

# THE TICKER

NEWS ABOUT RCHC: CARING FOR THE HEART OF OUR COMMUNITY

Rowan University  
SCHOOL OF OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE

**ROWAN**  
**COMMUNITY**  
**HEALTH CENTER**  
SPRING 2021 EDITION



## OUR VISION:

Osteopathic Medical  
Students Providing  
Comprehensive Health  
Care for Those in Need.

## OUR MISSION:

The Mission of the Rowan Community Health Center is to promote community health initiatives in order to provide, free, quality comprehensive primary care services and health education to the underserved communities surrounding RowanSOM while educating medical students in performing clinical exams, fostering cultural competency, and allowing for inter-professional communication and humanism in medicine.

## LETTER FROM DIRECTOR

*written by Maria Rita Anache, OMSIV and Sobiah Khan, OMSIII*

**T**he Rowan Community Health Center (RCHC) has faced many challenges and exciting beginnings within the past year. Our year started with adjusting to the current pandemic and continuously looking for ways to serve our community while we had to temporarily close our doors in the spring of 2020. Our eboard members were innovative and creative as we looked for ways to maintain our partnerships with current organizations in the Camden and Lindenwold communities. We expanded our outreach opportunities by providing virtual health education classes and various fundraisers. Simultaneously, with the help of the assistant director, Sobiah Khan, I worked on a COVID-19 Protocol that would allow the RCHC to re-open in a safe and effective manner. It was our priority to quickly be able to provide medical services to our community, who needed us then and now more than ever. After only four months of being closed due to the pandemic, the RCHC was one of the first student-run clinics in the country to be able to re-open with a completely in-person service since the start of the pandemic.

Although we felt “set back” after temporarily closing our doors, it is safe to say that the RCHC is a resilient organization composed of committed medical students who are constantly looking for ways to improve the clinic performance and service provided to our patients. As we discussed ways to enhance our services, we started the Case Management Program, with the goal of connecting with our patient population on a regular basis and follow-up regarding laboratory results, imaging and additional tests. The goal of this project is to also address social determinants of health that may affect patients’ ability of prioritizing their own health, such as food insecurity, transportation issues, etc. We also started a colon cancer screening initiative, which has allowed us to provide eligible patients with at-home Fecal Immunohistochemical Testing Kits with the goal of identifying and preventing colon cancer early on.

As my time as the executive director of the RCHC comes to an end, I can’t help but feel mixed emotions of excitement and sadness to leave. The RCHC has been the center of my medical school career, and was the organization that helped me feel motivated throughout my journey at Rowan SOM. It has also helped me find my passion for Family Medicine and future goals of continuing to address social determinants of health while striving to decrease barriers in terms of access to health care. I am excited to see what the future holds for the RCHC. I know for certain that this organization will continue to grow and look for ways to improve, while continuing to fulfill our vision of osteopathic medical students providing comprehensive health care for those in need.

## PARTNER SPOTLIGHT: Bienestar Pharmacy and Wellness Center

written by Mark Conforti, OMSI

Rowan Community Health Center appreciates all our various partners and organizations. In the Partner Spotlight section of “The Ticker” we hope to highlight people doing amazing things for the people around us. Fortunately, I had a chance to speak to our friends at Bienestar Pharmacy and Wellness Center. Bienestar Pharmacy and Wellness Center is a 3.5-year-old community pharmacy that is located right in Lindenwold! The small business exudes so much passion and love through a purposeful mission to engage, empower, and educate members of their local community. I was lucky to have the opportunity to speak with two wonderful people: Dr. Gladys Dueñas, pharmacist and owner of Bienestar Pharmacy, and Priyanka Sanghavi, pharmacy technician and a current undergraduate student at Drexel University.

As a community pharmacy, Bienestar strives to offer a wide variety of resources accessible to someone as soon as they walk through the doors. Built into its design, the pharmacy has a classroom and consultation rooms to provide patients in the community a place to be heard and learn information about their health and overall wellness. At the heart of Bienestar, is its purpose: connecting with people and providing them an experience in which they can have their questions and concerns attended to.



administer the Covid vaccines. She also noted how Priyanka was doing operational work and data analysis, which would allow them to continue to assess and analyze how the pharmacy’s services are reached and received by their community members.

Growing up in a Latino-Hispanic family in North Jersey, Dr. Dueñas, at a young age, was inspired by the pharmacist in her community and loved the knowledge that they offered. After completing pharmacy school, a residency in clinical pharmacy, and working in academia, Dr. Dueñas ultimately decided to go back to her roots to create a space for a community she knew needed resources. She shared that while working in a clinic serving patients in Camden, she met a patient who did not know how to read and confused his long-acting insulin and his short-acting insulin. This prompted the patient to inject himself with the long-acting insulin multiple times per day. Dr. Dueñas described this as a pivotal moment as she learned that giving medications should not be the only goal, but education should accompany it. Through the love and support of her family and friends, Bienestar Pharmacy and Wellness Center was born.

Towards the conclusion of our conversation, both Dr. Dueñas and Priyanka offered some advice for students who are interested in working with their local communities. Priyanka highlighted

the importance of reaching out to see if there are opportunities within your local pharmacy or clinic, while also focusing on not spreading yourself too thin and focusing on just a few things to center your attention. Dr. Dueñas shared that it’s important to keep your purpose at your heart, and for students to emphasize what they know and what they can bring to the table. She noted, “During your journey, it’s also important to recognize how much people bring to the table, and in this case, your patients. You can get easily caught up in the therapeutics or pathophysiology or all the stuff we are learning, and I think that’s cool. But at the end of the day, the expert is right in front of you and that’s your patient. And so they are not an expert in a medical or therapeutic standpoint, but they are telling you. So always kind of remind yourself to check-in and say, ‘Am I listening to them?’”

Thank you Dr. Dueñas, Priyanka, and the Bienestar Staff for all the wonderful work you do! If you are interested in visiting Bienestar Pharmacy and Wellness Center; they are located at: 799 S Emerson Ave, Lindenwold, NJ 08021.

With the start of the pandemic over a year ago, Bienestar Pharmacy’s priority was to instill confidence in their community by adequately informing their patients about Covid-19. The pharmacy adapted structurally and operationally to continue many of their services to their patients. Although in-person classes are not currently available, Bienestar naturally took to advertising on Facebook and doing educational information blasts through social media. RCHC Outreach Department has partnered with Bienestar pharmacy to offer some of these online information sessions. Most recently, earlier in the semester, there was a “How to Lose the ‘Quarantine 15’” educational seminar about good eating habits and a healthy lifestyle at home.

Upon continuing our conversation, I learned that Priyanka took the initiative to approach Bienestar Pharmacy to inquire about working there as part of her education at Drexel. As an educator and mentor, Dr. Dueñas, gleaming with joy, reported that Priyanka recently received her immunization certification from the State of New Jersey, which would allow her to

## RESEARCH DEPARTMENT UPDATES

written by Sahil Parikh, OMSI

The COVID-19 pandemic has continued to disrupt almost everyone’s normal day to day function. Yet everyone has found a way to overcome these obstacles and the RCHC’s research committee is no different. Despite seeing fewer patients due to social distancing guidelines, the research committee is continuing to develop new research projects as well as improving existing projects to deliver the best healthcare our patients deserve. It is even more important now to provide access to healthcare to our patients as the pandemic has been highlighting and amplifying the gaps within our healthcare system. With the rollout of the COVID-19 vaccine on the horizon, we are optimistically at the beginning of the end.

Our longest running project aims to understand the patients and community that comes to RCHC, so that we can best change and adapt the clinic to be more suitable to the community. One major finding is that our patients (n=1750) have not been following through with the labs and blood work that the doctors are recommending. This brings up the further questions of why these patients are not following through and if it’s correlated to a lack in accessibility. From seeing these trends, we as the RCHC have started implementing our own accommodations to administer blood work. With this, we will be able to draw blood and check lab values, such as glucose and iron, right in the clinic so the patients do not have to go elsewhere and can provide follow up care.



In addition to this project, the research committee has received IRB approval to start a new project focusing on mental health within our patient population. While waiting for approval for a second project focusing on health literacy, we ultimately hope to have a more comprehensive understanding of the patient population we serve with these projects. Along with the various services that the RCHC has to offer, we will also be providing screenings to patients to determine the prevalence of Major Depressive Disorder and Generalized Anxiety Disorder. With this we will be seeing if the general population needs specialized mental care at the clinic.

Our other upcoming project will quantify the level of health literacy of our patient population and see how this translates into other aspects of their lives. Our last project is to educate and quantify how much patients understand what strokes are, how to recognize symptoms, and what to do if someone is having a stroke. From here, we will be able to see if the community will benefit from educational classes on various common diseases such as stroke. As our numerous projects begin to unfold, our overall hope and goal at the RCHC clinic is to close the healthcare disparities gap and improve accessibility through the data we collect from our research projects.

## RCHC COLON CANCER SCREENING INITIATIVE

written by Patrick J. Tempera, OMSIV

In 2019, RCHC set out to initiate a colon cancer screening program for the Lindenwold community. Prior to the start of this project, a Needs Based Analysis created by Rowan-SOM medical students was performed within the Lindenwold community and Greater Philadelphia region and reported only 16% of the Lindenwold population having access to colon cancer screening. For reference, the national average for the insured patient is 63% and the national average for the uninsured patient is 22%. Research performed by the American Cancer Society shows that “individuals with health insurance are nearly twice as likely as those without health insurance to have access to critical early detection cancer procedures. Uninsured individuals are less likely to get screened for cancer, are more likely to be diagnosed with cancer at an advanced stage, and are less likely to survive that diagnosis than their insured counterparts.”

In order to provide colon cancer screening for the Lindenwold community, RCHC has created the RCHC Colon Cancer Screening Initiative. Patients who meet certain criteria will be provided at-home Fecal Immunohistochemical Testing Kits. This testing kit analyzes patient stool for hidden blood that may not be visible to the human eye due to changes that may be signs of cancer in an otherwise asymptomatic patient. This screening modality offers individuals the opportunity to prevent colon cancer or find it early. Finding cancer early gives you a better chance for successful treatment. Early colon cancer usually has no symptoms and you no longer have to wait for symptoms to occur. Please use the RCHC Colon Cancer Screening Initiative services. If you would like to learn more about colon cancer and who is at risk and who should likely be screened please use this resource from the American Cancer Society: Colorectal Cancer Guideline | How Often to Have Screening Tests.

## CASE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

written by Wali Kamran, OMS-II

The Rowan Community Health Center is excited to announce our brand-new Case Management Program, a system developed to integrate proper education and follow-up with patients to allow us to better serve our community. This program is designed to further the clinic's ability to establish greater rapport and continuity of care with our patients. A Case Manager would be assigned to a patient who comes to clinic, to ensure that patients follow up with any lab results, imaging, or even applications that they may need help to have completed. The Case Manager for a particular patient will be a Rowan SOM Student Doctor or Rowan University Graduate Student of Biomedical Sciences student, who will be present on the initial clinic date that the patient attended. Participation in the program is non-binding – patients will be able to opt out at their own leisure or convenience!

Moreover, this is an opportunity for us to get to know our community a little better and the challenges they face. We intend to utilize this program as an opportunity to maximize our potential as a resource for our patients, and advocate for them in whatever struggles they may have. These include access/knowledge of nearby pharmacies, options for healthy food and groceries nearby, and ensuring patients have resources for optimal transportation options around them. Additionally,

we hope to aid our patients in applying for medical coverage, if needed, such as Charity Care.

Case Managers will carefully store all confidential patient information in a secure database called RedCap. RedCap enables users to specifically store data gained from intake surveys,

which our patients are administered upon initiation of the program. All of our managers are carefully trained in using and managing a RedCap account, in order to eliminate any potential room for error. RedCap will allow us to safely gather patient information and better establish rapport with our patients, without patients having to worry about where their information is being stored.

We hope this program allows us better continuity of care with our patients, as well as a better understanding and trust in the community as a free, student run health clinic. We stress that this is an equal opportunity program and is one we implore all our patients to enroll in, regardless of what stressors or obstacles they may face in

their life. Our clinic prides itself in serving all individuals with the utmost respect and care, regardless of color or creed. We aim to bridge the gap between patient and provider, and help our patients as best as we can!

**“this is an opportunity for us to get to know our community a little better and the challenges they face”**

## SPANISH INTERPRETERS/ TRANSLATORS NEEDED!

written by Wali Kamran, OMS-II

### Calling all Rowan SOM/GSBS Spanish Speaking Students!

We are looking for individuals who are interested in volunteering as Spanish interpreters for the Rowan Community Health Center during our Saturday Clinic Dates. This is a great opportunity as a student to get exposure to patient care up close, while establishing rapport between patient and provider!

If you are interested, feel free to reach out to us at: [rowancommunityhealthcenter@rowan.edu](mailto:rowancommunityhealthcenter@rowan.edu)



## BREAKFAST FOR CHAMPIONS!

written by Shelly Sharma, OMS-III

For some, breakfast is a meal often ignored. Sometimes you are either running late, trying to finish some work before heading out for the day, or you just don't have the energy to make food in the morning. While each person is different and eating breakfast may not be for everyone, there are quite a few positives to starting your day with a great meal. One benefit to having breakfast is that your body and brain are now filled with energy to power through the day. Additionally, observational studies show that breakfast can help maintain heart health and lower the risk of diabetes. So, if you are trying to be a breakfast person or just interested in trying new recipes, check out these recipes below!

### Overnight Oats

The best thing about overnight oats is that they can also be made with different toppings or flavors, so you don't feel like you are eating the same thing everyday.

#### Here is what you need:

- ½ cups of oats: these can be either rolled oats, steel cut oats
- ¾ tbsp of chia seeds
- ½ cup of milk that you prefer: almond, oat, or regular milk all work well
- 1 tbsp of maple syrup or brown sugar

#### Toppings:

these are simply combination suggestions, you can add whatever you like  
 Strawberries, blueberries, almonds  
 Bananas, peanut butter, walnuts  
 Chocolate chips, espresso powder, pecans  
 Raspberries, strawberries, yogurt chips

#### Instructions:

1. In a bowl or mason jar, add your milk, chia seeds, and maple syrup or brown sugar and stir together
2. Add your oats and stir them in
3. Refrigerate overnight
4. Add your toppings in the morning
5. Enjoy!



### Tofu Scramble

If you prefer a more savory breakfast, this one's for you! Tofu is a great vegetarian/vegan alternative and can be stored for a few days.

#### Here's what you need:

- 1 block of firm or extra firm tofu
- 2 tbsp of olive oil
- ¼ teaspoon of turmeric powder

Spices: garlic powder, cajun powder, or italian seasoning, depending on what flavor you are craving

Salt and pepper to your liking

Vegetables you can include: onion, garlic, bell peppers

#### Instructions:

1. Take tofu out of packaging and wrap in a paper towel to absorb moisture
2. In a pan, add 1 tbsp olive oil and saute onion, garlic, bell peppers and any other vegetables you would like to include with spices of your choice
  - a. I really like using cajun powder with garlic powder, red pepper flakes, salt and pepper
3. Once veggies are done, take them out of the pan and set them aside
4. In the same pan, add some more olive oil and tofu. Using a fork, break apart the tofu so that you get smaller chunks
5. Mix around tofu in olive oil
6. Add turmeric powder to tofu and any other spices you would like
7. Once all mixed together, keep on pan for 3-5 minutes until tofu gets a crispy/golden brown appearance
8. Add veggies to the pan and mix into tofu
9. Let it cool down for a bit and enjoy!

The tofu scramble can be eaten just as is with some sriracha sauce or salsa on top. You can also add in some cheese. Goes well with a piece of whole wheat toast!

References: <https://health.clevelandclinic.org/do-you-really-need-to-eat-breakfast/>

# COMMUNITY DRIVEN PROJECTS: Promoting Health Prevention and Education

written by Shelly Sharma, OMS-III

As always, the RCHC prides itself for taking on new initiatives in all areas of healthcare. Two new projects that members of the Center are working on include a Preventative Health Series and a research study to better understand what patients know about Stroke as well as implementation of stroke education.

The Preventative Health Series consists of a specific health topic being dedicated to each month. Throughout the month, infographics and resources are shared via social media to passively educate people about the designated topic. For a more active educational component, there is a live presentation and discussion every month given by a medical student or professional. These discussions are open forums for community members to ask specific questions and actually take time to learn about each health topic. Regardless of what each month's topic is, the key takeaway of this series is that people can be active participants in their own medical care. There are steps that can be taken everyday to prevent many chronic illnesses and resources to help along the way. In times of COVID-19, where public health is facing an uphill battle, RCHC hopes to continue to empower all those who participate in the Preventative Health Series and better health literacy. If you are inter-

ested in learning more about the Preventative Health Series or joining one of our sessions please fill out this form: [www.tinyurl.com/rchcheart](http://www.tinyurl.com/rchcheart).



“Time is brain,” is a phrase often heard in medical settings, specifically when talking about strokes. Cerebrovascular accidents (CVAs) or strokes occur when there is brain damage due to interruption of blood supply. Unfortunately, these happen far too often and can be severely detrimental. However, medical therapies and surgical procedures have developed so extensively, that there are treatments if one has a stroke. Yet, treatment and surgery success is dependent on how quickly a patient gets to a hospital and sees a doctor. Thus, “time is brain.” Our study wants to better understand if people truly understand the signs and symptoms of a stroke and what to do if they think someone is having a stroke. Furthermore, we want to help educate participants enrolled in the study about stroke using different modalities, such as videos

or written pamphlets. It is hard to predict when a stroke may occur, but if we can help to educate everyday people on how to respond faster, we may be able to save more lives.

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