

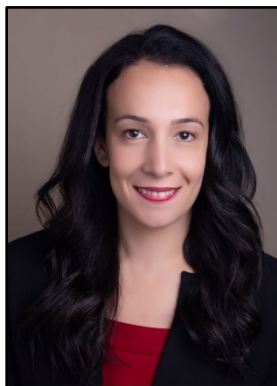
Recipients of Dr. Chirag Shah International Resident Award

Congratulations to:

2022-2023

Postgraduate Medical Education is pleased to announce the winners of the Dr. Chirag Shah International Resident award. The \$2,000 award was established in 2012 by Dr. Shah to assist international medical graduates who are adjusting to life in Canada and to inspire them to give back to their community and contribute to making Canada a better place.

Many of my earliest memories of medicine originate from growing up in rural Egypt. Witnessing few of my family members working as dedicated Family Physicians, to help people with various medical, social, and cultural backgrounds, ignited a spark in me to follow in their footsteps. The adaptability of Family Physicians to work with very limited resources and offer aid to each patient and their families made me appreciate that medical knowledge, although important, is not the only defining factor for these fulfilling interactions. It takes a compassionate heart, listening ear, and personal touch. These experiences were an integral factor in my drive to pursue Family Medicine in order to positively impact the physical and mental wellbeing of others and the community.



Dr. Caroleen Nasr
R1 Family Medicine

After finishing my post graduate training in Egypt, I moved to Canada with my family in order to pursue opportunities for medical research and education. Initially, it was very challenging not being able to continue my passion as a Family Physician. However, I was determined to find ways in which I could still contribute and support the wellbeing of others, especially the marginalized populations. I was fortunate to work at the Mustard Seed shelter where I was able to advocate for people struggling with homelessness and addiction. I also helped them find employment opportunities by organizing educational seminars, practicing motivational interviewing, and collaborating with external agencies. Through my work with this vulnerable population, I have learned the causes, prevention strategies, and proven solutions to mitigate homelessness, addiction and mental illness. I will continue to use these important skills and insights to further improve my clinical understanding of medicine so I may grow into the best physician I can be.

An opportunity that augmented my leadership skills was joining the Chinook Mall Medical Clinic as the Clinic manager. This experience allowed me to familiarize myself with the Canadian Medical System and learn about various clinical resources. It was surely a steep learning curve but my enthusiastic and inquisitive attitude allowed me to successfully instruct numerous employees, practicum students, and volunteers, while collaborating with other physicians and allied healthcare workers. I also developed and co-facilitated the Soul Program based on the four pillars of health: physical, psychological, social, and spiritual. Through the program's seminars, group therapies, and various counselling techniques, I gained a true appreciation of the holistic approach to patient care.

The Soul program currently has four family physicians as well as a social worker and a counsellor. I am planning to re-join them as a physician after I finish my residency training and expand our services through partnership with different non-profit organisations such as the Drop In Center, YWCA and The Mustard Seed where I used to work years ago. It is my vision and goal to accomplish this dream as I understand the complex needs of this population, including the need for guaranteed continuation of care. I am planning to continue working at this program and use the "whole-person approach"



**Dr. Raquel de Sarai
Vera Rodriguez**
R1 Family Medicine

I was born in a small community in Mexico. From an early age I knew I was a people person. I like to interact with other members of my community, and since medical school I actively volunteered in helping those around me. We would drive to remote communities for cancer prevention campaigns and would help bring vaccines to children and seniors that otherwise would have had a hard time reaching a rural health clinic.

When I moved to Canada in 2019, I knew I wanted to continue to give back to those who need it the most. By December 2019 I was actively volunteering as a senior companion in the Covenant Health Youville Home in St. Albert. Providing companionship to long-term care residents can have such a positive impact in their lives, listening to their stories, helping them remember their family members by going through their family albums and sparking their minds with art therapy and music activities not only helped them but gave me strength and determination to see the challenges in life as a gift.

I was also invited to volunteer as a special needs assistant at the Home Care & Community Program by Alberta Health Services in Edmonton. I stayed connected with two clients in the community, I would come to visit them once a week and for one or two hours we would watch their favourite TV show or play scrabble. One of them, a lovely lady, tried to teach me how to crochet. I can sincerely say that my scarf was not very symmetrical but it was fun to try and I can still remember her laugh when I told I would still try wearing it in the winter.

When the COVID 19 pandemic hit, I helped with COVID screening at the main entrance of the Grey Nuns Community Hospital in Edmonton. I could not help treating patients directly, but I could at least help keeping our staff, patients and visitors safe.

My reason for applying to the award is the need for funding. Moving from Edmonton to Calgary has been a great adventure and finally my husband will be to relocate with me. This award would help us feel more stable after finalizing the move. I truly appreciate his effort of relocating to a different city so that I can fulfill my dream of becoming a licensed family physician in Alberta.

Canada is a wonderful nation and having the opportunity to live here and help serve those around us is truly a privilege



2021-2022

Dr. Warder Munawar – R1 Internal Medicine:



I grew up in a small village and I understand health care challenges faced by remote areas. My desire to help people with medicine became my dream when I volunteered during the devastating earthquake in Pakistan (2005), raised funds for medicines, food, and clothes for earthquake victims.

I was involved in various volunteer positions to support rural community services (2013 – 2018), during and before my medical education. I used to travel hundreds of kilometers in various communities, to volunteer in medical camps. I led a team of my colleagues and advocated for health promotion and disease prevention. We focused on educating people about vaccination, maternal & child health. Also, during an outbreak of gastroenteritis in one community (Northern Pakistan), I advocated for the need for clean drinking water. I consider it to be my moral obligation and a prime duty as a physician.

Since resettling Canada in 2018, I have focused on community involvement. I volunteered as a Patient Experience Friendly Visitor; spending time with socially isolated patients at Peter Lougheed Hospital (2019 – 2020). Since 2020, I am a member of University of Calgary IMRP Charity Committee and Resident Wellness Committee.

My lifetime career goal is to be instrumental in the field of medicine through research, dedication, and teaching. I have ensured the combination of academic excellence, research, leadership in student life, and contribution to community by volunteering as outlined in my attached Resume. Moreover, I have been demonstrating collegiality and compassion by performing extra duties in emergencies whenever needed by the program in this era of Covid-19 pandemic.

My aim is to improve health care standards for the present as well as the coming generations, such as to make advancements in the field of transplant, cancer prevention & management, and mental health. This is my ambition and to me, worth investing my life for!

Dr. Mitra Arjang – R2 Family Medicine:

I was born and raised in a middle-class family in Iran. Despite our humble means, my parents persevered to ensure they provided the best education they could afford. At an early age my parents learned the values of hard work, dedication to family and determination to achieve one's goals.

As a young boy of 8, my father had to step up for the family when he lost his father. He earned his own way through postgraduate education to become a teacher. I remember him reminding us when we were growing up that we should never take things for granted and that we must find ways to give back to the community.



I believe this deep sense of altruism was my main motivation to become a doctor and serve my country. But when I followed my husband to Canada, I struggled to reconcile staying in Canada to ensure a better and safer life for my children, which meant leaving my beloved homeland whom I vowed to serve. I felt that a piece of my heart was left behind, but it was a painful choice I had to make. I coped with the guilt and frustration by constantly monitoring the political and social situation back home.

In 2016, by partnering with 2 of my friends, we started a public channel in Telegram called "Koodak-OmidFarda" meaning "child, the hope for the future". One is a child psychiatrist, based in England and the other an Internist, practicing in Germany; they both share their knowledge and expertise in discussions about parenting and child mental health and wellness.

"Koodak-OmidFarda" also collaborates with a non-profit organization, named "Baran-e-Mehr" that is run by a group of our medical school classmates in Iran. Through this partnership we have built schools in remote villages, with a third one currently under construction.

2019 - 2020

Postgraduate Medical Education is pleased to announce the Dr. Chirag Shah International Resident award recipient for 2019-2020. The \$2,000 award was established in 2012 by Dr. Shah to assist international medical graduates who are adjusting to life in Canada and to inspire them to give back to their community and contribute to making Canada a better place.

PGME is proud to announce that Dr. Oluseyi Akinola, a PGY2 in Family Medicine is the 2019 recipient of the Dr. Chirag Shah International Resident Award. The \$2,000 award was established in 2012 by Dr. Shah to assist international medical graduates who are adjusting to life in Canada and to inspire them to give back to their community and contribute to making Canada a better place.

Dr. Akinola was born in Western Nigeria and after completing her medical training in the Netherlands she volunteered in northern Nigeria where "the population is predominantly Moslem and the Boko Haram Crisis has resulted in internally displaced camps for citizens caught in a religious and political war. The ones who bore the most burden of suffering were the children and women. Many of them victims of rape and various forms of abuse, both physical and mental. It was a personal challenge for me every time I encountered a new patient there, trying to treat their physical ailment, at the same time wanting to unravel the mystery behind eyes pooled with pain." This experience led Dr. Akinola to develop her own Non-Governmental Organization "Building this Generation".



Dr. Akinola returned to practice in Lagos and was able to raise enough money to annually return to the camps to offer her services. “I succeeded in shipping books to makeshift libraries so that the children could dream outside their current reality and started some skills acquisition for the women including sewing, making neck beads as well as baking, all of which were aimed at mental health therapies. In these circles, they forgot their pain and chatted about the future, sometimes mentioning some of the trauma they endured.”

Today, Dr. Akinola continues her work with the underserved and her NGO “Building this Generation” has remained a priority for her. She is using the \$2,000 award to “identify and improve some health indices in the Internal Displaced Camps of northern Nigeria, a direct result of the Boko Haram crisis as well as promoting better mental health, both in Nigeria and Calgary, while working with refugee kids as well as victims of addiction, thus promoting health equity and bridging that gap.”

Past Award Recipients:

2018-2019 - Dr. Navdeep Dehar (Internal Medicine)

2017-2018 - Dr. Sidra Javed (Internal Medicine)

2016-2017 - Dr. Maria Espinoza (Pediatrics)

2015-2016 - Dr Hassan Azhari (Internal Medicine) and Dr Syeda Ruqaiya Abbas (Pediatrics)

2014-2015 - Dr Archana Vijay (Internal Medicine) and Dr Liena Zhao (Anatomical Pathology)

2013-2014 - Dr Sumathili Raja (Family Medicine) and Dr Wenqian Chen (Anatomical Pathology)

2012-2013 - Dr Ayesha Nasir Rahim (Family Medicine)