

Class of 2020



Jaleh Akhavan Yekta

University of Colorado

I was born and raised in the suburbs of Denver, Colorado with a near-decade stint in rural Wisconsin during grade school. After getting a degree in International Affairs from the University of Colorado in Boulder, followed by some soul-searching, I decided becoming a doctor would be a fulfilling lifestyle. I attended the University of Colorado School of Medicine with the hope of serving a community of women in the future. Family medicine provides training which best helps me achieve this dream. While in medical school, I fell in love with a New Mexican native who will be an emergency physician. We are excited to return to his home state and what I believe is a hidden gem because of the cultural diversity, beautiful skies, and kind-hearted people.



Zainab Aldaoseri

University of Al-Mustansiriyah

As a medical graduate from Iraq, I had the chance to practice medicine in many hospitals, clinics, and to serve a wide diversity of patients. It was a journey of soul searching. I realize how miraculous medicine can be, and how much of a difference we can make in others' lives. My passion for family medicine started when I served in rural areas, where many underserved families live. The joy of seeing the smile on my patients' faces, and the simple thanks, always made my days. I moved with my family to New Mexico, as refugees three years ago. The people of New Mexico were so kind, and they took good care of us. My husband and I are hoping to settle down in Albuquerque and to raise our kids here. I am very appreciative for how much I have learned from my education and life experiences. I am looking forward to my future as a family doctor with a great sense of commitment to provide exceptional patient care. Family medicine offers the opportunity to learn, to teach, to empathize, and to improve lives of others. I look forward to a lifetime filled with these opportunities.



Isaac Armistead

University of New Mexico

New Mexico has been home for most of my life, as well as the place where I received my medical education.

Formative experiences in community health centers in southern New Mexico and the East Mountain area of Albuquerque drew me to the essence of family medicine: comprehensive scope of practice, long-term patient relationships, and concern for wider determinants of health. The UNM residency program attracted me because of its high-quality training in family medicine, integration of community health opportunities, and the great



Carlos Cano

University of New Mexico

Albuquerque weather! In our leisure time, my wife and I enjoy music, cooking, and being outdoors.

I am from a small town in New Mexico, and as someone from a rural community, I grew up going to family physicians. That may have set a precedent for what I would become. Throughout medical school, I realized that what was most important to me was to have long-term patient-physician relationships that would allow me to see different generations of the same family and be able to feel comfortable seeing both the youngest of patients to the elderly as well. I have a particular interest in Spanish-speaking populations because my parents both came from Mexico and the town I grew up in was primarily Spanish speaking. During my time at UNM I got to meet all the wonderful staff and residents at the Family Medicine program and really enjoyed all my time with them both in the hospital and at the clinics. It was clear to me that UNM matched my goals in every way and naturally, I wanted to remain here for my training!



Sabrina Gill

Perelman Univ Pennsylvania

Hello! I am pursuing family medicine because of my longstanding interest in social justice and community building. During medical school, I helped write affidavits for immigrants seeking political asylum, hosted monthly arts-and-crafts fundraisers for small local organizations, and pursued a Masters in Bioethics that focused on issues of minority rights. I believe that many aspects of medicine, from obstetrics and family planning to psychiatry and addiction medicine, are extremely important from a moral and social standpoint. I expect each of these interests to develop and take unexpected turns as my career progresses, and I appreciate that the flexibility in family medicine will allow me to best support and advocate for the underserved communities that I will work in. Having grown up and gone to school in the Northeast, I am moving to the Southwest for the first time. Particularly at this political moment, I am hoping to listen to, work with, and understand the lives of patients who grew up in the opposite corner of the country from myself. Of course, it does not hurt that I will be living in a beautiful city where a river runs through a desert at a mile elevation!



Antonio Gonzales

University of New Mexico

Hello, I am a native Burqueño. I completed my undergraduate and medical degrees at the University of New Mexico, and I am ecstatic to continue residency training at UNM. Throughout medical school I enjoyed building relationships with my patients and thrived in the outpatient clinic. As I progressed through medical school the importance of preventative medicine and continuity of care became more apparent, and family medicine seemed like a natural fit. Fourth year rotations at Healthcare for the Homeless, iCOPE, and the experience of walking into a delivery room with one patient and leaving with two (exclusive to family medicine) only cemented my desire to be a family doc. As someone who would like to practice in New Mexico after residency, the UNM Family and Community Medicine residency program will provide me with the best education to serve this community. I anticipate continuing to pursue my hobbies of skiing, hiking and rock climbing with my wife and son.



Quinn Jackson

Tulane University

I grew up in Orlando, Florida and went to University of Florida for Women's Studies. Working at Planned Parenthood drew me to medicine and strengthened my passion for reproductive rights. Medical school took me to Tulane University in New Orleans, where I discovered a love of primary care. Family medicine is the perfect combination of my interests in women's health, working with teens and caring for the underserved. I love the philosophy of family medicine: treat the whole person, not just the disease. I'm very excited to join the program at UNM and have some adventures in the Southwest!



Brynne Latterel

University of New Mexico

Throughout medical school, particularly during third year I was debating what specialty I wanted to do. I loved OB, peds, women's health, and reproductive health. I knew I wanted to have relationships with my patients, be someone they trusted and connected with. The idea of building a relationship with a woman during her pregnancy, taking care of her throughout her pregnancy, then delivering her baby and continuing to take care of both her, and her new baby is something that sounds amazing. That pretty much solidified family medicine for me. There's no other specialty that can offer that. From the beginning UNM seemed like the right place for me. The program has amazing faculty, great training, and strengths in all my interests like the maternal child health curriculum and comprehensive reproductive health training. Not to mention I wouldn't have to learn how to live without a



Sydney Lee

Louisiana State University

constant supply of green chile, which as a native New Mexican I can't live without.

I grew up in Lake Charles, Louisiana before moving to Baton Rouge for college and Shreveport for medical school. I knew I wanted to be a doctor early in life and was inspired by my dad's enthusiasm toward the medical field, my mom's illness, and my own personal injuries. I pursued my dreams via my college studies and got my first taste of medicine as a scribe in an ER. In medical school, I was introduced to a variety of medical specialties and can remember the day when I realized Family Medicine was right for me. The field of family medicine emphasizes collaboration between patient and physician. It builds a trusting support system that allows receptiveness to education, which is how prevention takes place. I can't wait to have this kind of positive and encouraging relationship with my patients! I hope to target adolescents specifically but I love the diversity of all patients and situations that family physicians get to experience from maternal and child care to managing geriatric patients. I am thrilled to begin my journey as a physician at UNM, an institution known for excellent clinical training in a fun city, famous for its diversity and culture!



Parastou Malek

Escuela Latinoamericana

I was born in Iran and partly raised as a refugee in Europe before landing in California where I completed high school and attended the University of Redlands. My life experiences up to this point lead me to discover my deep passion for social, health, economic, and environmental justice. While studying abroad in Mexico and Guatemala, I was exposed to extreme poverty and health disparities that inspired me to look for direct ways of making a difference in the world. I knew that my lifelong commitment would be to use my education and resources to best serve others. I am extremely fortunate to have had the opportunity to study medicine at ELAM in Cuba in a system that values primary-care and considers healthcare as a fundamental human right. My medical education allowed me to experience first-hand that Family Medicine is a specialty perfectly positioned to address health disparities by its broad emphasis on disease prevention and health advocacy, while taking into consideration individuals in the context of their community and circumstances. I chose UNM and am excited to join the program, because it fosters a practice of comprehensive, community-oriented, holistic



Susan Muraida

University of New Mexico

care provided by physicians who are warm, compassionate and dedicated to serving the underserved.

I was raised in Albuquerque, and completed my undergraduate degrees at UNM in Spanish and Economics. My love of Family Medicine began in a small, mural-adorned community clinic where physicians provided patient-centered, holistic, innovative, and affordable care. Throughout medical school I kept an open mind about specialties but naturally gravitated toward Family Medicine as it incorporated the social context of its patients and attracted individuals who recognized this importance. Several diverse clinical experiences in New Mexico also reinforced my desire to work with the underserved, including working in Estancia, Las Cruces, and Edgewood. I am interested in strengthening my skills as a bilingual provider, and after residency, working part-time in an FQHC and part-time in an academic setting. I was drawn to residency at UNM for many reasons, including the focus on community health, dedication to an underserved patient population, and social-justice driven faculty and residents. Within Family Medicine, I orient my research and practice toward issues of quality improvement, increasing healthcare access, reproductive health, and further integrating psychiatry with primary care.

I was born in Vietnam and moved to Albuquerque when I was 12 with my family. New Mexico is like my second home. I always knew that I want to practice in primary care because I want to be the first person that my patients can come to when they need help. I chose family medicine because of its broad spectrum of practice and I felt that I will always be challenged and learning throughout my career. I also thought that family medicine would be the best specialty that will allow me to connect with my patients in a meaningful way, not only knowing about their medical concerns but also has a touch on knowing them as a whole person. I also love to teach and I believe that teaching is one of the best ways to keep learning. I want to stay in New Mexico for residency, especially at UNM because of the diverse population that I will be serving as well as the team that I will be working with over the next three years.



Hieu Nguyen

University of New Mexico



Daphne Olson

University of New Mexico

I was born and raised in Albuquerque, New Mexico and have a passion for this very unique and diverse state. I received a Bachelor's Degree in Health, Medicine, and Human Values from the University of New Mexico as a member of the Combined BA/MD Degree Program. This program was instrumental in developing my understanding of public health and physician advocacy, particularly for underserved populations. As a medical student, I had the opportunity to serve on the Board of Directors for the New Mexico Academy of Family Physicians and learned that the field of family medicine is committed to serving communities in need, not only through exceptional medical care but also through advocacy and public health projects. I am so honored to be joining a specialty where I will have the opportunity to develop meaningful relationships with patients and with entire communities. As a family physician, my ultimate goal is to give back to the New Mexican communities that made me who I am today, both on an individual level and on a larger level through community engagement and political advocacy. I also hope to support other future family physicians through teaching and mentoring programs.



Miranda Velikoff

University of Michigan

I am drawn to family medicine because of its holistic and longitudinal model of primary care: gathering information and making changes consistently over multiple visits throughout my patients' lives. I feel that getting to know my patients—not just their symptoms--enriches my job and improves the medical care I provide. I knew UNM was a great fit for me because of the program's emphasis on underserved medicine and diverse learning environments including the FQHC and the established relationship with Indian Health Services. I am also thrilled to be training with the welcoming and incredibly skilled residents and faculty at this program. Originally from Ohio, I have lived in the Midwest most of my life. My husband and I are very excited to discover the enchanting Southwest and are especially looking forward to all the sunshine!

Santa Fe Interns



Mohamoud Ismail

Ross University

“The good physician treats the disease; the great physician treats the patient who has the disease” one of my favorite quotes and one I live by. I have traveled the world with my family from the Middle East to north Africa, and then to the US. My family’s background is essential in conveying where I have been and who I am today. Understanding that my parents overcame many obstacles in coming to the United States, adjusting to many different cities, cultures and backgrounds has given me a strong motive for practicing medicine as a mean of helping people in difficulty. The diversity of family medicine is what attracted me to the field. During my volunteer experience in clinics and shelters in Chicago and in the Caribbean, I became a strong believer in longer term care, both preventative and therapeutic. I know my path to family medicine was not a straight one. During the last year, I have worked with the UNM Department of Neurosurgery as one of their fellows. I have realized that compassion is not doing extraordinary things, but in doing ordinary things extraordinarily well. In the words of Dr. Paul Kalanithi in his book *When Breath Becomes Air*, “You can’t ever reach perfection, but you can believe in an asymptote toward which you are ceaselessly striving.” I believe the UNM family medicine program is my path toward perfection. Outside of medicine, I enjoy computer programming, cooking and the rich New Mexican food culture, pleasure reading, the art culture and the endless opportunities of outdoor activities



Niraj Ganjawala

St. George's University

I was born and raised in India, and at the age of 17, my family and I immigrated to the rural community of Socorro, New Mexico. My firsthand experience in both developing and developed lifestyles has me exposed to diverse health and wealth disparities. Community outreach has been a primary aspect of my life. I worked as a medical assistant and phlebotomist at a small clinic in Socorro. I had the opportunity to travel to Latin America for volunteering and medical mission work. During medical school in Grenada, I spent numerous hours at the public hospitals and clinics to organize health fairs for the community members. I also witnessed how social conditions and determinants of resources play a principal role in healing patients while I was rotating at a rural family medicine clinic in Silver City, NM. My experiences in different facets of medicine have sparked my interests in outpatient/urgent care, health policy, as well as community and preventative medicine. In

	<p>addition, I aspire to encourage and educate patients to monitor their health practices, focusing on lifestyle and social determinants for their improvement. Thus, I believe UNM Hospital in Albuquerque and Christus St. Vincent Hospital in Santa Fe will provide me with unique and well-rounded experiences. I will be able to achieve my goal to work in both inpatient and outpatient settings, all while being in my home state. As a health care provider in NM, I hope to live up to my responsibility to gain more knowledge for patient advocacy and work to reform policies.</p>
 <p>Kavitha Kirubanandan MS Ramaiah Medical College</p>	<p>Born and raised in India, I was exposed to the discrepancies in access to healthcare at an early age. This spurred my interest in medicine. Following my graduation, I practiced in India, before moving to Trinidad and Tobago, where I worked as an ER physician for a period of four years. During this time, I experienced complete job satisfaction as I provided health care to the underserved population. Thereafter, I moved to the USA with my family, where I obtained an M.B.A in Health Care Management to acquire a new perspective of the health care system. I am confident that my passion to serve the underserved areas and cater to the healthcare needs of the community as a whole will be fulfilled by the unique 1 + 2 training program at UNM, comprising of 1 year of university-based training followed by 2 years of community-based training in Santa Fe. This I strongly believe will mold me into a well-rounded primary care physician capable of providing high-quality health care to the communities I serve. I would like to conclude by quoting Martin Luther King Jr. "Of all the forms of inequality, injustice in healthcare is most shocking and inhumane," and that I will do my part to eliminate this.</p>
 <p>Camilo Werlin-Martinez State University of New York</p>	<p>Raised by bookish activists, I assumed I was going to be an academic or a policymaker—fighting for social justice and human rights—but I was just too fascinated by the natural sciences, the human body, the people around me. I grew up in a bilingual home on California's central coast, but spent my breaks in Mexico, Cuba and Haiti. I went to NYU for undergraduate and studied Anthropology with a thesis on haptic interpretations in dance/martial-arts. A generally curious kid, I have been a bike mechanic, a lifeguard, a counselor for people with developmental disabilities, and a dance teacher. I studied medicine and public health at SUNY Downstate, training in a diverse and underserved population in the heart of Brooklyn. I loved my training and seek to be a family physician so I can practice full spectrum</p>

	<p>family medicine in a diverse and underserved community. I am excited to be at UNM because it affords me this opportunity, with explicit emphasis on the underserved, while providing me incredibly broad and well-rounded training. Family medicine connects me to my roots in social justice. It's a field permeated by ideas of equity.</p>
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