



# NEWSLETTER

## Sangamon County Medical Society

September 2025

Dear Members,

As summer winds down and we begin to feel the first hints of fall in the air, I'm reminded of how much this season brings with it a sense of transition. The changing leaves, the cooler mornings, and the return of routine after the chaos of summer all mark a fresh chapter, not just in nature, but in the life of our medical community as well.

This time of year always brings a special energy as we welcome a new class of residents to Sangamon County. These young physicians bring fresh perspectives, sharp minds, and a deep commitment to service. It's inspiring to see their enthusiasm and determination, and I know I speak for many of us when I say we're eager to support their journey, mentor when we can, and learn alongside them. To our new colleagues: welcome. You're now part of a strong, proud, and deeply engaged medical community.

We also had the chance to come together recently for one of our favorite annual traditions: the Springfield Horseshoes game. The event brought together physicians, families, and community members for an evening of fun, laughter, and just enough friendly competition to keep things interesting. It's always refreshing to spend time with colleagues outside the clinic or hospital walls. For those who couldn't make it this year, we missed you, and we hope to see you next time.

Our medical students also continue to make us proud. Their passion, innovation, and commitment to improving health in our community is evident in the work they do every day. Whether through research, service, advocacy, or clinical excellence, they are already making their mark. Be sure to check out this month's newsletter to read more about some of their recent accomplishments, you'll see why the future of medicine here in Sangamon County is so bright.

As we head into the fall, I encourage you all to stay connected, with your peers, your patients, and your sense of purpose. There's so much good work happening in Sangamon County, and I'm proud to be in it with each of you.

Warmly,

Shreepada Tripathy MD MBA MS-SA FAAP FHM  
President, Sangamon County Medical Society



## Creative Wellness: A Journey Through Trust, Art, and Healing Vidya Sundareshan, MD

A few months ago, I received a message on Facebook from someone I hadn't seen in over a decade. Carmen had been just eight years old when we met during a production of *The Jungle Book* at the Hoogland Center in 2013. She had played the part of a radiant bird, fluttering through the stage with joy. I hadn't heard from her in years. "Would you consider teaching a workshop at Washington University," she asked, "on trust in public health—but through a creative medium? Maybe music or dance?" I found myself smiling at the screen. This wasn't just an opportunity—it felt like a reflection of something deeper, something I've carried with me all my life.



### The Spark: A Dancer on the Screen

I was nine when I first saw her—an Indian classical dancer on television. Her eyes told stories without words; her movements seemed to breathe emotion. I remember sitting completely still, unable to look away.

My mother quietly joined me and wrapped her arms around my shoulders. She pointed to the screen and whispered, "This is going to be your dance teacher."

A few days later, I stood at the doorway of her studio, my small hands clutching a colorful autograph book filled with signatures of people who inspired me. I didn't know it then, but this stunningly graceful lady who welcomed me that day would become far more than a teacher. She would be my anchor, my friend, and my philosopher and guide.

### Art and Medicine: Parallel Paths

At seventeen, I left my home in New Delhi to begin medical school. My teachers in dance and music were heartbroken that I chose to pursue a career in medicine. They knew what I was leaving behind. And they were right—there wasn't much time for raagas or rehearsals amidst anatomy textbooks and tight exam schedules.

But I kept coming back to it. Late at night, when the silence was too loud, I would hum the notes of a familiar raga or move through a short dance sequence. Every time I did, something shifted inside me. It was like exhaling after holding my breath all day. I returned to my studying more focused, more whole. In town, I was often the "unofficial" performer for medical conferences—sharing music and movement in spaces where stress and structure ruled. My connection to the arts wasn't just a hobby. It became a lifeline.



## Creative Wellness: A Journey Through Trust, Art, and Healing

The art community embraced me—offering encouragement, comfort, and joy. They showed up when I was exhausted, they celebrated when I passed difficult exams, and they reminded me that my identity was more than my profession. That sense of belonging still stays with me. My artist friends continue to uplift me and inspire me.

### Creative Wellness: The Healing Thread

So when Carmen reached out, I knew this wasn't just about trust in public health. It was about creative trust—in ourselves, in others, in the process of healing through art. There is growing evidence that creativity isn't just good for the soul—it's essential for our well-being. The World Health Organization defines health as "a complete state of physical, mental, and social well-being." That means we can't separate healing from our emotional, expressive selves.

In Indian classical dance, we speak of the Navarasa—nine core emotional expressions that reflect the full human experience: love, courage, wonder, peace, laughter, sorrow, anger, fear, and disgust. In my workshop at Washington University, we used those expressions to explore body language and build conversations around trust—in each other, in healthcare, and in ourselves. It was one of the most fulfilling experiences I've had.

### Why It Matters—for All of Us

Creativity isn't a luxury. It's not a side project. It's a form of self-care, as essential as sleep or exercise. Studies show that dancing reduces blood pressure and stress. Ceramics and embroidery act like moving meditation. Making art increases dopamine levels, which improves focus, emotional regulation, and joy.

And no, you don't need to be a professional artist. Maybe you journaled once. Maybe you played the flute or painted watercolors. Start there. Reconnect with it—not as a project to finish, but as a part of yourself waiting to come alive again. We are not meant to live split lives—one side professional, one side passionate. Creative wellness invites us to integrate. To bring our whole selves into the room. To heal, not just treat. To live fully, not just function.

So take five minutes today. Hum. Sketch. Dance. Write one awkward line in a journal. It's not about performance. It's about presence.

Let creativity lead you back to yourself.

As for me—I can't wait to return next year and share in that journey once again.



September 2025

## Upcoming Events.....



### **SCMS Dinner Meeting**

#### **Special Guests: Illinois State Medical Society**



**Richard C. Anderson, M.D.,  
President**



**Scott Reimers, Vice President,  
State Legislative Affairs**

**Arlington's Gourmet Provisions  
210 Broadway, Springfield IL  
October 22, 2025**

**5:30 pm Social time, 6:00 pm Program  
Dinner and Cash Bar**

Dr. Anderson and Mr. Scott Reimers will be our guests, presenting an update on what the Illinois State Medical Society has been involved in over the past year.

Enjoy Arlington's delicious food offerings as we socialize and discuss organized medicine and its impact.

Please RSVP to [ozma@scmsdocs.org](mailto:ozma@scmsdocs.org) by October 15th  
Membership in ISMS or SCMS not required



September 2025

## SAVE THE DATE



Meet and Greet  
with

**Sameer Vohra, MD, JD, MA**  
Director of the Illinois Department of Public Health

January 28, 2026

6:00pm

Venue to be announced

## What our Students have been up to...

I was able to attend the Midwestern Association of Plastic Surgeons 2025 Annual Meeting in Lake Geneva, WI, where my poster “Radial Tunnel Release: Demographics, Comorbidities and Outcomes” was accepted. This was my first in-person plastic surgery conference, and I wanted to highlight some of the things I learned from my experience and how it will help me in my future career.

With this being my first plastic surgery conference, I was able to listen to plenary speakers present on a wide range of plastic surgery domains including hand surgery, craniofacial surgery, and breast surgery. This meeting was particularly timely as it occurred right before I started my away rotations and I was able to connect with residents, faculty, and program directors at some of the institutions where I was heading for my rotations. I was also able to listen to other resident/student presentations and get a better understanding of the research being done at various plastic surgery residency programs in the Midwest.

This experience was a wonderful learning experience in addition to being a great networking opportunity as I head into residency application season. Thank you again for your support that allowed me to attend the MAPS 2025 Annual Meeting.

Sara Lee

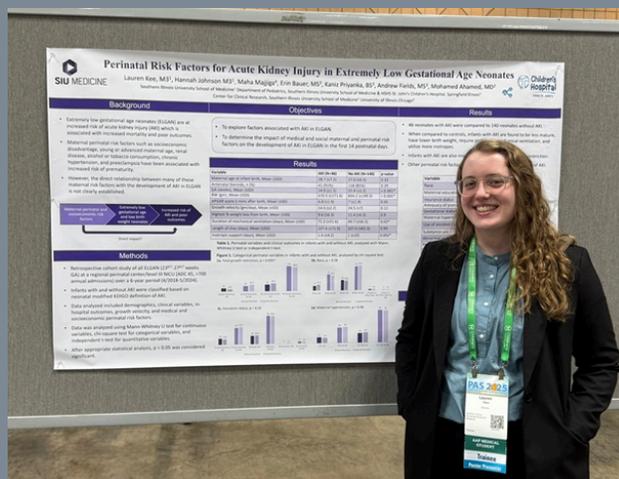
# What our Students have been up to...

Dear Members of the Sangamon County Medical Society –

At the end of April, I had the opportunity to present my research at the Pediatric Academic Societies (PAS) Conference in Honolulu, HI. My project, entitled “Perinatal Risk Factors for Acute Kidney Injury in Extremely Low Gestational Age Neonates,” was accepted as an abstract and poster to this conference and was completed under the mentorship of Dr. Mohamed F. Ahamed and the Division of Neonatology at SIUSOM and St. John’s Children’s Hospital.

At this conference, I had the chance to form connections with resident, fellow, and attending pediatricians as well as several residency programs. I also attended multiple presentations, allowing me to learn more about current research and advances in various pediatric specialties. As a medical student planning to pursue pediatrics, this was an excellent opportunity for me to showcase research happening at SIU and facilitate my future career. I sincerely thank you for your support and financial contribution to my research and professional development! Thank you,

- Lauren Kee, SIU School of Medicine Class of 2026





September 2025

## What our Students have been up to...

The FCAAP's Medical Student Forum was a wonderful opportunity to meet with other students interested in the pediatric specialty. I was very grateful for the opportunity to speak about my team's research looking at Food Insecurity in SIU's Pediatric clinics, as an oral presentation. Following the talk, I received positive feedback and engaged in interesting discussions, which our team is now using to further direct the project. In addition to presenting, I was able to attend a full day of sessions with presentations by my peers and learn from many challenging research topics and ethical questions. Some memorable discussions included new approaches to immunotherapy use in brain malignancies, the most successful and least stigmatizing ways to talk about weight management with adolescents, and strategies being used to combat the pediatric psychiatrist shortage in Puerto Rico. We also had a very encouraging group session from Dr. Krithika Lingappan, Associate Professor of Pediatrics in the Division of Neonatology at the University of Pennsylvania at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. She spoke about her research, balance in the practice of medicine, and how to keep your passion during the medical education journey. Overall, this conference broadened my horizons, challenged me, and ignited in me a new eagerness to learn about and practice Pediatrics. I am very grateful to the Sangamon County Medical Society for the support that allowed me to take part in this forum. Thank you for this opportunity to learn!

Allison Mool



I am the blonde girl wearing green third from the left in the back row

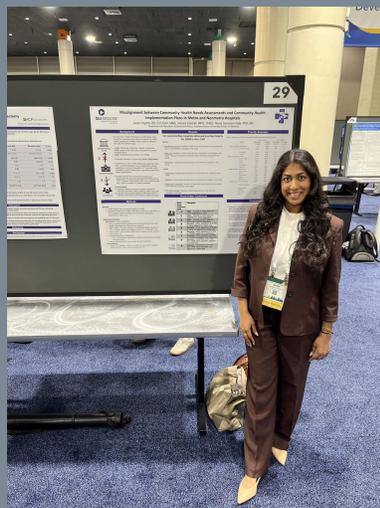


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## What our Students have been up to...

Hi my name is Avani Yaganti, and I am a fourth year medical student at SIUSOM. I recently matched at the University of Iowa for Internal Medicine Residency. At the American College of Physicians (ACP) Illinois Chapter Scientific meeting this past fall, I presented my project titled "Misalignment between Community Health Needs Assessments and Community Health Implementation Plans in Metro and Nonmetro Hospitals." I was fortunate to win first place there, and as a result, I was given the opportunity to present my work at the national ACP conference in New Orleans, Louisiana. I have conducted research in this space throughout medical school, and addressing health inequities is important to me.

I am grateful to the Sangamon County Medical Society for their support in me attending this conference. The travel grant greatly contributed to the cost of attendance. While in New Orleans, I was lucky to be able to meet students, residents, and physicians from across the country. I was also able to connect with physicians from Iowa who I will be working with next year. I was able to attend multiple sessions on standards of care in prescribing and new innovations in medicine. The conference ended with my participation in the poster contest. Posters were set up, and judges came around to each participant. I gave a short presentation and concluded with answering any questions. This conference was an excellent professional opportunity, and I can't thank the Sangamon County Medical Society enough for this travel grant.





September 2025

## What our Students have been up to...

My experience attending the Pediatric Academic Societies (PAS) 2025 meeting was incredibly rewarding both professionally and personally. I had the opportunity to present my research on reducing unnecessary, and sometimes harmful, diagnostic and treatment interventions in the treatment of bronchiolitis. Sharing this work with a community so passionate about advancing the health of children was encouraging and left me better prepared to do so in the future. Throughout the conference, I engaged in meaningful conversations with attendees who not only offered valuable insights into my project but also shared their own experiences and innovations in pediatric medicine.

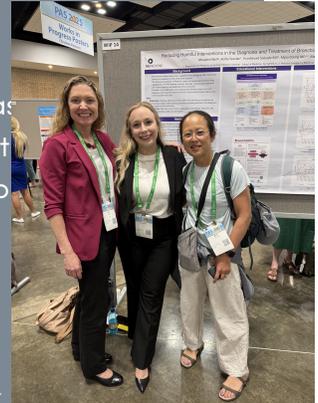
One of the most impactful connections I made during the conference was with a second-year pediatrics resident from Florida who had completed a quality improvement project at her hospital focused on addressing the lack of antibiotic stop dates for neutropenic, afebrile pediatric patients. Our conversation highlighted the importance of careful, thoughtful stewardship in pediatric care and reinforced my passion for research that prioritizes safety, evidence-based practice, and minimizing harm.

Dr. Aaron E. Carroll, the Debbie Anagnostelis Keynote Speaker, gave a very important and impactful lecture titled, "Why 'Follow the Science' Falls Short: Reimagining How We Communicate Research". He challenged us to think critically about the limitations of purely data-driven messaging in a pivotal societal climate where scientists and healthcare professionals are not readily trusted by the public. He emphasized the importance of empathy and nuance in how we translate scientific findings to the public and policy makers. His perspective resonated deeply with my own interest in improving how we engage both families and clinicians in evidenced based yet individualized care.

In addition to presenting my work and learning from fellow researchers, I attended a workshop on psychological safety led by three faculty members from UCSF who work closely with both residents and medical students. This session emphasized the importance of cultivating environments where learners feel safe to speak up, ask questions, and address concerns. A particularly engaging portion of the workshop involved role playing, where we practiced conflict resolution strategies and communication tools designed to foster psychological safety. The experience was both fun and deeply educational, providing me with skills I can use in clinical teams throughout my training and career.

Attending PAS 2025 opened my eyes to the breadth and depth of research and advocacy happening within pediatrics. I left the conference inspired by the collective efforts of clinicians, researchers, and educators to improve care for children across the globe. I am especially grateful to the Sangamon County Medical Society for supporting my attendance at this conference.

Micaylen Wolf



## What our Students have been up to...



I had the opportunity to attend two neurosurgical conferences that enhanced my academic development within the neurosurgical community. First, I attended the MGB Global Neurosurgery Symposium held in Boston, Massachusetts. This symposium brought together global leaders in neurosurgery to address access in underserved regions. Leaders from around the world spent the first day broadcasting videos of how they uniquely perform skull base operations in their country. The main event of this conference was the Boston Declaration, a pledge that outlines the plan to develop safe and timely neurosurgical care worldwide. I was able to attend the Edward M. Kennedy Institute for this declaration. The purpose was to provide ideas on how to advance neurosurgical services using global health initiatives. Attending this symposium provided me the opportunity to engage with international neurosurgeons, which would not have been possible without the funding from SCMS.

The same week, I attended the 2025 American Association of Neurological Surgeons (AANS) Annual Scientific Meeting at the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center. The theme of this year's meeting was "Power of One, Impact of Many," which reflected the collaborative effort towards effective global neurosurgery. At this meeting, I presented two research projects. The first project examined long-term outcomes following two-level Axial Lumbar Interbody Fusion (AxialIF). Our study focused on rates of adjacent segment disease and index-level reoperations in patients undergoing this approach. The second project was a poster that focused on aneurysms, investigating the relationship between vascular morphology and the formation of aneurysms. Presenting these findings allowed me to receive meaningful feedback for future directions and further refine my research communication skills.

Both of these experiences have greatly impacted my professional growth. I was able to both contribute to and learn from the evolving field of neurosurgery on a global level. These events have furthered my interest in a career in neurosurgery and have inspired me to continue conducting my research. I am grateful for the opportunity to attend and represent my institution at these conferences, which was made possible by the SCMS.

Noah Drewes

# Sangamon County Medical Society

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