



## The Long Ride 2014

### FEEL THE PULSE

- 8<sup>th</sup> World Congress on Developmental Origins of Health and Disease
- Giving to the Next Generation

### UP CLOSE WITH HEROES

- Ms Janet Lee  
*Assistant Director of Human Resources  
Dean's Office (Administration)*

### KOPI-TALK

- 11<sup>th</sup> Asia Pacific Medical Education Conference

### MY STORY

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Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine

# MediCine

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## Dean's Message



### Dear Friends,

Warmest greetings to all! I trust that you have all had a bright start to 2014!

In a blink of an eye, we are already into the second month of 2014. Allow me to share with you highlights from the last few events held in 2013, as well as some exciting events that we can look forward to in 2014.

We were honoured to co-host the 8th World Congress on Developmental Origins of Health and Disease (DOHaD) in Singapore. It is the very first time that this prestigious meeting is held in South East Asia. The Congress, which was held from 17 to 20 November 2013 at Suntec Singapore, was chaired by Associate Professor Chong Yap Seng from Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology. On the student front, our students enthusiastically organised the highly anticipated annual Playhouse event at the Mrs Lee Choon Guan Theatre, Anglo-Chinese Junior College

on 15 December 2013. The successful theatrical extravaganza wowed the audience, showcasing our students' incredible array of talents outside the classroom.

Starting off 2014, we organised the 11th Asia Pacific Medical Education Conference (APMEC) from 15 to 19 January. This successful event was attended by over 850 participants from 34 countries. APMEC is now the largest medical education conference in our region. In this issue of MediCine, we have invited Professor Matthew Gwee, who was the co-chairman of the 1st APMEC in 2004 and organising committee member of this year's APMEC to share with us the journey and evolution of APMEC.

One of our important goals and resolutions for 2014 is to create more support for our students with financial need, through our new initiative "*Giving to the Next Generation*". Please help us to ensure that no student misses the opportunity of medical education due to financial barriers. About one quarter of our 1,350 students need

financial aid. We currently give out over one hundred scholarships and bursaries each year, but the unmet needs are twice again as many. By the combined efforts of our staff, students and alumni, I am confident we can provide more support for our students in need. We each became doctors through hard work but also because we received support from parents, family, friends or people who believed in us and gave us an opportunity. Let us now do the same for the next generation. On behalf of our School and students, I thank all of you who have contributed generously to our bursaries and to our students in need.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank each and every one of our faculty, staff, students and alumni for your invaluable contributions to the School.

Let me wish one and all a Happy Lunar New Year, filled with good health, joy & fulfilment!

### Yeoh Khay Guan

Dean

Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine

# 8th World Congress on Developmental Origins of Health and Disease



Panel discussion with a thousand-strong audience on 19 November 2013, a day devoted to “DOHaD and Public Policy”.

**Held** for the first time in South East Asia, the 8th World Congress on Developmental Origins of Health and Disease (DOHaD) was themed “From Science to Policy and Action”. The congress which took place from 17 to 20 November 2013 brought together policy-makers, public health professionals, clinicians, researchers, and non-governmental organisations from 52 countries. This landmark event, which was organised by the School, the Singapore Institute for Clinical Sciences (SICS), and Agency for Science, Technology and Research (A\*STAR), hosted 1,109 participants with 128 individual invited speakers.

The Congress was chaired by Associate

Professor Chong Yap Seng from the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, while the Programme Chair was Sir Peter Gluckman, who is Chief Science Advisor to the Prime Minister of New Zealand, as well as Chief Scientific Officer at the SICS, A\*STAR. The event was preceded by a day packed with five exciting and informative satellite meetings: Preterm Labour, Epigenetic Analysis/ EWAS, Environmental Exposure and Disease, Cohorts and Longitudinal Studies, and Intestinal Microbiology in Early Life: Building a symbiosis for health.

622 impressive abstracts were received from 42 countries, and the 10 winners received their Poster Awards from the

Minister for Health, Mr Gan Kim Yong. The Poster Award winners were hailed from Australia, Canada, Chile, India, New Zealand, Singapore and the USA.



Singapore Minister for Health, Mr Gan Kim Yong delivering his address at the opening ceremony.

# Giving to the Next Generation

**Playing** pranks, learning from mentors, singing “interesting” songs, and making lifelong friends are all part of Dr Ngoi Sing Shang’s fond memories of his student days at the NUS Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine. These experiences were possible in part because of several scholarships he received. More than 30 years later, Dr Ngoi is now an established surgeon with his own practice, and one who feels compelled to give back and support the next generation of doctors. \*

Generous donations from alumni such as Dr Ngoi could not come at a more crucial time, with the rising costs of medical education. It is estimated that one third of our medical students experience financial difficulty in meeting tuition (\$23,050 for the 2012/2013 academic year) and living expenses. Currently, the total number of bursaries available is insufficient to meet the demand.

The Medical School hopes to enable every student who has the propensity to be the next generation of capable and compassionate doctors with financial aid. To this end, the Giving to the Next Generation project was launched in May 2013. This project seeks the support of Alumni to unite as a class to provide bursaries to provide financial aid to our students who are in need. Based on current cost of living, we need to generate approximately S\$100 million in endowed funds.

As a further incentive and acknowledgment, the Medical School will consider bursary naming rights for

individuals or classes reaching the target amount for an expendable or endowed bursary. Classes achieving one of these goals will also receive a plaque on a Class Giving Wall located on our flagship building, the Centre for Translational Medicine.

The Giving to the Next Generation project has started to yield results. For example, members of the Class of 1979 reunited to establish the Balaji Sadasivan Bursary in memory of their late classmate, a neurosurgeon and Senior Minister of State for Foreign Affairs. The Class of 1981, led by class member Professor John Wong Eu Li, has also raised enough funds to establish a bursary. Yet another inspiring story is the Christine Chong Hui Xian Bursary. The bursary was set up by the Class of 2012 to honour a member of the class who died from lymphoma during her third year of medical school. To date, approximately \$700,000, inclusive of government matching funds, has been raised towards this bursary.

Who are these bursaries helping? The first recipient of the Christine Chong Hui Xian Bursary, Phase III student Wilson Ong Ying Fa, embodies the kind of student for whom we are all rooting to succeed. As Wilson puts it, “I don’t come from a very rich background and, honestly speaking, before applying to Medicine, I worried about whether I could afford to pay the hefty sum of school fees to pursue the course that I liked.” However, he decided to apply after a senior medical student convinced



**Wilson Ong Ying Fa (Phase III Medical student), first recipient of the Christine Chong Hui Xian Bursary**

him that the strong spirit of giving to the Medical School meant that financial constraints should not hold him back.

Receiving the bursary in 2013 has allowed Wilson to focus on his studies and participate in community involvement programmes because he no longer needs to take up part-time jobs and tuition assignments. It has also motivated him to be a donor himself someday. “I hope to continue on with this culture in the future and contribute as best as I can to pay this kindness forward.”

**If you are interested in contributing or would like to initiate a class gift, please contact Mr Luke Siah at [luke\\_siah@nuhs.edu.sg](mailto:luke_siah@nuhs.edu.sg) or go to <http://medicine.nus.edu.sg/corporate/aboutus/giving.aspx>.**

*\* Adapted from NUS Office of Alumni Relations article. Familiar faces in a familiar place. [https://www.alumnet.nus.edu.sg/Content/Images/Contributions/ngoi\\_sing\\_shang.pdf](https://www.alumnet.nus.edu.sg/Content/Images/Contributions/ngoi_sing_shang.pdf). Accessed 12 December 2013.*



# Ms Janet Lee

**Assistant Director of Human Resources  
Dean's Office (Administration)**

**Kicking** off the new series of Up Close with Heroes, meet our heroine Ms Janet Lee, who leads a team supporting the 750 Non-Academic and Executive and Professional staff in the Medical School. Determined yet humble, this lady constantly goes above and beyond her job duties to make a positive difference to those under her care.

### What do you do?

I joined the Medical School in August 2011 with over 30 years of HR experience in the electronics, food manufacturing, insurance, social club, hotel and property development, and marine and offshore sectors. I have always been very keen to join the medical or pharmaceutical field, so it was a dream realised to be offered a post here.

### Tell us more about your work.

Looking after the staff's well-being is one of the main thrusts of good HR practices. Taking care of these issues for the staff helps them to focus on their work, which benefits everyone in the Medical School. Helping others is inherent to me. I also like challenges and making things happen for a good cause.

### What was the first challenge you encountered upon joining the Medical School?

When I had just joined in 2011, the Medical School performed its first joint employee engagement survey with NUHS. To my dismay, our response rate was very low, barely reaching 50% by the end date. To obtain more meaningful feedback, I eventually helped boost response rates to 66% by bringing the survey to department meetings and organising a "survey day."

### Any other interesting experiences to share?

Recently, two colleagues were diagnosed with chronic illnesses while the university was in the midst of changing staff medical insurance providers. I saw a pressing need to help the staff with their insurance claims, from notifying the insurers of their hospitalisation to filing and monitoring the claims and ensuring all bills were submitted in time. I felt a strong sense of

job satisfaction when the claims were amicably settled. I was impressed when the Medical School management stepped in to bear the hospitalisation expenses of two staff in excess of their entitlement, which was prorated due to the change in insurers.

Another interesting experience involved the Long Service Medal, which requires a minimum service of 25 years and other criteria set by MOE. In my second year, a staff with 40 years of service was upset that she had not been shortlisted for the medal year after year, despite satisfying all stated criteria. I found out that eligible staff are only shortlisted in batches each year, with those within 10 years of retirement or contract expiry being nominated first. Thus, people who have served at least 25 years but are more than 10 years from retirement age are not nominated. With the support of the Vice Dean (Administration) and the Dean, we made a change. Another 35 staff were nominated for the award in 2012.

### Do you have an overall philosophy that guides your approach to your work?

My philosophy revolves around simple work principles: take pride in your job, do things right the first time, always clarify when in doubt, be persistent, practise altruism, and go that extra mile to make a difference in others' lives.

**If you know of any heroes or heroines who truly embody the NUHS core values of Teamwork, Respect, Integrity, Compassion, and Excellence (T.R.I.C.E), we would love to hear from you! Contact us at [alumni.med@nus.edu.sg](mailto:alumni.med@nus.edu.sg)**

# 11th Asia Pacific Medical Education Conference

By Professor Matthew Gwee  
Co-Chairman, 1st APMEC 2003

Organising Committee, 11th APMEC 2014

Medical Education Unit, NUS Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine

## History

**Asia** Pacific Medical Education Conference (APMEC) was initiated in 2003 by the Medical Education Unit (MEU), NUS Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine. APMEC had a modest start with about 300 participants, mostly from the Asian region. From its humble beginning, APMEC has grown in stature over the years; we now boast an attendance of over 800 participants, from more than 33 countries.

Established in 2002, members in the newly formed MEU, filled with enthusiasm and firm conviction, felt that a conference specially devoted to medical education would be of value to and consistent with the education mission of our medical school. Moreover, our medical school founded more than one century ago has the consensus that we can now take the lead to promote our medical school as a centre of excellence in medical education in this

region and beyond. So, a few 'brave' and committed individuals from MEU, with support from the medical school leadership then, decided to undertake the daunting task of organising the first APMEC in 2003.

The MILES (Mentorship, Innovation and Leadership in Educational Scholarship) award was subsequently introduced in 2006. The award is given to individuals who are outstanding scholars in medical education and/or have contributed substantially to the objectives and mission of our APMEC. Each year the Organising Committee will review for a candidate of merit to receive the MILES Award and submit to Dean for the final approval.

## 11th APMEC: Optimising Collaboration In Medical Education- Building Bridges And Connecting Minds

This year's APMEC took place on 15 to 19 January, with a total of over 800 registered participants from 34 countries. The theme selected for the 11th APMEC is of special significance. Global trends in curriculum reforms are now ongoing. Undergraduate medical education consists of a diversity of disciplines but with a common goal. Collaboration across the disciplines is, therefore, essential to the success of any curriculum reform. So 'building bridges

and connecting minds' can be expected to pave the way for greater collaboration and, thus, to more sustainable curriculum reforms.

The Organising Committee of APMEC 2014 is chaired by Associate Professor Goh Poh Sun from the Department of Diagnostic Radiology together with several members of our MEU on the Committee. A dedicated group of staff members from the MEU, headed by Ms Lee Su Mei, provided excellent supporting services to the Committee. The camaraderie and the teamwork among the group members are indeed exemplary.

## APMEC: Looking Back And Going Forward

It has been a most delightful and satisfying journey, beginning with the first APMEC in 2003; very soon we will be in the early stages of planning APMEC 2015. Disruptive events have occurred globally and locally and have made it imperative for medical schools to undertake urgent curriculum reforms.

Hopefully our APMEC series has contributed, through our expert speakers and the many educational activities, to a greater understanding of the changes that medical schools need to make in order to remain viable and relevant to our students in this new millennium.



Prof Gwee announcing the recipients for the prestigious MILES Award 2014.

# Playhouse 2013

By Trevor Tan (Phase II Medical student)  
Arts and Culture Director, 65th EXCO, NUS Medical Society

On 15 December 2013, the highly anticipated annual theatrical extravaganza, Playhouse, took place at the Mrs Lee Choon Guan Theatre, Anglo-Chinese Junior College. Stretching back almost 40 years ago, Playhouse is an indelible, long-standing tradition of the School. Indeed, many of our current professors, clinical educators and practitioners took part in this exhilarating event. As King Edward VII College of Medicine underwent a transformation into NUS Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine, so has Playhouse which evolved with increasingly sophisticated props and choreography. Now the norm is a far cry from the simple skits put up by Medical students decades ago.

Playhouse is not just an event showcasing the vibrancy of the Medical School's arts and culture scene; it is also a friendly competition between the five Phases, with each year putting up a play that aims to dazzle and regale the audience. This year was no different; Cardiac Arrest by Phase I, The Toilet Monologues by Phase II, Saundra by Phase III, That's What She Said by Phase IV, and Residency: Evil by Phase V. All proved to be exceptionally entertaining and riveting. These plays were the culmination of many weeks of exhausting rehearsals and practices, as well as long hours of toil on props and choreography. The fact that the clinical students (Phases III to V) still had to attend classes and study for examinations



during the Playhouse preparation period attests to their sheer dedication and skilful time management.

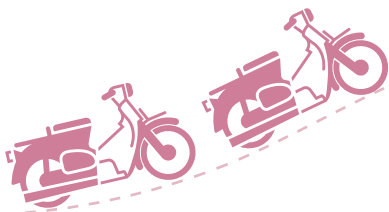
Nonetheless, though it could be tiresome and time-consuming at times, the greatest satisfaction about organising Playhouse was to see Medical students from all Phases coming together to produce a theatrical spectacular that enthralled the audience. Needless to say, the theatre was packed with staff, teaching faculty, friends and family all clamouring to support their loved ones on stage. I can confidently say that they were very impressed by all the performances put up, and that not a single one of them left disappointed.

Of course, Playhouse would not have been possible without the kind support of the Dean's Office and teaching faculty, as well as the tremendous effort by each of the Playhouse representatives. Yingxin Low and Sanaa Sheriff (Phase I), Alvin Tan and Tabitha Abraham (Phase II), Amit Cutilan (Phase III), Samuel Lau and Samuel Lam (Phase IV), Jacqueline Tan, Warren Ong and Tharsan Renganathan (Phase V) were all pivotal in harnessing the collective efforts of each of their batches to put together stunning plays.

Playhouse 2014 will be taking place this year in December. Hope to see you all there!



# The Long Ride 2014



*Singapore to Sweden*

**On** Friday, 21 March 2014, alumnus Associate Professor Philip Iau (Class of 1989) and fellow Associate Professor Mikael Hartman, from the Department of Surgery, National University Hospital, will be embarking on a journey from Singapore to Sweden on their motorcycles in the name of breast cancer awareness and research. The Long Ride 2014 will cover 17 countries in four months. MediCine caught up with Prof Iau to find out more...

## What is The Long Ride 2014 about?

The Long Ride is about raising awareness about breast cancer in Asia. Most people seem to think of it as a disease that affects more women in the west, but the truth is that we in Singapore are not that far behind. If present trends continue, we will have the same incidence as most western countries in my daughter's generation. This is a problem that is seen in most of the rapidly developing urban centres in Asia as well. The chance of dying of breast cancer, however, is much higher in Asia than in developed western countries because of later presentation, lack of access and acceptability of treatment, and possibly unfavourable types of breast cancer seen here.

One of our main aims in The Long Ride is to increase awareness by letting others know what it is like to have breast cancer as an Asian woman, in as many places as we can in Asia. Key areas include the challenges to getting women to present earlier, the cultural barriers to presentation and treatment, and how local cancer doctors have overcome these problems. We think that while we have a lot to learn about how to manage this disease, we also have a lot to learn from each other.

The funds that we raise from The Long Ride will all go to the Breast Cancer Research Fund. This will fund research carried out in Singapore on breast cancer predisposition, treatment and prognosis.

## What motivated you and Prof Hartman to embark on this journey on motorbikes?

Mike initially suggested we do this on bicycles. After some hurried calculations on the back of a napkin and google maps I calculated this would take about two and a half years. We felt this was too long and thought that engines might make it easier.

*More on next page...*

... continued from previous page

## How do you prepare for such a campaign?

I think a lot of the effort goes into trying to take the focus away from the bikers and the bikes and the routes and that side of things. The ride is about Breast Cancer in Asia. We spend a lot of time trying to get people to give to the Asian Breast Cancer Research Fund and see the urgency that we really need to find Asian solutions to this very Asian problem. This has come in the form of interviews, dinners, after-dinner lectures, charity drives and the like.

On the bike side of things, we are making some modifications on the bike and learning basic roadside repairs. A lot of the stuff that can go wrong is beyond that level of maintenance so prevention is the key. This is asking the bikes to do quite a lot in a short time, hence lots of changes are made before we leave including fluids, cables, suspension, chain and sprocket. We are riding different bikes – which may be a really big mistake – but this also means separate training with different mechanics. We have done some riding like this before – Mike mainly in Europe and me up to Thailand, but nothing quite on this scale.

I think the one act that remains to make sure that the focus stays on the cause is get my bike pinked out, the traditional colour of Breast Cancer Support. This is hard.



The Long Ride 2014 sharing about Breast Cancer and its mission with students from Anglo-Chinese School (Independent) on 16 October 2013.

## Any words of wisdom to share with our current students and peers alike?

Be malcontent on how things are. Most of all, stay curious and engaged to the latest developments of the field you have been called to. Don't sell out for commercial comfort too quickly. This ride is motivated by the need to do research to answer our problems ourselves. Without that curiosity and discontent, our patients can only expect the same from us, and not our best.

To support The Long Ride 2014 or to stay updated with our doctors' progress, visit <http://www.longridess.com.sg/>



From left:  
Associate Professor  
Mikael Hartman and  
Associate Professor  
Philip lau



# CATCHING UP ON GOOD TIMES

CLASS OF 1992



CLASS OF 1999



**Thinking of holding a class gathering to reconnect and reminisce the old times, but too busy to do so?** The Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine Alumni Relations Team can provide all the support you need to make your long-awaited gathering hassle-free, smooth and memorable! For more information, contact us on [alumni.med@nus.edu.sg](mailto:alumni.med@nus.edu.sg)

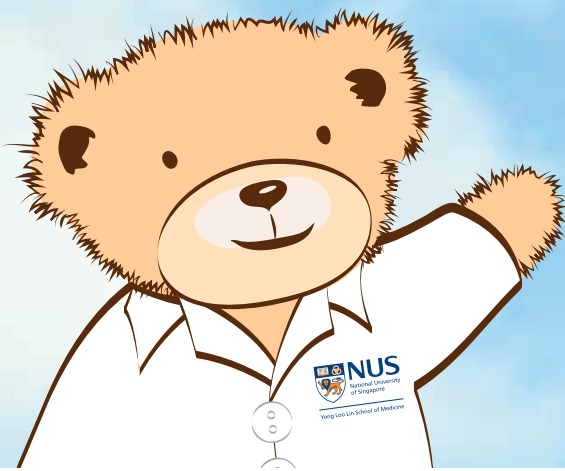
# MEDBEAR – YOUR NEW BEAR FRIEND

Greetings from the NUS Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine and a warm BEARY hug from MedBear to all students, alumni and staff!

MedBear is finally in school and he is embarking on a mission to kick-start a year-long campaign to create a vibrant medical school life and online community!

Join MedBear paw-in-paw in capturing those special moments in life, and smile at the good ol' days as you look through the photos years later!

Send us the photos and stand a chance to win a **GRAND PRIZE!** Find out more about this campaign at [www.facebook.com/NUSYLLSoM](http://www.facebook.com/NUSYLLSoM) now!



Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine

## 3

### Calling out to all alumni!

## Steps to Stay Connected



### 1

#### Update your particulars



with us via email ([alumni.med@nus.edu.sg](mailto:alumni.med@nus.edu.sg)) and receive the latest news and events around school

### 2

#### Contact Us



to plan your next class gathering!

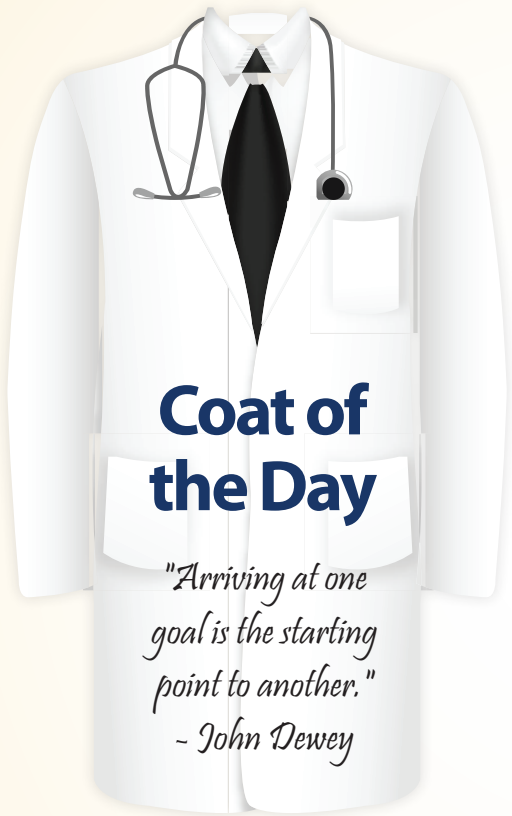
### 3

#### Choose your part/role



in shaping the next generation of doctors.

- Admission selection committees
- Career guidance to students
- House mentor
- Mentor for student initiatives



## Stay Tuned

Making its debut in the next issue, a new column about the exciting research taking place at the School of Medicine!



Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine

The Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine is the first academic body in Singapore's history dedicated to tertiary education. Established in 1905, it has the honour of being the foundation of what has now evolved into the National University of Singapore. The School is a strong component in the University's Mission to advance knowledge and foster innovation, educate students and nurture talent in service of Singapore and society.

## White Coat Humour

### Testing! Testing!

A man goes to the doctor and complains that his wife cannot hear him. "How bad is it?" the doctor asks. "I have no idea," the husband says. "Well, please test her. Stand 20 feet away from her and say something. If she doesn't hear you, get closer and say the same thing. Keep moving closer and closer and repeating the comment until she does hear you. That way we'll have an idea of her range of hearing loss."

So the man goes home and sees his wife in the kitchen chopping up vegetables for dinner. From 20 feet away, he asks, "What are we having for dinner?" No answer. From 10 feet, and then five, the same thing happens. Finally, he stands right behind her and asks, "What's for dinner?" She turns around, looks at him and says, "For the FOURTH time, BEEF STEW!"

## Picture Quiz

### The Results are out!

The correct answer for the last issue's Picture Quiz is:



Winners will be notified by email on prize collection.

### Centre for Translational Medicine (MD6)

#### Congratulations to our three winners!

- Cheng Mei Ting (*Management Asst Officer, Alice Lee Centre for Nursing Studies*)
- Ooi Xue Ting (*Class of 2017*)
- Ng Peng (*Class of 2017*)



### Where can I be found?

Submit your answers to:  
alumni.med@nus.edu.sg  
Contest ends on:  
1st March 2014

First 3 correct answers will win a **\$10 Starbucks Card** each!  
Multiple entries are not accepted.

# MediCine

is brought to you by the  
Yong Loo Lin School of  
Medicine, Dean's Office.

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