

TO MEDIA:

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**EXCELA HEALTH WELCOMES NEW PHYSICIANS
TO AWARD-WINNING FAMILY MEDICINE RESIDENCY PROGRAM**

LATROBE, PA, September 1, 2020... Excelsa Health welcomes eight new physicians to the Latrobe Family Medicine Residency Program. Established in 1974, the three-year-program is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) and affiliated with Jefferson Medical College of Thomas Jefferson Medical College of Thomas Jefferson University and the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine.

The new residents began their assignments July 1 and will alternate clinical rotations and office-based practice, while supporting the 24/7 coverage at Excelsa Health hospitals and broadening their understanding of the continuum of care. Recognized by the National Committee for Quality Assurance at the highest level as a Patient-Centered Medical Home, the program is also the recipient of the prestigious DeWitt C. Baldwin, Jr. Sponsoring Institution Award given by the ACGME and Arnold P. Gold Foundation. The award is presented to accredited residency/fellowship programs that are exemplary in fostering a respectful, supportive environment for medical education, and the delivery of patient care, which leads to the personal and professional development of learners.

The Family Medicine Residency Program is based at Excelsa Square at Latrobe, which serves as the program's hub.

To learn more about the Latrobe Family Medicine Residency program visit: www.excelahealth.org/Careers/Family-Medicine-Residency

A lifelong interest in sports and outdoor activities coupled with his father's experience as a medical device engineer provides the framework for **Shane Bealer, DO**, in his pursuit of a healthcare career. Hailing from the Philadelphia suburb of Levittown, Bealer began his medical studies in exercise science at the Abington campus of the Pennsylvania State University before transferring to East Stroudsburg University where he earned both a bachelor's and master's in Exercise Physiology. As part of his program, Bealer volunteered as a health coach for patients having difficulty with their personal wellness to help them overcome obstacles to good health.

Following graduation, he worked as a Medical Fitness Trainer to assist patients returning from medical leave and/or with weight gain/obesity issues while enrolled in premedicine study at LaSalle University as a transitional year. He completed his education at Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine (PCOM) where he received both PCOM foundation and alumni scholarships.

Bealer chose the Excelsa Health Latrobe Hospital Family Medicine Residency program because of previous residents' positive experiences in addition to his own preferences for sports medicine. A current practitioner of martial arts, he previously played high school football and basketball and enjoys boating and fishing. He is assigned to Excelsa Health Latrobe Family Medicine at Excelsa Square at Latrobe.

Abigail Casey, DO, hails from Allentown, PA, where she began her post-secondary education at Cedar Crest College and received a degree in Biology. Casey won the Frank M. Cressman Award while at college, translating to Valedictorian of her graduating class. In addition to her college experience, from 2011 to 2016, Casey volunteered at St. Luke's University Health Network as an office clerk and patient transporter, accumulating more than 300 hours of patient contact.

She continued her education at Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine (LECOM) where she also distinguished herself academically, receiving school scholarships in both 2018 and 2019. She also served as a mentor for students who were new to the medical school environment.

Among Casey's interests are writing, cooking and playing classical music on the piano. She also enjoys running and hiking which led her to the Laurel Highlands and the Excelsa Health Latrobe Hospital Family Medicine Residency program. She was attracted to the hard-working and dedicated people within the program, and the program environment itself. Casey is assigned to Excelsa Health Frick Family Medicine at Excelsa Square at Frick.

Nancy Copeland, MD, brings a world view to her family medicine residency, which will serve her well as she adapts to her new surroundings.

A native of suburban Philadelphia, Copeland graduated from Lafayette College in nearby Easton with a degree in Biochemistry and mathematics minor.

But adventure was calling, as she pursued her PhD in Bioinformatics at University of Dundee in Scotland. Her experience in the United Kingdom not only offered her research opportunities that lasted throughout her entire stay, but also the chance to continue teaching. She had been a tutor and undergraduate teaching assistant so she was prepared for the challenge and the responsibility.

Similar opportunities to tutor, create curriculum and lead small group discussion presented themselves once she returned to Philadelphia and medical school at Sidney Kimmel Medical College of Thomas Jefferson University. Additionally, she was able to bridge a language and healthcare disparity gap using her conversational Cantonese as a volunteer interpreter at the free Chinatown Clinic in Philly for uninsured and undocumented members of the community.

That sense of community as well as the program's reputation drew Copeland to Excelsa Health. And she'll find an extended family for her husband and young daughter in the teaching staff, attendings and other residents. Her love of running, hiking, arts and crafts, Zumba and yoga as well as past competition in the sport of fencing will provide many opportunities to socialize.

She is assigned to Excelsa Health Latrobe Family Medicine at Excelsa Square at Latrobe.

They say that medicine is both art and science. **Elliott Hirsch, DO**, will blend both as he follows in the footsteps of his father and grandfather, present and former family physicians in Lancaster. His father also welcomed Hirsch onboard during his third and fourth years of medical school for rotations with his practice. Inspired by their desire to impact the lives of others, the younger Hirsch studied Health Sciences at Gettysburg College before enrolling at Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine (LECOM) in Erie.

As passionate about art as he is science, Hirsch has created numerous digital art commissions including a stained-glass window installation for Google's headquarters in Mountain View, CA. He continues to pursue his artistic interests including his latest commission for a mural in a crossfit gym in Lancaster.

His interest in Excelsa's Family Medicine Residency Program was piqued by the friendliness of the personnel and the sense of family he experienced as he was introduced to the program. The welcoming attitude and demeanor gave him a reminder of his own family experiences in the medical field. Hirsch is assigned to Excelsa Health Latrobe Family Medicine at Excelsa Square at Latrobe.

Emily Kukura, MD, will have a natural affinity for the patients who will be in her care throughout her Family Medicine residency. Having grown up in nearby Black Lick, Indiana County and attended Saint Vincent College in Latrobe, she'll find shared life experiences will help to build rapport.

An outdoor enthusiast who enjoys hiking, mountain biking, and kayaking in the Laurel Highlands, Kukura is equally passionate about the ocean and the environment. She has been a licensed SCUBA diver for 15 years, and more recently a certified rescue diver and had ample opportunity to pursue that avocation while attending medical school at St. George's University School of Medicine, Grenada.

And just as she was guided to Excelsa Health during her undergraduate days by peers, she was led to St. George's by other physicians within the program and appreciated the substantial opportunities the school provided.

During her medical schooling, Kukura spent a year stateside in New Jersey in St. George's Atlantic Health Medical Humanities program where she learned the importance of being socially and culturally aware in all medical and patient settings.

Returning to her roots, she is assigned to Excelsa Health Latrobe Family Medicine at Excelsa Square at Latrobe.

Katherine McGowan, DO, was born in Washington, DC, but spent most of her younger life in Vienna, VA, where she had plenty of time to consider her future. But her mind was not always focused on a path to medicine, despite her father's occupation as a virologist with the National Institutes of Health and her mother's own work there, as well.

Instead McGowan had her sights set on Theater or Law when she entered James Madison University, but she quickly determined she enjoyed studying medicine and completed her undergraduate degree in Health Science. During her studies she earned certification as a nurse aide and volunteered with the Rockingham-Harrisonburg Free Clinic. She would also accept her first of many research assignments that would deepen her understanding of heart disease, infectious disease and patient communication preferences.

While completing a postbaccalaureate program at the University of Massachusetts, McGowan served as a patient liaison for Compassionate Care Hospice. After graduation, she worked as an Emergency Department Technician at George Washington University Hospital in DC before enrolling at Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine (LECOM) at Seton Hill University. While at LECOM, she would volunteer as a Naloxone Educator for the Westmoreland Drug and Alcohol Commission.

After bouncing among states, McGowan decided to remain settled in Pennsylvania for residency training having fell in love with her fiancé's native Pittsburgh.

She also had received so much positive feedback from others in the Excelsa Health residency program her decision was an easy one.

McGowan is a member of the American Academy of Osteopathy, The American College of Osteopathic Emergency Physicians, The American Osteopathic Associations and the Pennsylvania Osteopathic Medical Association. She is assigned to Excelsa Health Saltsburg Family Medicine.

With roots in rural Greene County, **Jessie Milliken, DO**, knows all too well the value of relationships that last a lifetime, like those between a patient and a family doctor. He'll have his Western Pennsylvania upbringing, schooling and residency training to thank for a career that points to community medicine.

Valedictorian of Jefferson-Morgan High School, the Mather native studied Biology and Pre-Med at Gannon University in Erie. During his undergraduate years, Milliken volunteered as a tutor for underprivileged students as well as learned fundamental medical techniques at Central Greene Pediatrics in Waynesburg during a summer student experience. Milliken himself was a former patient in the same office growing up, which piqued his interest in medicine at an early age. This helped him realize his goal to become a family physician so he could help families grow, especially when taking care of families in rural areas.

Milliken remained in Erie for medical school at Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine (LECOM). He also worked for a year full time at Arnot Ogden Medical Center just over the state line in Horseheads, NY, gaining experience in ambulatory medicine, pediatrics and more.

Milliken appreciates that Excelsa's Family Medicine Residency also offers diverse opportunities and will allow him to engage more personally with patients over time. His interests in hunting, fishing, kayaking and camping will help in building those relationships. A member of the American Osteopathic Association, he is assigned to Excelsa Health Frick Family Medicine at Excelsa Square at Frick.

Alexander Porter, DO, calls the rural Northeastern Pennsylvanian town of Sayre, home. That's where he raised sheep and saw his parents as excellent role

models. He began his career journey at Allegheny College in Meadville, where he majored in Chemistry with a minor in Economics. But it was while enrolled at Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine (LECOM) at Seton Hill University in Greensburg that his path forward crystallized.

Choosing the Excelsa Health Latrobe Hospital Family Medicine Residency program was an easy decision, as Porter had many opportunities to connect with Excelsa staff and physicians, including Dr. James Masterson, sports medicine and concussion management, among others during medical school rotations. He is equally fond of the area and the supportive nature of the Excelsa staff with whom he interacted.

His various volunteer experiences with social service agencies as well as Special Olympics, Muscular Dystrophy, and a summer preceptorship at the Richard G. Lugar Center for Rural Health in Indiana also helped to shape his interest in family medicine.

A member of the Family Medicine Education Consortium, the American Academy of Family Physicians and the Pennsylvania Medical Society, Porter looks forward to serving the community at Excelsa Health Saltsburg Family Medicine.