Do not seek water, seek thirst
So that water may flow from
the high and low

Rumi
Undoubtedly, 2020 has been a challenging year for one and all. The COVID-19 pandemic forced hibernation and strategy revamping to individuals, organizations, and institutions everywhere. We at the Global Health Program quickly evaluated the pandemic’s impact and repurposed our program. This report features the extent and detail of these changes as written by members of the program leadership. Here, I highlight just a few.

To provide our partners with up-to-date evidence-based information, we mounted a robust COVID-19 resource center featuring descriptions and links to some of the most trusted scientific sources as well as the latest COVID-19 articles distilled into short clinical extracts delivered twice weekly. A survey we conducted revealed that approximately 84% of our global health community almost always refers to our COVID-19 Resource Center for pandemic-related information.

We also repurposed the content of our eMagazine and Global Health Diaries Blogs, conventionally encompassing a broad array of topics, to focus on the COVID-19 pandemic. Both platforms now serve as podiums for the pandemic-related stories, views, triumphs, and challenges of our partners, colleagues, and friends the globe over. We additionally started “Global Health Open Forum With Friends and Colleagues Around the World,” an initiative in which global health leaders share their insights, challenges, and success stories with a diverse population of medical students, residents, nurses, physicians, and community members.

The flourishing of our partners is a source of pride for all of us. Kazan State Medical University is launching a longitudinal global health pathway, rendering it the first university in Russia to offer such a unique program to medical students and the primary care residents. We are also nurturing a new partnership in India with Datta Meghe Institute of Medical Sciences (DMIMS), boasting sizable research partnerships worldwide and offering opportunities to conduct diverse research, as the chief site. This rural community-based medical university holds tremendous potential for a mutually rewarding global health partnership.

Equally committed to maintaining and growing our domestic partnerships, we are in the process of reaching out to New Americans in Vermont as well as to Latinx communities in Vermont and Danbury towards new and expanded collaborations for health education exchange and public health outreach. Meanwhile, communication and planning continues with our border medicine elective at Chiricahua Community Health Centers in Arizona, our newly established Nursing Division, and our new partnership with Villanova University in Pennsylvania.

We look forward to carrying out our collaborative ideas when we emerge from this hibernation phase. Until then, we expect to continue supporting our program as well as our partners by launching new initiatives and seeing them through.

Majid Sadigh, MD

Christian J. Trefz Family Endowed Chair in Global Health
Director of the Nuvance Health/University Vermont Larner MD College of Medicine
Global Health Program
The past year was marked by an extraordinary global challenge, yet we responded with agility and imagination. As the COVID-19 pandemic ravaged communities around the world, the Global Health program responded in remarkable ways that allowed us to remain connected to our international healthcare partners fighting the novel coronavirus. At the heart of the connection was an enduring commitment to share knowledge, promote learning and accelerate the discovery of more effective treatments, better prevention strategies and ultimately, a cure.

In the midst of a rapidly progressing pandemic, the Global Health program’s robust communications platform facilitated the creation of a virtual COVID-19 Resource Center featuring links to leading scientific resources as well as the latest medical literature distilled into concise clinical extracts. Efficient access to this critical information helped our healthcare partners stay informed and streamline pandemic response in their own communities and clinics.

Our dynamic partnership with the University of Vermont Larner College of Medicine (UVLMCOM) continues to enrich our shared vision for quality patient care and medical education through cooperation and exchange of ideas. An exceptionally driven subset of UVLMCOM students is working to integrate global health topics and perspectives into the pre-clinical Foundations curriculum. Several of these sessions have already been scheduled with global health partners co-teaching with UVLMCOM faculty.

Although border closings and other pandemic restrictions hinder traditional Global Health program activities, our unwavering commitment to education fostered the development of new curriculum offerings and learning models, including a two-week virtual global health course completed by 395 students, an ‘open forum’ for global health leaders, and an innovative ‘virtual home-visit’ teaching model piloted in Uganda.

The Global Health program’s Nursing Division has partnered with the Villanova College of Nursing and the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine, and students from both schools will accompany a Nuvance Health team on a future visit to an international partner site. The Nursing Division has partnered with two sites in Uganda, including the ACCESS School of Nursing, and co-created a COVID-19 learning module with plans for a foundational nursing course in the future.

The continued success of our global health partners is a source of ongoing pride, including for Kazan State Medical University in Russia, whose longitudinal global health pathway for medical students and primary care residents is the first program of its kind at a Russian university. We also continue to nurture a partnership with Datta Meghe Institute of Medical Sciences in India, a medical university offering significant opportunity for diverse research.

We are profoundly grateful for the energy, enthusiasm and commitment of our loyal donor community and international and domestic partners, whose generosity continues to broaden the scale and scope of Global Health program impact through focused educational initiatives, fellowships and scholarships, all of which catalyze notable achievement in global health training and research.

Uncertainties surrounding COVID-19 make planning a challenge, but the Global Health program continues its journey of innovation and discovery, fueled by necessity and limitations imposed by a global health crisis. As we await the next chapter, we are sustained and inspired by our commitment to improving patient care around the world, especially for its most vulnerable citizens.

John Murphy, MD
CEO and President of Nuvance Health
For the last nine years the Global Health Program has been an important feature of the partnership of the Larner College of Medicine and Nuvance Health. Our relationship with colleagues at our Connecticut branch campus has always been rooted in our institutions’ shared mission of medical education in the ultimate service of the patient. Among the benefits Larner medical students gain from their work in Connecticut is exposure to a broader, more diverse patient population. Our guiding principle of professionalism, fostering cultural humility, kindness, and respect through all our work, is enhanced even further by the opportunities the Global Health Program makes available to our students and faculty members. Medical students, faculty and others, through the Global Health Program, take part in health care experiences around the world, and build on the insights they gain from those experiences throughout their careers.

The current pandemic has underscored the importance of viewing health care as a worldwide system. A virus, as we have all seen, knows no boundaries. During this past year we have seen, through heartbreaking experiences and the diligent, courageous work of health care providers and biomedical scientists, that our response to the novel coronavirus and COVID-19 was most effective when it was based on our shared human experience, not national identities.

I am grateful to Dr. John Murphy, President and CEO of Nuvance Health, for his partnership in these efforts, and, of course, to Dr. Majid Sadigh, the Christian J. Trefz Family Endowed Chair in Global Health at Nuvance Health, for his crucial work in the formation and guidance of the program. This pandemic has presented major obstacles to the usual travel and networking activities of the program; but Dr. Sadigh has responded energetically and effectively, as seen in the activities chronicled in this report, and kept program participants throughout the world connected and engaged. We all look forward with hope that the coming year will bring continued excellence and even international travel in support of participants across the globe.

Richard L. Page, MD
Dean, University of Vermont Larner College of Medicine
My family and I are very proud to support the Global Health program. The work being done around the world is inspiring. Congratulations to each and every person involved: the medical students, interns, residents, faculty, and many others who comprise the Global Health team. But, I must send a very special thank you to Dr. Majid Sadigh. My wife, Eva, and I hold him in high regard. He is a true humanitarian, and working with him on this Program has been one of our most rewarding philanthropic partnerships. Martin Luther King, Jr. said “Life’s most persistent and urgent question is, ‘What are you doing for others?’” Dr. Sadigh and the Global Health Program are constantly “doing for others” and inspiring us all to follow.

Christian J. Trefz
The Impact of COVID-19
Here at Nuvance Health, COVID-19 preparedness activities began well over a month ago and continue to be refined on a daily, if not hourly basis. Please rest assured knowing that we have developed and practiced detailed processes to reduce the risk of spreading the virus if individuals with COVID-19 symptoms present at any of our locations, including office practices, ambulatory diagnostic sites, and emergency departments.

Our experts in global health, infectious disease, infection control, emergency preparedness, and communications have been working in collaboration with local and state health departments. We are staying abreast of the frequently updated guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other global and federal agencies and organizations. We are meeting with community leaders to develop comprehensive emergency preparedness programs for our communities.
Professor Chiralidzo E. Ndhlouvi, M Med Sci (Clin Epi), Frcp

Director of Global Health at University of Zimbabwe

Due to unforeseen circumstances, we in Zimbabwe have not been able to take part in physical global health exchanges for the past year. The COVID-19 pandemic also contributed to putting a “nail in our coffin” this year! We are grateful that Nuvance Health/UVMLCOM Global Health Program were able to host Dr. Pamela Gorejena-Chidawanyika last year for her oncology attachment which she seemed to have enjoyed very much.

We are grateful for the program’s continuous communication with us through frequent emails and also updating us on COVID-19 via the “critical articles.” This has allowed us to be kept abreast of papers that we would otherwise have not seen or had access to. Access to newly published documents/manuscripts is always a challenge to some of us in the “developing world.”

We may not have taken part in the Faculty Development Series/COVID-19 Webinars that are currently happening via UVMLCOM, but we are grateful that those resources are available to us. We hope COVID-19 will eventually be controlled as it appears to be in Zimbabwe and many other African countries, allowing global health visits to recommence!
COVID-19 Resource Center

The Privilege of Social Distancing

From the Global South, I hear a vastly different conversation: We don’t have water to drink, where are we supposed to get water to wash our hands twenty times a day? We can’t afford to buy a loaf of bread, and now you tell us we have to purchase alcohol-based hand sanitizer? We live in high-density areas and travel on overcrowded buses, where do you expect us to go to remain two meters apart from each other? The problem isn’t that we are uneducated and don’t understand what social distancing is about. It is that if we stay at home for a day, our families do not eat on that day. If we stay at home for 21 days, our homes will be our coffins.

Remember to take a step back and look at the larger picture during these darkest of times. Don’t forget to reflect on smaller pictures from around the world that are different from your own.

Let us allow the immensity and the gravity of this international catastrophe sober us and remind us that our coronavirus claustrophobia is in many ways a privilege. Perhaps then, we can endeavor to be grateful for the things that we do have, even as we mourn what we have lost. Maybe then, compassion will govern our attitudes and actions, and guide us through this global humanitarian crisis with humility and grace.

Tendai Machingaidze, MD
Global Health Program Site Director for the University of Zimbabwe

Are These Humanitarian Crises Inevitable?

I particularly like the “learn from anywhere” approach. It would work if the classroom is kitted with communication infrastructure, i.e. webcam and connectivity. The students connected remotely would have to have the receivers—laptops of smartphone and data (MBs, as they are called here). This will address the need for social distancing since only some students will need to be physically present in class. We could even develop a roster system that gives each student an opportunity and obligation to sometimes attend in-person. Likewise, all students would be given a chance and obligation to connect remotely and thus attain online learning skills. There still remain the challenges of inequitable distribution of Information and Communication Technology hardware facilities and connectivity. Even here in Kampala we groan on account of limited bandwidth connectivity and therefore, speed. This also exposes the need to train teachers who teach in the face-to-face format in skills to adapt their materials and methods to fit the new reality. Many don’t know what to do and hesitate to try. In Uganda, most teachers suffer from lack of laptops and internet connectivity as well.

I am still racking my brains wondering how we can get the Global Health Program running again.

Reverend Sam Luboga, PhD
Co-Founder of the Homestay Model in Global Health
The Year 2020

The year 2020 was challenging for all of us. Nonetheless, we were successful in quickly repurposing our program and streamlining the educational process. Though we previously had an online course, we launched a new portal that can support a large number of students. We continue to work on this front and hope to launch advanced versions of our courses in the coming year.

We will also be training and providing technical support to Kazan State Medical University in Russia as our partners launch a global health pathway. This is a big leap forward for our collaboration, making KSMU the first university in Russia and among our partner sites to offer this opportunity to their medical students.

Furthermore, we plan to strengthen our partnership with our new site in India which has great potential in terms of research, clinical electives, and capacity building. Similarly, this new partner has expressed interest in launching the global health pathway as well as other joint certificate programs.

One of the key features of the site in India is the leadership’s commitment to offering a capacity building platform to Global Health Scholars to learn medical procedures and receive hands-on training, a forum that is not possible in the United States.

We are excited for the newly launched Global Health Program website, as well as for the creative collaborative opportunities awaiting us in 2021.

Swapnil Parve, MD
Director of the International Affairs Office and Information Technology

Your Next Handshake Could Kill You

COVID-19 has changed a lot of lives. We may never be able to view things the same way again. Case in point: the handshake has just been rendered taboo by social distancing. In many cultures in Africa, we had the power of a handshake. It symbolized many things—from the strength of an individual, giving away a bride, closure or opening of a business or diplomatic meeting, a cordial greeting, a friendly parting, and an offer of congratulations—to least of which: an expression of gratitude.

What would you do if you ran into your mother-in-law who, upon seeing you for the first time in four months, without any hesitation, instinctively pulls you close to her and gives you a warm, tight hug? Even when you try to break free and explain yourself, she puts up a hand as if to tell you, “I know what you are going to say, but I have missed my family terribly and I can’t help it.” This is what many are facing, in one form or another. We are stuck between culture and common sense, but the writing is on the wall and it is clear: “A handshake can kill you.”

Jamidah Nakato, PhD and Hamidah Babirye
Co-Directors of Linde Healthcare Educators Without Borders

COVID-19 Resource Center
Jamidah Nakato, PhD  
Co-Director of Linde Health Educators Without Borders

I had watched as the Nuvance Health Global Health Program laid out an ambitious plan that included collaborations, trainings, scholarships, rotations, and exchanges, among other elements. I was excited about the many possibilities the program could take advantage of.

Then, wham! Coronavirus hit. Truth be told, I was very nervous about the future of the program and wondered about how it was supposed to survive amidst all the mayhem. To my surprise, thanks to the team, the program changed strategy and birthed the brilliant idea of onlinisation of activities to keep the program alive. Today, the program is not just alive, but vibrant. Members and stakeholders have contributed to the fulfillment of the program’s goals and objectives. They have contributed to the online magazine, newsletter, diaries, meetings, training sessions, and workshops to mention but a few.

The program has not only kept its partners on board but has also birthed numerous ideas, knowledge, information, and academic articles while helping sustain the spirit of our communities. In fact, the program has widened its stakeholders beyond what was originally imagined. The beneficiaries include patients, health workers, students, junior and senior staff, community, management, funders, etc. All in all, I think what the program has achieved is way above what was originally planned. You just might never know how many lives the program has saved, impacted, and transformed.

Professor Gulshat Rashatovna, MD  
Director of the Department of Epidemiology and Evidence Based Medicine at KSMU

Reflection on My Own Long Covid

You may have subfebrile temperature and even normal labs but feel terrible because of weakness, dizziness, myalgia (in my case), chills, cold extremities, unstable blood pressure and headache. And in addition, something has happened to the brain. It is difficult to explain the situation but it feels like it is not your brain. You think another way, you forget things, and you cannot sleep at all. And many people have signs of severe depression after recovering from the illness. It feels like you have aged by 20 years, both physically and mentally.

Albert Tronden, MD  
Spain: Hard Time for Doctors with Children at Home

It’s difficult here. The state-taken measures are terribly restrictive. All kids are at home, without the possibility of leaving them with friends, as all people are terrorized with fear. All collasses are closed, and you can’t walk to the supermarket with a child, etc. But we manage it week by week, with the help of friends. I rotate with my residents because of a small workload. This week I have four shifts (Monday-Wednesday-Friday-Sunday) and I’m staying until 3 PM every day while my other residents are at home. I hope to stay at home with my daughter next week.
COVID-19 Continues to Test Our Resiliency and Flexibility

Then, COVID-19 arrived. School moved entirely online and everything that had been normal for medical school became a memory of the good old days.

Resiliency is defined in many ways, but I think of it as the ability to endure and still find joy in the little things of life. I am surprised to see how flexible medicine can be. Physicians are finding ways to deliver healthcare to their communities even with COVID-19 limiting their options. What’s more, those physicians in global health have had the unique opportunity to look at home with a new eye and explore how the field is not only going to different countries but also working with communities of new arrivals in their own country. The rise of Zoom has also opened a door for students and physicians across the globe to share ideas and have conversations we might not have had before COVID-19 limited our ability to travel.

I Feel Scared

For ten months now, the new coronavirus infection has been with us in our daily lives. I’m not as fearful as I was six months ago, but sometimes still feel scared when it comes to the death of people I know. I’m especially sad when young people die.

Dr. Saida Agliullina is an epidemiologist working at Kazan State Medical University in Kazan, Russia as an Assistant Professor. She came to the United States in early February to improve her knowledge in Evidence Based Medicine (EBM).

What If the Situation Gave Me an Angel?

Unfortunately the situation the world is experiencing did not allow me to continue my education at Danbury Hospital. The pandemic did not even allow me to return home. I was stranded in Danbury! What if I say that the situation has given me an angel? If you are reading correctly, this is how I have named Michelle, the third-year resident whom I had the pleasure of hosting in my country and my hospital in February, to whom I showed the most intimate part of our health system and who helped me several times with her skills and knowledge in our congested wards, with whom I shared a little piece of my beautiful island and our daily lives when I had no idea what would come next.

What a blessing you have been Michelle, not only in my country, but when with just two months of knowing me you opened the doors of your home, your family, and your heart. Thank you for your hospitality, for your family, for showing me your culture, for reintroducing exercise into my life and inviting myself to vegan cuisine. I hope I have also taught you at least a little to make up for how much you taught me.

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Remember Wilde’s quote, “Life is too important to be taken seriously!” We live in important times. We are all engaged in critically important activities. We are all working to save lives. We are all part of something much bigger than ourselves. We should not take ourselves too seriously. We should see ourselves as privileged to participate in perhaps the most important experience in our lives, where we have been given an amazing opportunity to do something far more important than we could ever imagine. And for that reason, we must be forgiving and generous. We must smile and laugh until we notice the sun still shines and the birds are singing again.

The hospital CEO has located three or four intensivists but at present, they are scarce. I am fairly resilient and energetic but find myself having to stop and take a deep breath, lest I respond in an unsympathetic or abrupt manner. This must change.

I remind myself that the life of any community is defined by the degree of compassion from those within. When this storm is over, I pray that it will have left me more willing to be intimate with what is right here, right now.

I pray that I can learn to look at my present experience and directly at my life, however different it is from the thoughts, dreams, and ideas which I had always held so tightly.

I now understand that we have a shared fate and although I have never felt so deeply exhausted in my life, I also feel alive and connected. Taking care of others who are sick and so alone makes one lean into a love one never realized was possible.

Time to move along. Writing for a moment always helps me clarify my thoughts, and helps me remember my responsibilities.

The CEO has just brought around some food. He is emaciated, gaunt, and sleep-deprived. But he reminds me that hope locates itself in the simplest of gestures
The major outbreak of COVID-19 in China has passed and everything is going well. The medical team sent to Wuhan from all over the country returned two weeks ago and the closure of Wuhan was completely ended and public transportation returned to normal a week ago. Of course, the key areas (customs, border inspection, airports, railway stations, hospitals, schools, etc.) are still highly controlled and necessary protection has been recommended, especially masks.

In Dalian, which has a population of seven million, the hospitals have been fully restored. But we still keep the fever outpatient and part of the fever ward. All inpatients were admitted to the hospital after being excluded from COVID-19 screening (chest CT, complete blood count). Suspected patients who cannot be excluded in outpatient will be temporarily admitted to the fever ward and transferred to the specialized ward only after the completion of two negative nucleic acid tests. In fact, for some non-COVID-19 viral pneumonia, we are also more willing to be treated in the fever ward to reduce the risk of nosocomial infection (which will cause the whole ward or even the hospital to close). Of course, Chinese hospitals often have more beds. The school will open next week in batches from higher grades to lower grades and some enclosed entertainment venues, such as cinemas, gyms and so on, will open finally.

Yang Song from Dalian, China
LEADERSHIP PERSPECTIVES
Associate Program Director for the Nuvance Health/UVM Larner College of Medicine Global Health Program

We have a wonderful growing faculty at the UVMLCOM supporting our student and resident global health education and engagement. We saw our largest global health student cohort last year, and enjoy tremendous support from our students who recognize the need to more broadly explore the human experience of health, wellness, and disease. With COVID-19, we are in a sort of hibernation period but we are far from asleep. This difficult time has awakened us to the need to do certain things better.

Dean of Walailak University Medical School

When Nuvance Health (formerly Western Connecticut Health Network) agreed to partner with Walailak University Medical School at the end of 2018, I was anxious about how I could manage to pursue the several academic activities we planned to work on together.

Then in 2019, I was invited to attend the inaugural Nuvance Health Global Health Conference at Danbury Hospital, Connecticut, USA, where I was not only an appreciative first-time visitor to the country but was also in the fortunate position to learn several aspects of this medical science. Throughout my time during the conference, I was not only exchanging academic experiences but also participating in arranged visits to hospitals and other places of interest. This opportunity enriched me with experiences and ideas that I was able to then integrate into my work at the Walailak University’s School of Medicine in Nakhon Si Thammarat, Thailand. This was of great help not just to me, but it also clearly influenced my staff and students who are increasingly enthusiastic and ready to improve both their academic learning and practice.

Following my return, two groups of medical students from UVMLCOM visited our school to pursue their global health study. In addition, two training workshops for medical staff, held by Dr. Majid Sadigh and Prof. Jeffrey Wong, enormously benefited our staff who successfully integrated the techniques they learned into our teaching and learning standards.

At the end of 2019, our school passed the accreditation by the World Federation of Medical Education Standard, which verified that our partnership with Nuvance Health/UVMLCOM was having an immediate impact on our objectives for improvement and development.

Our partnership with Nuvance Health/UVMLCOM has built bridges among our communities and improved the health and well-being of Thai people.
Creative Novel Virtual Programs in Global Health

The newly planned “Bring the Field to the Zoom Class” is an attempt to bring the patient’s living condition and environment to the virtual classroom, thereby familiarizing students with the sociocultural aspect of medicine. These sessions start with a doctor-patient encounter but then follow the patient to their residence to show students the patient’s living condition. In addition, our colleagues around the world will have the opportunity to present their diagnostic dilemmas to each other for consultation and assistance.

Enthusiasm among students and lecturers to participate in and implement these new forums is high. We have identified students and filmmakers as well as senior residents and experienced faculty to guide students in creating a virtual global health curriculum. What we learn now in building creative virtual projects through collaboration and partnership helps Makerere University College of Health Sciences reshape the content and structure of the Global Health Program towards becoming a center of excellence in global health education in the region.

Mitra Sadigh
Writer, Editor and Researcher at the NH/UVMLCOM Global Health Program

We are proud of our extensive, heavily connected global health advocacy group across all our partnerships, of which we have sixteen in ten countries around the world: Botswana, China, the Dominican Republic, India, Russia, Thailand, Uganda, the United States, Vietnam, and Zimbabwe.

In fact, the introduction and nurturing of the global health concept has been so successful that three of our partner institutions are considering offering global health pathways to their medical students. With so many flourishing partnerships and new developments including Nuvance Health Information Centers, with the mission of circulating the global health concept and supporting participants as they adjust to the Global South; a new Nursing Division, with the mission of promoting interdisciplinary collaboration; a soon-to-be-launched Ethical Dilemmas in Global Health module, with the mission of discussing ethical challenges inherent to the global health setting; and Linde Healthcare Educators Without Borders, the establishment of a Global Health Academy would give us a platform to elevate our program to higher academic prowess while training global health personnel in the skills that are essential for making a difference.
Audree Frey, MPH
Global Health Program Coordinator Office of Medical Student Education UVM Larner College of Medicine

Growing Interest in the UVMLCOM Global Health Program

The Class of 2023 global health cohort is a wonderful group of students, with diverse and impressive backgrounds that led them to pursue global health as part of their medical education. This group had to endure the disappointment of their summer elective abroad being canceled amid the global pandemic, but they have shown resilience, initiative, and a commitment to remain involved in our program despite this unfortunate setback – all qualities that embody the spirit of global health, and that led us to gratefully accept them into the program early in their first year of medical school. An exceptionally driven subset of this group has been working on a global health supplemental curriculum initiative to integrate global health topics and perspectives with the content in the pre-clinical foundations curriculum. Some of the sessions they are designing have already been scheduled and involve our global health partners co-teaching sessions with our UVMLCOM faculty. We are looking forward to staying engaged with these inspiring future doctors throughout their medical school careers (and beyond), and are excited for the time when they can finally travel abroad to meet our exceptional partners as fourth-year students.

Dylan Ochoa, MPH
Coordinator of the Nuvance Health Global Health Program

With the Loss of Something Comes Appreciation of Other Things

While many people have been rightfully complaining about what has been taken from them, I have been trying to find new meaning and adopt new hobbies to invest my time in. I am not alone in this endeavor. With sadness and frustration being common emotions felt during this time, so too are hope and redirection. For example, social issues such as police brutality and voter suppression have never before been so acknowledged and actively addressed thanks to the pandemic. The #blacklivesmatter and the #endsars movements have never been more felt and seen, due to less distractions going on in the world. With less sports or recreational events to distract us from these issues, we are now able to see with clarity the serious issues we are facing. While some are still complaining about what they are missing, others are finding productive and valuable meaning in new interests and social issues that have now become the focus.
Global Health Scholars and Students

Global Health Scholar of the Month

Tran Hoang Long, MD

Dr. Long is an interventional cardiologist who specializes in electrophysiology at Cho Ray Hospital in Vietnam.

Nguyen “Mark” Hong Tai My, MD

Dr. Mark is an interventional cardiologist at Cho Ray Hospital in Vietnam who was at Danbury Hospital from October 2019 - January 2020. Dr. Mark rotated in many departments like the Outpatient Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation Clinic, the Cardiac Catheterization Lab, and Critical Care Unit, which he noted has incredible technology and experienced staff.

Prasanna Kumar

University of Vermont Larner College of Medicine Class of 2022

I believe that my global health experiences have prepared me for clerkships and beyond. I feel more confident in my ability as a future healthcare provider to effectively communicate and demonstrate cultural humility with patients. As far as global health at UVM goes, I hope to stay involved with the program, helping to improve the experience for future students.

Moreover, I want to return to the Dominican Republic as a fourth-year TA. In the meantime, I hope to continue listening to Spanish music, learning medical Spanish, and practicing salsa whenever possible! Thanks to UVM, I feel more equipped to better help Latinx patients. At the same time, I am excited to spread the interest for and awareness of Hispanic culture. As such, I hope to make an impact on others in this ever-evolving multicultural population in the United States.

Thailand: An Environment Where Medicine Is Truly Medicine

Dr. Long is an interventional cardiologist who specializes in electrophysiology at Cho Ray Hospital in Vietnam. Dr. Mark is an interventional cardiologist at Cho Ray Hospital in Vietnam who was at Danbury Hospital from October 2019 - January 2020. Dr. Mark rotated in many departments like the Outpatient Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation Clinic, the Cardiac Catheterization Lab, and Critical Care Unit, which he noted has incredible technology and experienced staff.

Russell Himmelstein

University of Vermont Larner College of Medicine Class of 2020

The dean of Walailak University School of Medicine, Dr. Prachyapan Petchuay, treated us to lunch, dinner, and hot springs upon our arrival. The doctor I work with drove me around town to find a gym and figure out the bus schedule. Every lunch we wait for the other doctors to share a meal together.

It’s interesting how down to earth the physicians I have worked with are. Being a U.S. medical student, I have unfortunately dreaded mingling and working with other physicians, as many have an attitude of self-worth and entitlement I hope to never inherit. But at Tha Sala, it feels different. Doctors interact with nurses and families the same as they interact with one another. Instead of belittling, there is a sense of respect for the families we treat and the difficulties they must overcome. It’s refreshing to be in an environment where medicine is truly medicine and the patient is the priority.
Since the end of 2019, our focus has been on development of the nursing division.

Our goal is to encourage involvement of the experienced nurse in GH to work collaboratively with our medical colleagues and our academic partners and their students to advance team-based clinical education abroad.

We formed a committee last year composed of nurses from both Norwalk and Danbury Hospital and had prepared for the visit of 2 scholars from China who were scheduled to arrive at the end of February. Then with Covid, their visit was canceled as well as the 2nd grand rounds. During this period of hibernation, we have continued to connect across borders through work in Uganda and China.

We have also worked with two sites in Uganda, the first one is the rural setting and is the ACCESS school of nursing. We have provided a Covid module earlier in the year with their input and are now working on the content for a course entitled Foundations of Nursing.

In the urban setting we are working with a scholar there who is interested in researching nursing practice in the context of Covid in Uganda.

And recently we have partnered with Villanova School of Nursing and Philadelphia College of Osteo Med in Pennsylvania to select students from both schools to participate in a four- to six-week course at an international site with the Nuvance health team once international travel can be safely reinstituted.

In 2021, we plan to continue with content development of additional courses in the curriculum for Access and to support the proposed pilot project on nursing practice in Uganda. We will also continue the conversation with our Chinese colleagues and look to a possible visit in 2022.
A huge component of adaptive success was the tight bonds formed with colleagues. A fragile support network was strengthened. It was awe-inspiring to witness staff truly help one another for no other reason than the good of the team. We leveraged the power of our

Yes, Covid-19 was a difficult test. Yet, nurses not only passed it but exceeded expectations with dedication to the profession, dignity, and grace. We did it as one unit—one team—because nurses understand that we are all in this together!
Mr. Felix Rodriguez

Mr. Rodriguez was born in Santo Domingo in the Dominican Republic and eventually moved to Danbury, CT in the 1970s. Mr. Rodriguez currently works in the Maintenance Department where his primary responsibilities include disinfecting the hospital and keeping it clean. He is thankful that his entire family is still healthy and able to work from home. They are waiting for things to calm down.

“Putting safety first is what is going to get us through this difficult time.”

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Mr. Alex Sanchez

Mr. Sanchez is originally from Santo Domingo in the Dominican Republic and moved to Danbury, Connecticut in 2017. He has since been working as a cook at Danbury Hospital. He has three kids that have to adapt to the online school. His wife also works at Danbury hospital.

“I know it’s not the best time for everyone, but we will move forward from this. I won’t say back to ‘normal’ but we will be ok and we will be good if we stick together.”

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Mr. Sean Hatch

Mr. Hatch works as a mail clerk in the mail room where he assists with delivering and distributing mail.

“I and my colleagues are adherent to hand-washing and mask-wearing protocols. I feel safer in the hospital than outside, thanks to the Danbury Hospital Sanitation Team’s great work.”
TENDAI MACHINGAIDZE, MD
The first Linde Educator Without Borders spends several weeks of clinical training at Norwalk Hospital.

Linde Health Educators without Borders
February: The First Linde Medical Education Course in Thailand

Dr. Jeffrey Wong, Associate Dean for Medical Education and Professor of Medicine at Penn State College of Medicine, and Dr. Stephen Scholand, Associate Director of Nuvance Health Global Health Program, visit Walailak University in Thailand for the First Linde Continuing Medical Education Program.

Faculty Development in the “Land of Smiles”

Dr. Jeffrey Wong, Associate Dean for Medical Education and Professor of Medicine at Penn State College of Medicine

I recently returned from a brief yet gratifying visit to the Walailak University School of Medicine in Thailand. There, I presented eight three-hour workshops—adapted from the well-studied and validated Stanford Faculty Development Program—to sixteen enthusiastic faculty teachers over the course of four days. The smiling excitement and kindness of these young people rejuvenated me. I hardly noticed the jet lag of international travel that was further complicated by the frenzy associated with the 2019-nCoV outbreak.

Global Fellows in Pulmonary Medicine

Mr. Ronald Nair, Vice President of the National Emphysema Foundation, made a short site visit to Cho Ray Hospital, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam where he was welcomed by the administration and medical education leadership of this 3000-bed tertiary hospital.

New Scholarships

Almira Family Charitable Foundation

This foundation has donated a generous grant to the Global Health Program to support residents and faculty to travel to international sites for capacity building of human resources and to invite junior faculty from international sites to the United States for clinical and educational training. In addition, residents and scholars from international sites involved in research will have the opportunity to present their data in international or national medical conferences. The first annual event in celebration of the accomplishments of this new initiative, attended by Almira’s family, will hopefully be in late 2021.

Anne Robley Scholarship

Anne’s Scholarship annually supports a highly competitive and passionate senior nursing student and a premedical student, prior to matriculation to Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine (PCOM), from Villanova University to participate in a four- to six-week elective in one of nine international sites that are partnered with the Nuvance Health Global Health Program. The program is projected to continue forward for eight years.
Art in Global Health

Editor: Tendai Machingaidze, MD,
Global Health Program Site Director at the University of Zimbabwe

January: Tendai Machingaidze: The Art of Sitting on a Bench: An interview with Siridzai Dzukwa

February: Tendai Machingaidze: Health Communication and the Arts in Uganda: An Interview with Jill Sonke, Director of the UF Center for Arts in Medicine

March: Tendai Machingaidze: Education Through Theater Arts (ETTA): An Innovative Approach to Residency Training

May: Tendai Machingaidze: Ghen Cô Vy: Vietnam Goes Viral in Response to the Virus

June: Tendai Machingaidze: The Privilege of Social Distancing

July: Tendai Machingaidze: Tender Arts Nigeria: An Interview with Olakunte Adewale

“Essential Goods Only” by Allen Kupeta from Zimbabwe
Art to Remind Us of Who We Can Be

Editor: Mitra Sadigh

During times of confusion, tribulation, grief, uncertainty, and despair, the arts enliven us by reintegrating the disjointed pieces of ourselves and replenishing them with clarity and hope. The arts remind us of our individual and collective potential to grow, evolve, and transform. They remind us of what and who we can be and what we can create. In this new section, we bring you works of art that have moved and inspired us. We encourage you to also share works that have inspired you.

August: Chris Esneault: Jacqueline du Pré
August: Karl Peter: Alice Sara Ott, Beethoven, Piano concerto No. 3
September: Yuja Wang and the Art of Performance
October: Ursula K. Le Guin
November: A. Maziar Zafari, Mohammad Reza (Siavash) Shajarian: 1940-2020 A Personal Reflection
December: Jesse Ball, Come Back, Come Back
With the Media

Coronavirus cases are rising in CT again. Is the state in a better position this time around?

Ebola survivors face health issues long after recovery.
Caitlyn Stulpin from Healio Infectious Diseases interviews Dr. Sadigh, September 23, 2020

An Interview with Dr. Sadigh: George Floyd Protests Could Cause Coronavirus Spike.
By Justin Papp, Monday, June 1, 2020

WHO declares end of the second largest Ebola outbreak in history.
June 25, 2020
Healio, Infectious Diseases Interviews Dr. Sadigh By Caitlyn Stulpin

CT Doc Who Tracked Ebola: 'You Need an Army' for Coronavirus Contact Tracing
Justin Papp interviews Dr. Sadigh, May 10, 2020

A story published in Bloomberg News last week:
Virus Strains U.S. Health System With Supply, Test Shortage

A story published on FOX News:
Coronavirus outbreak in US 'at best could be 10 times worse than bad flu season,' expert warns
To John Murphy, MD, CEO of Nuvance Health, for being named Businessperson of the Year by Westfair.

To Bulat Ziganshin, MD, PhD for his promotion to the Director of Research and Innovation at the Nuvance Health/UVMLCOM Global Health Program.

To Swapnil Parve, MD, for his new position as Director of the International Affairs Office at the Nuvance Health Global Health Program.

To Dilyara Nurkhameyeva, MD, for her promotion to the Director of the American University of the Caribbean (AUC) and Ross University School of Medicine (RUSM) Global Health Program.

To Mitra Sadigh for her exemplary job as Nuvance Health Global Health Fellow since 2014.

To Robert Kalyesubula for being selected among Emergent Leaders in Nephrology by the International Society of Nephrology.

To Professor Luboga, Chairperson Of Education Service Commission in Uganda, for being the keynote speaker at the Heroes in Health Award (HIHA) ceremony.

To Dr. Ben Clements, the Director of the Family Medicine Global Health Program at UVMLCOM, for being awarded a Vermont Medical Society Grant for $5000 to Support On-Farm Flu Shot Clinics for Migrant Farmworkers.

To Dr. Tania Bertsch, Associate Dean for Clinical Education at the University of Vermont Larner College of Medicine (LCOM), on her retirement.

To Ali Ershadi, MD, former Nuvance Health Global Health Program fellow for his heroic work during the COVID-19 pandemic.

To Alex Kayongo, MD, Ugandan Global Health Scholar for publication of “Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease Prevalence and Associated Factors in a Setting of Well-Controlled HIV: A Cross-Sectional Study” in the Journal of Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease.

To Mitra Sadigh and Amanda Wallace for publication of the 2019 Reflections & Photos and Ethical Dilemmas booklets.

To Dr. Wong, Dean Nunez, Dr. Elizabeth Dinorah Peralta Sabá from UNIBE for acceptance of their manuscript “Faulty Development in Basic Science Disciplines for Clinical Teachers: Results of a Cross-Cultural Workshop in the Dominican Republic” for publication in Medical Science Educator.

To Justus Ibrahim Twinomujuni who has completed a course titled “COVID-19: Tackling the Novel Coronavirus,” taught by the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine and UK Public Health Rapid Support Team and offered by the World Health Organization.

To Alex Kayongo, MBCBi(Mak), Msc, Immunology and Clinical Microbiology Lead at Makerere University College of Health Sciences, and Global Health Scholars Program alumnus, for being awarded a four-year Global Infectious Diseases PhD fellowship/scholarship sponsored by the National Institute of Health (NIH), whose objective is to train and nurture Ugandan medical doctors in the field of immunology of mycobacterium tuberculosis.

To Professor Gulshat Rashatovna, Director of the Department of Epidemiology and Evidence-Based Medicine at Kazan State Medical University, for being promoted to the position of Professor of Epidemiology.
Program Highlights

Creation of the COVID-19 Resource Center
By Mitra Sadigh and Amanda Wallace

To help our global health family stay informed and up-to-date with reliable information, we have launched a concise, practical, and trustworthy COVID-19 resources center which includes links to NEJM, JAMA, Lancet, John Hopkins University, University of Washington, WHO, and CDC COVID19 Resource Centers. In addition, we are reviewing more than 100 relevant articles weekly from the most prestigious medical journals, with summaries of important publications made available to our colleagues and friends here and around the world.

The link is here:
Nuvance Health / UVMLCOM Global Health COVID19 Resource Center

Dr. Jeremy Schwartz’s visit to UVMLCOM

Dr. Jeremy Schwartz, Co-Director of the Uganda Initiative for Integrated Management of Non-Communicable Diseases at the Yale School of Medicine, made a short visit to UVMLCOM where he had dinner with the leadership team and students, delivered a medical grand rounds, spoke to global health bridge students, listened in on student presentations and debates, and attended the medicine resident report. His presence on campus was both informative and inspiring.

Meeting with the Danbury Dominican Club Board Members and President

By Dylan Ochoa, Coordinator of the Nuvance Health Global Health Program

On February 28, Dr. Sadigh, Dr. Joann Petrini, and Dylan Ochoa met several members of the Danbury Dominican Club as well as club president Mr. Elvis Nivas in order to discuss the needs of the Latinx community in Danbury and determine possibilities for collaborative exchange. Dr. Sadigh also gave a short summary of the Global Health Program’s involvement in the Dominican Republic as well as its relationship with UNIBE and the surrounding community.
We are excited to launch a Global Health interactive Zoom series, “Open Forums with Friends and Colleagues Around the World.” We will hear from our friends about their background, their experiences with the COVID-19 Pandemic, and what we can learn from them, as well as their thoughts about the future, and other hot topics. This series will be moderated by Dr. Mariah McNamara, the Associate Global Health Director at UVMLCOM. We expect this to be an interactive informative session with plenty of opportunity to ask questions. We hope you can join us!

Almira Family Project, Building Human Capacity

International Conference

Dr. Sadigh was one of the speakers in the International Conference “Noncommunicable Diseases and Health of Russia’s Population”.

Global Health Teaching Elective

Creating a reading course for senior students focused on five major international health themes.
Publications