

MOLA Scholars

(alphabetically by last name)

MOLA Scholars are selected by MOLA's scholarship subcommittee to complete a scholarly project under the guidance of a MOLA mentor. MOLA scholars receive their final scholarship support upon completion of their MOLA Scholar project at the Latino Health Symposium.



Jonathan Alcántar

Project title: The Ability of Acoustic Signals to Predict Acute Chest Syndrome in Sickle Cell Disease (Poster# 9)

Mentor: Robert Molokie, MD – University of Illinois Chicago

Jonathan is a second-year medical student at the University of Illinois at Chicago interested in pursuing internal medicine. As a first generation Mexican-American, Jonathan witnessed the toll that health barriers and low income had on several loved ones and family members. Jonathan is determined to incorporate clinical research into his professional trajectory, and is currently researching a low cost, clinical tool to accurately diagnose acute chest syndrome in sickle cell patients.



Virginia Alvarado Jones

Project title: Top Dermatologic Conditions Examined at a Federally Qualified Health Center Specialized in LGBTQ and Latinx population health (Poster# 3)

Mentor: Wen-ho Yang, MD – Howard Brown Health

Gina is a medical student of Salvadorian heritage, currently enrolled at the University of Illinois Chicago School of Medicine and in process of completing a research year prior to her fourth and final year of medical school. She has shown her commitment to the Latino community through her leadership in her school's Latino Medical Student Association chapter, UIC's Urban Medicine Program, *Medicina* Scholars, as well as with her active presence within MOLA's medical student committee. Gina's MOLA Scholar project will explore her interests in dermatology and Latino health.



Jacqueline Bellefontaine

Project title: Assessing Access to Organ Transplant Among Chicago's Undocumented Community: A Local Needs Assessment (Poster# 27)

Mentor: Óscar Iván Zambrano, MPH, MBA – Advocate Illinois Masonic

Jacqueline is currently a graduate student at the University of Illinois at Chicago, where she is pursuing dual Masters degrees (Master of Public Health and Master of Social Work). Inspired by the impact that chronic disease has had on her own family, Jacqueline plans to explore how access to health insurance and cost of care impact care utilization in specific populations. She hopes to use this research experience and her graduate degrees to inform future work as a leader in health care policy.



Angélica Cabrera

Project title: Childhood Vaccinations: A Quality Improvement Project for Latino Populations at PrimeCare Community Health (Oral #18)

Mentor: Margarita Mankus, MD – Riverside Medical Group Pediatrics

Angélica Cabrera is currently a second-year graduate student at the University of Illinois at Chicago in the Master of Public Health program concentrating in Maternal and Child Health. She currently works as the graduate assistant at UIC's College of Medicine Hispanic Center of Excellence. She is also currently a quality improvement intern at PrimeCare Community Health where she was able to conduct this quality improvement project. Angélica is passionate about childhood and adolescent health, especially within the Latinx population. She hopes to attend medical school after completing graduate school to become a pediatrician. Angélica hopes to create impact for children through her academic and professional experience by serving the low-income, Latinx population during her future career.



Mariel Juanita Galván

Project title: The impact of the imposter phenomenon on health and productivity in female scientists (Oral# 9)

Mentor: Katherine Tossas-Milligan, PhD, MS – University of Illinois Hospital & Health Sciences System

Mariel Galván is a fourth-year undergraduate obtaining her Bachelor of Science in Integrative Biology with a minor in African American Studies on a pre-medical track at the University of Illinois Urbana Champaign. Mariel's academic interests include studying gender and racial disparities in medicine, public school systems, and workplaces. As a Black-Latina woman in STEM, her personal experiences have fueled her curiosities regarding inequities for women of color in science. In pursuing a lab, Mariel ensured that the work she undertook would either address disparity in women's or minority health. She began her lab work under Dr. Clancy's Laboratory for Evolutionary Endocrinology in September of 2018, specifically working with Dr. Michelle Rodrigues on their research of stress and workplace experiences of women scientists.



Elizabeth García

Project title: Building the Pipeline: Review of Best Practices Proven to Develop and Sustain a Mentorship Program (Oral# 7)

Mentor: Joaquín Estrada, MD – Advocate Illinois Masonic

Elizabeth García, a first-generation medical student at the University of Illinois at Chicago, strives to create inspirational opportunities for Latinx minority students aspiring to pursue a career in healthcare. Life hardships and being the first in her family to navigate a career in higher education, she knows the importance of reliable, encouraging, and advocating mentors. With the help of MOLA leaders, Elizabeth hopes to further develop the MOLA Mentorship Program so that other Latinx students can fearlessly become leaders in healthcare and work against the disparities affecting their community.



Nelly González-Lepage

Project title: Influence of language and culture in the psychiatric care of Spanish-speaking adult patients (Poster# 13)

Mentor: Joseph Cooper, MD – University of Illinois College of Medicine

Nelly is a Mexican American and DACA scholar, currently enrolled at Loyola University in their dual MBA/Medical Degree program. She will earn her MBA at the end of this year, and continue her clinical education with an interest in Psychiatry. At Loyola, she is also a part of the Global Health Honors Program. Nelly hopes to use her journey and Latino heritage in order to address cultural stigmas surrounding mental health.



Itzel López Hinojosa

Project title: Musculoskeletal Medical Spanish Curriculum (Oral# 5)

Mentor: Pilar Ortega, MD – University of Illinois College of Medicine

Itzel López Hinojosa is a second year medical student at Pritzker School of Medicine. She graduated with a double major in Biochemistry and American Culture Studies from Washington University in St. Louis in 2017. Before coming to medical school, she was the founder and president of MedX, an organization that tackled health disparities in St. Louis through educational events, advocacy and community service. During her gap year, she returned to her alma mater, the Illinois Math and Science Academy in Aurora, Illinois as a Residential Counselor. She is a Albert Schweitzer Fellow developing a mentorship curriculum in Holy Cross Parish in Back of the Yards. Her first year she served as the Pritzker LMSA Chapter Co-President. She is now co-chair of MOLA's Medical Student Committee.



Kryztal Peña

Project title: Why Should We Care About Cancer Registry Legislation and How Should We Advocate? (Poster# 19)

Mentor: Geraldine Luna, MD, MPH – University of Illinois Chicago

Kryztal is an accomplished college student, set to graduate this year with a Bachelor of Arts in Public Health from the University of Illinois Chicago. Her intention is to impact the Latino community as a physician, and she is well on her way, as an active volunteer with the ALAS-Wings Breast Cancer Support Group and mentorship programs such as PROMYS. Kryztal also has considerable research experience, winning an award for her oral presentation regarding "the effect of social capital on patient misconceptions about breast cancer" at the 2018 Latino Health Symposium. Through her MOLA scholars project, Kryztal would like to build on her previous research related to health disparities.



Noé Vázquez

Project title: Colon Cancer Screening Among Hispanic Men (Oral# 13)

Mentor: Jonathan Moreira, MD – Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine

Noé Vázquez is a recent graduate from Roosevelt University where he major in Psychology with a concentration in Neuroscience and a minor in Biology. Noé is anxious to be admitted into the Medical Science Training Program and ultimately earn an MD/PhD degree at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Despite the daunting challenges that he faces as an undocumented student, he has managed to develop extensive experience in exploring the role of nutrition in exacerbating health disparities in immigrant communities. He is also a standardized patient helping to train medical students in use of Spanish in medical settings, and has volunteered countless hours as MOLA's professional photographer. In the future, as a researcher and health care provider, he hopes to use clinical lab work and academic knowledge to improve the overall health of Latino communities. On his downtime, Noé enjoys playing the drums and capturing

moments with his camera.