Venkat is an internal medicine physician at the Center for Inclusion Health at Allegheny Health Network in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Her work focuses on low barrier access to medications for opioid use disorder as well as increasing access to care in the post-incarcerated population. She currently serves as co-Director of the Inclusion Health Track in the internal medicine residency.

Divya was born and raised in Las Vegas, Nevada. She left her sunny hometown for college at The George Washington University in Washington, DC. There, she became involved in mentoring programs for elementary aged children in underserved neighborhoods and became passionate about equity in education. She continued her studies in Washington, DC and attended The George Washington University School of Medicine for medical school. During medical school, Divya explored her interests in underserved populations and participated in programs around food insecurity and weight management. She attended residency at Allegheny Health Network in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and was a part of the Inclusion Health track, which focused on underserved populations. She found her passion advocating for patients during this time and developed curriculum for residents and hospital staff in health equity. She continued in her dream job as a physician with the Center for Inclusion Health.

Her interests in health policy include advocating for harm reduction based policies for substance use disorders, increasing healthcare access for marginalized populations, and improving healthy equity in the social determinants of health.