

# 2025 Annual Meeting Souvenir Journal



## 2025 Honorees

### **OUTGOING PRESIDENT**

Kham Ali, MD, MBA, MPH, FACEP

### **PRESIDENT-ELECT**

Anaïs Carniciu, MD, FAAO, FASOPRS

### **“FRIEND OF THE SOCIETY” AWARDEE**

Elizabeth Amato

President & CEO HealtheConnections

### **“FRIEND OF MEDICINE” AWARDEE**

Emil Nigro, MD, FACEP

**MARY ELLEN & JOHN PILKINGTON**

*Would like to Congratulate*

**Incoming President**  
**Anaïs Carniciu, MD**

**Outgoing President**  
**Kham Ali, MD, MBA, MPH, FACEP**

**“Friend of Medicine”**  
**Emil Nigro, MD**

**“Friend of the Society”**  
**Elizabeth Amato**  
**President & CEO HealtheConnections**

# BEST WISHES

Westchester County Medical Society

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## CONGRATULATIONS

**Anaïs Carniciu, MD**  
*WCMS President-elect*

**Kham Ali, MD, MBA, MPH, FACEP**  
*Outgoing WCMS President*

**Elizabeth Amato**  
*President and CEO, HealtheConnections*  
*"Friend of the Society" Awardee*

**Emil Nigro, MD**  
*"Friend of Medicine" Awardee*

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## **2025 Westchester County Annual Meeting Program:**



### **6:00 pm — Networking Reception with Sponsors & Guests**

*Please be sure to visit all of our sponsors!*

### **7:00 pm — Dinner**

### **7:15 pm — Call to Order**

Recognize Special Guests, MSSNY Officers, WCMS/WAM Officers,  
Past Presidents, WCMS Staff, Sponsors & Supporters

### **7:45 pm — Meeting called back to order**

Report of the Nominating Committee

Academy Program—WESEF Award Winners

Remarks of MSSNY President

50 Year Citation Awards

“Friend of the Society Award”

“Friend of Medicine Award”

Outgoing President’s Award

Outgoing President’s Remarks

Introduction of New President

Incoming President’s Remarks

Adjournment



# **Proudly Supports**

**The Medical Society of the County of Westchester  
&**

**The Westchester Academy of Medicine**

**Join us in celebrating the remarkable  
achievements of this year's honorees:**

**Anaïs Carniciu, MD**

WCMS President-elect

**Kham Ali, MD, MBA, MPH, FACEP**

Outgoing WCMS President

**Elizabeth Amato, President & CEO of HealtheConnections**

"Friend of the Society" Awardee

**DEmil Nigro, MD**

"Friend of Medicine" Awardee

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would like to thank all of our sponsors, exhibitors and supporters.  
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## Keeping Up with the PACE of Aging

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**Westchester County Medical Society**  
*and the*  
**Westchester Academy of Medicine**  
**2025 Annual Meeting**

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*Congratulations to all the honorees,  
outgoing President Kham Ali, MD, MBA, MPH, FACEP,  
and President-elect Anaïs Carniciu, MD*

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## The Westchester County Medical Society Administrative Staff

Would like to thank  
Outgoing President, **Kham Ali, MD, MBA, MPH, FACEP** for all of his  
effort and hard work throughout the year.



We would like to offer Best Wishes to our  
**President-elect, Anaïs Carniciu, MD**  
We are looking forward to the upcoming year working with you!

**We would also like to thank all of our members for a great year!**



Charles J. Sellers & Co., Inc.

# WE PROUDLY SUPPORT THE WESTCHESTER COUNTY MEDICAL SOCIETY

And Congratulate

Kham Ali, MD, MBA  
Outgoing WCMS President

Anaïs Carniciu, MD  
Incoming WCMS President

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Medical Society State of New York  
and the  
Westchester County Medical Society

Would like to recognize the following Physicians  
for 50 years devoted to the service of the public  
in the practice of medicine:

**Jeffrey M. Ambinder, MD**

**Andrew Bronin, MD**

**Wayne Brook Eisman, MD**

**Wilmore B. Finerman, Jr., MD**

**Ronald Irwin Jacobson, MD**

**Harold Mermelstein, MD**

**Biagio V. Mignone, MD**

**Francisco Montano, MD**

**Emil J. Nigro, MD**

**Frances M. Stern, MD**

**Gerald Walter Zaidman, MD**

**Congratulations on such a tremendous achievement!**

# Past Presidents of the Westchester County Medical Society

Archibald McDonald, MD	1797-1798	Harrison Betts, MD	1934-1935
Seth Miller, MD	1797-1798	Theodore West, MD	1935-1936
Elias Cornelius, MD	1797-1798	Morley T. Smith, MD	1936-1937
Ebenezer White, MD	1798-1799	Erich H. Reston, MD	1937-1938
David Rogers, Jr., MD	1817-1820	Ralph T.B. Todd, MD	1938-1939
Matson Smith, MD	1825-1826	Henry J. Vier, MD	1939-1940
Matson Smith, MD	1828-1830	Reginald A. Higgons, MD	1940-1941
William Hoffman, MD	1831-1832	George C. Aide, MD	1941-1943
David Palmer, MD	1833-1834	Merwin E. Marsland, MD	1943-1944
James Fountain, MD	1835-1836	Laurance D. Redway, MD	1944-1945
Peter Moulton, MD	1836-1837	Isadore Zadek, MD	1945-1946
Amos W. Gates, MD	1838-1839	Robert B. Archibald, MD	1946-1947
William A. Stanley, MD	1840-1841	Godfrey Childress, MD	1947-1948
Seth Shove, MD	1842-1843	Waring Willis, MD	1948-1949
James Fountain, MD	1844-1846	Christopher Ward, MD	1949-1950
Benjamin Bassett, MD	1847-1848	Henry E. McGarvey, MD	1950-1951
Joshua W. Bowron, MD	1848-1849	Margaret Loder, MD	1951-1952
John Collett, MD	1850-1851	Reid R. Heffner, MD	1952-1953
Stewart Philander, MD	1851-1852	W. Alex Newlands, MD	1953-1955
George Fisher, MD	1857-1858	David Fertig, MD	1955-1956
Caleb W. Haight, MD	1859-1860	Harold J. Dunlap, MD	1956-1957
J.F. Jenkins, MD	1861-1862	John N. Dill, MD	1957-1958
Thomas Snowden, MD	1863-1864	William P. Reed, MD	1958-1959
Hosea Fountain, MD	1864-1865	Donald Reed, MD	1959-1960
I.F. Pelton, MD	1865-1866	Arthur Diedrick, MD	1960-1961
J.H. Curry, MD	1866-1867	Charles M. Brane, MD	1961-1962
E.F. Arnold, MD	1867-1868	Thomas Jaleski, MD	1962-1963
George Bayles, MD	1869-1870	James M. Jones, MD	1963-1964
James W. Scribner, MD	1870-1871	Wallace M. Sheridan, MD	1964-1965
H. Caruthers, MD	1871-1872	James Haralambie, MD	1965-1966
J.J. Linson, MD	1872-1873	Maurice Woodhull, MD	1966-1967
W.H. Helm, MD	1874-1875	William Brumfield, MD	1967-1968
Z.E. Lewis, MD	1875-1876	Robert Healy, MD	1968-1969
Platt R.H. Sawyer, MD	1876-1877	Francis T. Rogliano, MD	1969-1970
Isaac G. Collins, MD	1877-1878	Allison B. Landolt, MD	1970-1971
H. Ernest Schmind, MD	1878-1879	Katherine L. Freidman, MD	1971-1972
G. P. Balch, MD	1879-1880	Robert A. Mayers, MD	1972-1973
Henry L. Horton, MD	1880-1881	Albert Lowenfels, MD	1973-1974
Champion J. Judson, MD	1881-1882	William P. Clark, MD	1974-1975
Archibald M. Campbell, MD	1882-1883	Thomas D. Rizzo, MD	1975-1976
J. Frances Chapman, MD	1883-1884	William J. McCann, MD	1976-1977
Edward F. Brush, MD	1884-1885	John A. Ramsdell, MD	1977-1978
H. Freeland, MD	1886-1887	Bertram J. Oppenheimer, MD	1978-1979
C.S. Benedict, MD	1887-1888	Charles A. Bertrand, MD	1979-1980
William H. Helm, MD	1888-1889	Michael Sierp, MD	1980-1981
Samuel Swift, MD	1889-1890	Kenneth W. Trout, MD	1981-1982
Charles Mason, MD	1890-1891	Peter B. Farnsworth, MD	1982-1983
Newton F. Curtis, MD	1891-1892	Armond B. Mascia, MD	1983-1984
William F. Green, MD	1892-1893	Richard L. Fenton, MD	1984-1985
E. Ernest Schmid, MD	1893-1894	Stanley M. Mendelowitz, MD	1985-1986
Stuart B. Carlisle, MD	1894-1895	Robert C. Mickatavage, MD	1986-1987
Philander Collard, MD	1895-1896	Richard L. Petrillo, MD	1987-1988
Archibald M. Campbell, MD	1896-1897	William J. Walsh, MD	1988-1989
Edgar M. Hermance, MD	1897-1898	Pellegrino J. Tozzo, MD	1989-1990
R. Condit Eddy, MD	1898-1899	Ann C. Cea, MD	1990-1991
Archibald T. Banning, MD	1899-1900	Sanford A. Kaplan, MD	1991-1992
A.R. Snowden, MD	1900-1901	Thomas A. Larsen, MD	1992-1993
P.A. Callan, MD	1901-1902	Mark L. Fox, MD	1993-1994
Robert T. Howe, MD	1902-1903	Stephen O. Schwartz, MD	1994-1995
Robert T. Irvine, MD	1903-1904	Paul S. Carton, MD	1995-1996
Charles E. Chapman, MD	1904-1905	Robert L. Soley, MD	1996-1997
T.F. Goodwin, MD	1905-1906	Barney B. Silverman, MD	1997-1998
H. Beaty Brown, MD	1906-1907	Howard F. Stock, MD	1998-1999
C.P. Byington, MD	1907-1908	Carl P. Weber, MD	1999-2000
W.A. Miner, MD	1908-1909	Peter S. Liebert, MD	2000-2001
George A. Peck, MD	1909-1910	David E. Bank, MD	2001-2002
S. Oscar Myers, MD	1910-1911	Kira Geraci-Ciardullo, MD	2002-2003
Frank E. Russell, MD	1911-1912	Andrew Kleinman, MD	2003-2004
Edward W. Weber, MD	1912-1913	Michael Rosenberg, MD	2004-2005
John W. Smith, MD	1913-1914	Bonnie Litvack, MD	2005-2006
Samuel E. Getty, MD	1914-1915	Peter F. Rizzo, MD	2006-2007
Bertrand F. Drake, MD	1915-1916	Alfred Tinger, MD	2007-2008
W. Stuart Woodruff, MD	1916-1917	Amy E. Newburger, MD	2008-2009
Henry Moffat, MD	1917-1918	John J. Stangel, MD	2009-2010
William L. Russell, MD	1918-1919	Joseph J. Tartaglia, MD	2010-2011
Clarence C. Guion, MD	1919-1920	Abe Levy, MD	2011-2012
William H. Purdy, MD	1920-1921	Thomas T. Lee, MD	2012-2013
Francis R. Lyman, MD	1921-1922	Robert Lerner, MD	2013-2014
Edwin G. Ramsdell, MD	1922-1923	Louis McIntyre, MD	2014-2015
A.S. Corwin, MD	1923-1924	Thomas Lester, MD	2015-2016
Charles C. Sweet, MD	1924-1925	Gino Bottino, MD	2016-2017
H.T. Kelly, MD	1925-1926	Marshal Peris, MD	2017-2018
H.W. Titus, MD	1926-1927	Omar N. Syed, MD	2018-2019
Elton G. Littell, MD	1927-1928	Daniel Gold, MD	2019-2020
W. H. Cattle, MD	1928-1929	Peter Acker, MD	2020-2021
W.W. Mott, MD	1929-1930	Jeffrey Jacobson, MD	2021-2022
Louis B. Chapman, MD	1930-1931	Bruce Molinelli, MD	2022-2023
Louis V. Waldron, MD	1931-1932	Peter Acker, MD	2023-2024
Andrew A. Eggston, MD	1932-1933	Kham Ali, MD, MBA, MPH, FACEP	2024-2025
Mortimer W. Raynor, MD	1933-1934		



# Westchester County Medical Society

## 2024-2025 Officers

### 2024-2025

Executive Committee

#### President

Kham Ali, MD, MBA, MPH,  
FACEP

#### President-elect

Anaïs Carniciu, MD

#### Immediate Past President

Peter Acker, MD

#### Vice President

Marshal Peris, MD

#### Treasurer

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Bruce Molinelli, MD

#### Academy President

Daniel Gold, MD

#### Staff

Janine Miller  
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Kalli Voulgaris, MPH  
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Rhonda Nathan  
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### Westchester

#### Delegates 2025

John Abrahams, MD  
Peter Acker, MD  
Kham Ali, MD  
Steven Baek, Medical Student  
Srinidhi Gadula, Medical Student  
Thomas Lee, MD  
Bruce Molinelli, MD  
Marshal Peris, MD  
Dhruba Podder, Medical Student

### Putnam

#### Delegates 2025

Elliot Barsh, MD  
William Zurhellen, MD

### Westchester

#### Alternate Delegates 2025

Karen Arthur, MD  
Anaïs Carniciu, MD  
Joseph Tartaglia, MD

#### 9th District Councilor

Daniel Gold, MD

### Committee Chairs 2024-2025

#### Ethics

Ronald Jacobson, MD

#### CME

Marshal Peris, MD

#### Budget & Finance

Andrew Kleinman MD

#### Delegates

Bonnie Litvack, MD

#### Legislative

Daniel Gold, MD

#### Membership

John Abrahams, MD

#### Communications & Public Relations

Anaïs Carniciu, MD

#### Socio Medical Economics

Thomas Lee, MD

#### Workers Compensation

Bruce Molinelli, MD

#### Young Physicians

Kham Ali, MD, MBA, MPH,  
FACEP

Westchester County Medical Society  
Westchester Academy of Medicine  
45 Beekman Avenue, Unit 727  
Sleepy Hollow, NY 10591

**Northwell Phelps Hospital** is pleased to join the Medical Society of the County of Westchester and the Westchester Academy of Medicine in congratulating **Emil Nigro, MD** recipient of the “**Friend of Medicine**” award and all of tonight’s deserving honorees.

We also join them in thanking **Kham Ali, MD**, for his leadership as President of WCMS.

We salute the **Medical Society of Westchester** and **Westchester Academy of Medicine** for their leadership in advancing medical science in Westchester County.



701 North Broadway  
Sleepy Hollow, NY  
914-366-3000  
[phelps.northwell.edu](http://phelps.northwell.edu)



**Emil Nigro, MD, FACEP**  
**2025 Friend of Medicine Awardee**



Dr. Nigro did his undergraduate at Fordham University, College of Pharmacy after which he taught high school science and practiced clinical pharmacy.

After medical school and while completing his residency at New York Medical College, Westchester Medical Center he discovered Phelps Hospital. It was then, and now today, a warm and friendly community hospital — “friends caring for friends”. Back then it had, and continues today to have a superb clinical staff and breathe of services which has increased with its Northwell affiliation.

In 1979 Dr. Nigro accepted a full-time emergency medicine position and in 1984 was selected as Director. He was at Phelps for 45 years and served his last 6 years as President of the Phelps Medical Staff.

Over those 45 years the most recently recognized medical specialty, emergency medicine, evolved and improved in large part due to the partnerships that were created with first responders, fire, police, Westchester Department of Health, EMS agencies and county government.

These partnerships led to many programs that benefited our communities such as bystander CPR, rapid response fly cars, and most recently community paramedicine, which has facilitated access to care, including needed vaccinations.

Over the years we learned a lot together and dealt head-on with many challenges—hepatitis outbreaks, Ebola, Flu and of course the COVID pandemic.

We also learned that “life is about relationships” thanks to Mr. Latimer, Mr. Jenkins, Mr. Wishnie, Dr. Sherlita Amler, our patients and especially our vulnerable home-bound seniors who all benefited from the relationships and the bridges we built.

We also came to appreciate the wise words of Sir William Osler, father of modern medicine who said that “Medicine is the science of uncertainty and the art of probability.” This is especially true in and “ER” which is real life, but in fast forward.

Dr. Nigro recently retired from Phelps and is now enjoying his time in New York and North Carolina.





**Elizabeth Amato**  
**President & CEO HealtheConnections**  
**2025 Friend of the Society Awardee**



Elizabeth Amato,  
President and CEO,  
HealtheConnections

Elizabeth Amato is a respected leader and innovator in the health information technology field, with over 16 years of experience driving healthcare transformation across New York State. She has been a tireless advocate for leveraging data-driven strategies, innovative health information exchange solutions, and clinical-community partnerships to improve healthcare delivery and outcomes.

As President and Chief Executive Officer of HealtheConnections, a leading health information organization serving 26 counties across New York State, including Westchester, Elizabeth brings a collaborative leadership style and a deep commitment to improving our community's health through data, technology, and strategic partnerships.

She joined HealtheConnections in 2022 as Chief Operating Officer, where she led key initiatives across health information exchange services, data solutions, policy and compliance, business intelligence, communications, and customer engagement. Her effective leadership and strategic vision made her a natural choice to guide the organization forward, and she officially assumed the role of President and CEO at the start of 2025.

Elizabeth began her career as an administrator in a medical office, gaining firsthand insight into the experiences of both providers and patients. This understanding continues to inform her work to this day. She later served as Director of Health Information Technology for a prominent consulting firm, collaborating with healthcare providers and community stakeholders to integrate technology into patient care. She then spent over a decade with the Statewide Health Information Network for New York, holding multiple leadership roles where she drove the growth of regional health information exchanges and led transformative programs that enhanced data use and strengthened healthcare systems statewide.

Elizabeth's vision is rooted in innovation, partnership, and progress. Her leadership is marked by a forward-thinking, mission-driven approach that keeps equity and impact at the forefront. Under her guidance, HealtheConnections is poised for continued growth to serve as a trusted partner in advancing better care, healthier communities, and stronger outcomes across New York State, including right here in Westchester County.



443 North Franklin St., Suite 001  
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[healtheconnections.org](https://healtheconnections.org)

**Thank you, Westchester  
County Medical Society**  
for your continued contributions  
to better health in our community.



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# Proud to be the leader in cancer care.

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Memorial Sloan Kettering  
Cancer Center



Memorial Sloan Kettering  
Cancer Center

WESTCHESTER COUNTY MEDICAL SOCIETY  
WESTCHESTER ACADEMY OF MEDICINE  
REPORT OF THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE 2025-2026

The Nominating Committee of the Westchester County Medical and the Westchester Academy of Medicine met on April 9, 2025, and hereby nominates the following candidates for election at the Annual Meeting on June 4th to take office effective **July 1, 2025**:

***Note: Per the Bylaws, the current President-elect, Anaïs Carniciu, MD automatically assumes the Office of President and the current President, Kham Ali, MD assumes the Office of the Immediate Past President.***

***President***

Anaïs Carniciu, MD

***President-elect***

Daniel Gold, MD

***Vice President***

Bruce Molinelli, MD

***Treasurer***

Thomas Lee, MD

***Secretary***

John Abrahams, MD

***Academy of Medicine President***

Peter Acker, MD

**Delegates to the MSSNY House of Delegates**

(Five for two years; term ending 2027)

Peter Acker, MD	Bruce Molinelli, MD
Kham Ali, MD	Danilo Silva, MD
John Abrahams, MD	

**Delegates to the MSSNY House of Delegates**

(One for one year; term ending 2026)

Joseph Lee, MD

**Alternate Delegates to the MSSNY House of Delegates**

(Two for two years; term ending 2027)

Mauvareen Beverley, MD	Marshal Peris, MD
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***\*Additional candidates may be nominated from the floor at the WCMS/Academy Annual Meeting, provided that each nomination is supported by a petition signed by at least 100 members, as specified in the Bylaws.***



Kham Ali, MD, MBA, MPH, FACEP  
2024-2025  
Outgoing President  
Westchester County Medical Society



Kham Ali was born in London but grew up on the beach in South Jersey where he witnessed his parents pursue the classic American Dream via hard work, determination, and creativity. Kham was along for the ride and learned many valuable lessons as he would spend long hours in the family bakery perfecting croissants, danishes, and palmiers while serving customers. This work ethic led him to a merit scholarship at George Washington University where he completed a dual BS program and eventually medical school. He had a short stint in between undergrad and medical school with the Department of Defense in the neuro defense division as an analytical chemist.

With a passion for policy and improvement of healthcare systems, he took a year off of medical school to pursue his MBA at the University of Cambridge in the UK. There he completed projects for the NHS and multinational consulting firms. He begrudgingly gave up a consulting position in London and returned to DC to finish out medical school and eventually meandered to the field of Emergency Medicine where he fell back in love with patient care. Forever in search of opportunities to better serve his community on a larger scale, he decided to pursue an MPH at Harvard during which he started multiple impactful initiatives including a digital health equity program aimed at reducing avoidable visits by the homeless population to ERs. He graduated from the program last summer and then went on to sit for the Clinical Informatics Boards. He hopes to leverage this specialty knowledge and skill set to meaningfully contribute to the future of health care IT and specifically where it intersects with cyber security. As healthcare infrastructures continue to demonstrate the chinks in their armors, he feels that clinical experts need to be more involved to aid in the identification of vulnerabilities within frontline workflows. Kham will pursue his JD this year in order to take the (likely) final step in his educational journey. During his presidency he has started initiatives to foster relationships with local hospitals and creatively generate revenue for the medical society. He hopes to build on his education and accomplishments in order to impact meaningful change across at-risk populations, healthcare payer system inequities, and healthcare technology infrastructure.

Anaïs Carniciu MD, FAAO, FASOPRS  
Incoming President  
2025-2026  
Westchester County Medical Society



Founder & President, New York Eye and Face Oculoplastic Surgery

Dr. Anaïs Carniciu is a board-certified ophthalmologist and fellowship-trained oculofacial plastic surgeon dedicated to delivering exceptional, patient-centered care. A proud Westchester native and alumna of Chappaqua's Horace Greeley High School, she went on to graduate *cum laude* from Dartmouth College, where she was honored as a Howard Hughes Medical Institute Scholar before earning her medical degree from Stony Brook University School of Medicine.

Dr. Carniciu completed her ophthalmology residency at Case Western Reserve University, followed by an intensive, two-year fellowship in oculofacial plastic surgery through the American Society of Ophthalmic Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery (ASOPRS) at the University of Michigan. She is Westchester County's only ASOPRS-certified surgeon, part of an esteemed global community of fewer than 750 surgeons, recognized for their gold-standard expertise in

eyelid, orbital, and lacrimal surgery.

As founder of New York Eye and Face Oculoplastic Surgery in West Harrison, Dr. Carniciu has pioneered direct specialty care in Westchester, providing patients with enhanced access to advanced reconstructive and cosmetic procedures. Her clinical expertise spans a wide spectrum including eyelid reconstruction, blepharoplasty, orbital surgery, laser skin resurfacing, and facial rejuvenation. Dr. Carniciu is widely respected for combining surgical precision with an artistic understanding of facial anatomy, consistently delivering natural, balanced results.

Committed to academic excellence, Dr. Carniciu serves as Associate Adjunct Surgeon at the New York Eye and Ear Infirmary of Mount Sinai, where she mentors residents and volunteers as oculoplastic surgery faculty. She has authored multiple peer-reviewed publications and textbook chapters and regularly presents at national medical conferences.

Dr. Carniciu is equally passionate about medical advocacy and leadership. She has served as a Delegate to the Medical Society of the State of New York and chairs the Communications and Public Relations Committee for the Westchester County Medical Society. Through these roles, she works tirelessly to amplify physician voices, support public health initiatives, and foster physician engagement in championing our profession.

Using her Instagram platform, [@anaiscarniciumd](#), Dr. Carniciu educates the general public on oculoplastic surgery, healthcare policy, and critical public health topics—helping to bridge the gap between medicine and community awareness.

As incoming President of the Westchester County Medical Society, Dr. Carniciu is committed to strengthening the connection between the medical profession and the community we serve. She will continue to promote physician advocacy, innovation, and leadership development—particularly for early-career physicians—while working to elevate the visibility and standard of physicians as the trusted, compassionate leaders of healthcare.

Outside of medicine, Dr. Carniciu enjoys reading novels, traveling, and spending quality time with family and friends.

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# **Westchester Academy of Medicine hosts The Third Annual Bertrand-Pilkington Golf Outing & Fundraiser**

**Date—Tuesday, August 19, 2025  
Westchester Country Club  
99 Biltmore Avenue  
Rye, NY 10580**



**Registration, Driving Range & Halfway House Lunch  
Tee times will begin at 11:00am & will be assigned  
6:00 PM—Cocktails  
7:00 PM—Dinner and Raffles**

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## Future of Medicine Award Winner: Urja Jain—Ardsley High School Medicine & Health Services



### Abstract:

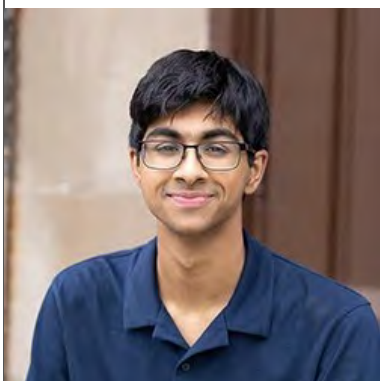
**Introduction:** Fabry disease (FD) is a rare X-linked lysosomal storage disorder that leads to cell globotriaosylceramide (Gb3) accumulation. This buildup disrupts mitochondrial function, elevates oxidative stress, and contributes to cardiovascular damage—one of the leading causes of morbidity and mortality in FD (Tseng et al., 2017). This research investigates whether L-arginine nanoparticles can enhance mitochondrial function and reduce reactive oxygen species (ROS) in Fabry cardiomyocyte models compared to free L-arginine, providing a novel therapeutic strategy. We also seek to improve FD modeling through iPSCs to generate the first beating organoid to model

FD. **Methodology:** Using dynamic light scattering and electron microscopy, L-arginine nanoparticles were synthesized and characterized for size, charge, and drug-release properties. Treatment groups included untreated Fabry iPSCs, iPSCs treated with free L-arginine, and those treated with L-arginine nanoparticles. ROS levels were measured using a spinning disk confocal microscope and MitoSOX Red and MitoTracker Green staining. Data were statistically analyzed using ImageJ with student T-tests to ensure significance. Cardiac fibroblasts were reprogrammed into induced cardiomyocytes (iCMs) to model Fabry disease. Cells were analyzed for pluripotency using immunofluorescence, and images were taken of isolated colonies. **Results:** L-arginine nanoparticles significantly reduced mitochondrial ROS levels ( $p < 0.05$ ) compared to both untreated cells and those treated with free L-arginine. We also found that iPSCs could successfully be differentiated into iCMs, and then a beating organoid, such that all three pluripotency markers (OCT4, SOX2, NANOG) were present. **Discussion and Implications:** This research demonstrates that L-arginine nanoparticles can reduce oxidative stress and improve mitochondrial function in Fabry cardiomyocytes. Future directions include in vivo studies to validate efficacy and refine nanoparticle formulations for clinical use. Beating organoids also hold tremendous promise in being used as a personalized model for FD patients.

### Future Plans:

Urja Jain is a current high school senior at Ardsley High School, with a passion for utilizing medical science and engineering to solve pressing problems in rare diseases and underrepresented populations. Next year, she plans on studying molecular biology and economics at the University of California, Berkeley. She hopes to use this background in medicine, combined with principles in business and economic policy, to drive actionable change in communities around the world.

## **Future of Medicine Award Winner: Vivek Malik—Hackley School Molecular & Cellular Biology**



### **Abstract:**

Macrophages are essential immune cells that polarize into pro-inflammatory (M1) or anti-inflammatory (M2) subtypes. M1 and M2 macrophages are involved in the progression and prevention, respectively, of atherosclerosis and cancer, the two leading causes of death. Therapeutic harnessing of macrophages is difficult due to lack of effective targets. Plexin D1 (Plxnd1) is a cell-surface receptor involved in cell signaling and migration. While Plxnd1 signaling is implicated in atherosclerosis and cancer, its role in macrophages is incompletely understood. This study investigated the role of Plxnd1 in macrophage immune responses including polarization, migration, and phagocytosis. Using THP-1 human monocytes, I created and characterized a novel model of macrophage polarization which combined treatment of M1 and M2 signals to accurately simulate in vivo conditions. Flow cytometry revealed high Plxnd1 expression across all macrophage subtypes (>60% expression), with a substantial increase in M1 (90% expression). Notably, treatment of resting-state macrophages with anti-Plxnd1 blocking antibodies elicited a two-fold increase in expression of the M2 marker CD209, indicating Plxnd1 blocking preferentially promoted anti-inflammatory macrophage polarization. ELISAs revealed that Plxnd1 blocking decreased secretion of the pro-inflammatory cytokine TNF $\alpha$ , indicating functional modulation of macrophage inflammatory signals. Transwell migration assays showed that Plxnd1 blocking enhanced macrophage migration by two-fold, while Plxnd1 activation immobilized macrophages. Lastly, microscopy analysis revealed that Plxnd1 blocking increased phagocytosis of *E. coli* in resting-state macrophages. This study elucidates Plxnd1 as a strong therapeutic target for modulation of the macrophage immune response, which may prove useful for the treatment of atherosclerosis and cancer.

### **Bio:**

Vivek Malik is a senior at Hackley School in Tarrytown, NY and an incoming first-year at Yale University. His research interests include macrophage behavior, the molecular mechanisms of T-cell lymphomas, antibody-based immunotherapies, and the computational design of small molecules through molecular docking and dynamics. Vivek was named a 2025 Regeneron Science Talent Search Finalist for his research. In the future, Vivek hopes to continue research and work in healthcare policy, drawing on a deep-rooted understanding of science to inform decision-making. In his free time, Vivek enjoys swimming, solving puzzles, and playing the piano. He also serves as a volunteer EMT with his local ambulance agency.



# Future of Medicine Award Winner: Aaron Weinberg—The Masters School Medicine & Health Sciences



## Abstract:

### **S107 Mitigates RyR2-Mediated Cardiac Dysfunction in COVID-19-Infected Rodents**

Cardiac complications associated with SARS-CoV-2 infection include arrhythmias, myocarditis, and heart failure. However, the pathogenesis underlying COVID-19-induced cardiac dysfunction remains poorly understood. The current investigation characterized the role of the ryanodine receptor (RyR2), an intracellular calcium release channel on cardiomyocytes' sarcoplasmic reticulum, in the pathophysiology of COVID-19-induced cardiac dysfunction. Rycal s107, a RyR2 stabilizer, was evaluated as a therapeutic to mitigate the RyR2-mediated calcium leak and restore cardiac function in COVID-19-infected rodents. Biochemical analyses of immunoprecipitated RyR2 from infected mouse and Syrian hamster cardiac tissue revealed pronounced phosphorylation and oxidation of RyR2 and depletion of its stabilizing subunit, calstabin2, hallmarks of a pathological calcium leak. In situ s107 treatment increased binding of calstabin2 to RyR2, likely stabilizing the channel. Calcium spark imaging corroborated these findings, demonstrating a significant increase in calcium spark frequency in cardiomyocytes treated with cytokines identified to be upregulated in COVID-19 cardiac tissue ( $P < .0001$ ). Calcium spark frequency normalized following ex vivo s107 treatment. Echocardiograms revealed a 0.73-fold decrease in ejection fraction in infected hamsters compared to controls ( $P < .001$ ). In vivo s107 treatment significantly improved cardiac function ( $P = .02$ ). These findings confirm the role of RyR2 in cardiac pathophysiology associated with COVID-19 and highlight the therapeutic potential of s107 in improving cardiac function by reducing the RyR2  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  leak. This study sets the stage for future in vivo investigations and clinical trials, employing s107 to reduce COVID-19 morbidity and mortality.

## Bio:

Aaron Weinberg is an incoming freshman at Cornell University's College of Engineering, where he plans to study Biomedical Engineering on the pre-med track. He has a strong interest in biomedical research, with experience investigating cardiac dysfunction in COVID-19-infected rodent models at Columbia University's Marks Lab and exploring species-specific differences in interleukin-15 at Regeneron Pharmaceuticals.

Outside the lab, Aaron has served as a peer leader, captain of Varsity Tennis, co-chair of *Pickle for a Purpose* (a charitable club that raises funds through pickleball), vice president of the Gold Key Touring Ambassadors, and a teacher's assistant at Bet Am Shalom Synagogue.

He looks forward to continuing his research and community engagement at Cornell, and he ultimately hopes to pursue an MD/PhD after college.

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Medicine & Health Sciences

Vivek Malik—Hackley School  
Cellular & Molecular Biology

Aaron Weinberg—The Masters School  
Medicine & Health Sciences

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