

Health Systems Management

The Practitioner 2025 Annual Report





Table of Contents

<u>Letter from the Chair</u>	4
<u>Mission, Vision, Values</u>	6
<u>About Health Systems Management</u>	7
 <u>Bridging Classroom and Practice</u>	 9
<u>Support</u>	11
<u>Celebrating Diane Howard</u>	12
 Faculty	
<u>Adjunct Faculty Spotlight</u>	14
<u>New Rush University Leadership</u>	15
<u>Faculty News</u>	16
<u>Research, Publications, Presentations</u>	18
<u>Faculty Development</u>	21
<u>Awards</u>	22
 Students	
<u>Student Cohorts</u>	24
<u>Awards</u>	25
<u>Student News</u>	26
<u>Student Governing and Professional Committee</u>	29
<u>Career Services</u>	30
<u>Case Competitions</u>	31
<u>Fieldwork</u>	32
 Alumni	
<u>Board</u>	33
<u>In Memoriam</u>	33
<u>Events</u>	34
<u>Alumni Spotlight</u>	35
 <u>HSM Core Office</u>	 37
<u>Address and Links</u>	38

Letter from the Chair

Dear Friends,

We are so proud of all that we have accomplished this year. As you will read in our 2025 Annual Report, it has been an ‘all hands on deck’ year with our Health Systems Management, or HSM, students, faculty and alums at the heart of everything we do.

Our student committees, led by our Student Governing and Professional Board, updated and codified the roles and responsibilities of their work and oriented incoming classes on policies and procedures that would make for a successful student and graduate experience. Collaborating with the HSM Career Services Committee, the students promoted career advancement through over 20 lunch and learns and company site visits.

As you will read later, our students were recognized by the Chicago Health Executives Forum for their contributions to the field. Our students collaborated with Chicago-area universities to sponsor two annual events with hospitals, associations, insurance, pharma, private equity and technology companies, helping students refine their career interests. With the generous support of the Don Oder Excellence in Administration Fund, Rush HSM supported over 20 students to attend the 2025 American College of Healthcare Executives Congress on Healthcare Leadership in Houston. Despite the challenging employment landscape in recent years due to COVID-19 and market changes, these efforts helped 86% of our graduates secure employment by May 2025.

Beyond the classroom, our students and faculty volunteered in numerous community activities, including the American Heart Association Heart Walk, Breast Cancer Mobile Unit, West Side Walk for Wellness and Bike MS: Tour de Farms. They adopted families for the holidays and distributed gifts; collaborated with the Multicultural Center on managing the annual back-to-school fair and participated in many more activities aimed at giving back to the community.

Under the direction of our faculty, Chien-Ching Li, PhD; Kristin Smith, PhD; and Shital Shah, PhD, residential HSM students presented research covering 12 operational projects. The executive HSM students under the direction of Matthew DePuccio, PhD, and Steve Wightkin, PhD, presented six research projects. See the project list and sponsors on page 28.

We also celebrate the accomplishments of our practitioners and core faculty who have made significant contributions to the program. In July, our very own faculty member, John Diederich, CEO Rush Copley Medical Center, accepted a top four award for the Foster G. McGaw Prize, sponsored by the American Hospital Association at its Leadership Summit in Nashville.

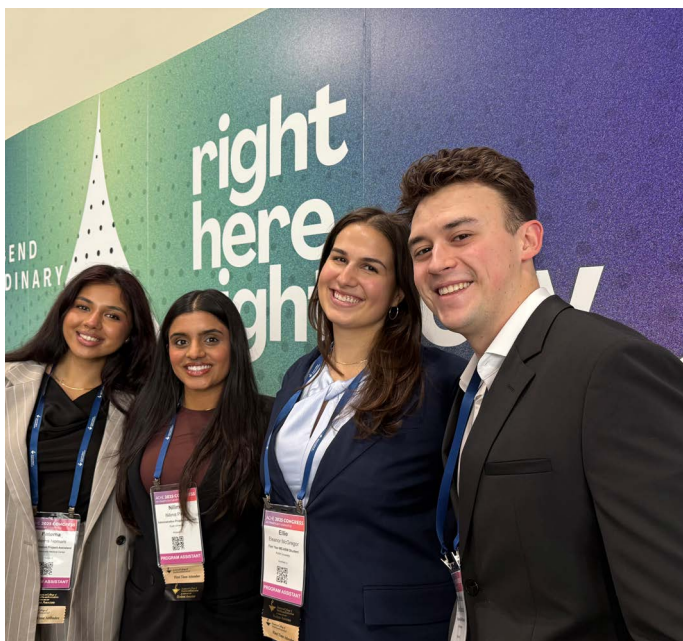
I could not be more pleased with the work of our HSM core faculty and staff who continue to integrate teaching, service and research into their portfolios, contributing to a well-rounded academic community of scholars. The core faculty have been actively engaged in national meetings where they share their research and learn from peers in the field. See the entire list of grants, publications and presentations starting on page 18. In terms of contributions to professional associations, Steve Wightkin, PhD, was invited by the Association of University Programs in Health Administration to revise its Body of Knowledge on Information Technology and AI, and I was invited by the American College of Healthcare Executives, or ACHE, to join 17 scholars to redraft the ACHE Fellowship Exam.

Congratulations to Chien Ching Li, PhD, and Shital Shah, PhD, on their promotion to full professor, and to Elena Delahera, HSM Office Manager, as she prepares to receive her MS degree in Industrial-Organizational Psychology from the Illinois Institute of Technology in 2026.

Thank you to our alums across the country and around the world who continue to serve as faculty and mentors to the HSM program. We held our second annual Alumni Weekend, honoring our outstanding alums



Diane Howard, PhD (left) and Wrenetha Julion, PhD, RN, associate dean, Rush University College of Nursing (right) join John Diederich on stage during the American Hospital Association Leadership Summit. Diederich celebrates with Rush's trophy after being named one of the top four finalists for the Foster G. McGaw Award.



Fatema Nomani, Nilima Patel, Eleanor McGregor and Bartosz Stefaniuk network at the 2025 ACHE Leadership Congress.

who inspired us over the year, including Jason Girzadas, MS-HSM ('94); Jordan Wirtz Frazzetta, MS-HSM ('19) and Aubree Larson, MS-HSM ('22). Read more about them on pages 35-36. The HSM Alumni Association, or HSMAA, continues to manage the Rush Alumni Mentoring Program, or RAMP, matching alums with students for coaching and mentoring. The program is entering its third year and has made 56 matches in 2025.

We also celebrated alum Sarah Woodrum, DrPH, MS-HSM ('93), who was appointed dean of the West Virginia University School of Public Health. Our alums presented at national meetings around the country including Eric Alvarez, MS-HSM ('11), at the National Association of Latino Healthcare Executives; Rick Goddard, MS-HSM ('11), presented at ACHE in Houston on "Leadership Insights: Navigating Payer Partnership for a Sustainable Financial Future;" Brian Lane, MS-HSM ('99), on "Leading the Use of AI and Data-Based Solutions to Solve Health Disparities;" Ishani Patel, MS-HSM ('17), on "Revenue Renaissance: Innovating for Clinical Growth, Wellness and Diversified Revenue Streams;" Dominica Tallarico, MS-HSM ('93), on "Beyond Recovery: Thriving as a Health System into the 2030s and Beyond" and Woodrum on "Fearless Leadership: Psychological Safety and the High-Performing Healthcare Organization."

The new year brings new changes. After decades in our old office space, HSM moved to the Armour Academic Center, where we will be in the heart of the action on the 10th floor within the College of Health Sciences. We hope you can visit us in our new space.

Please look for new initiatives that HSM will pursue in 2026 with the introduction of a new career center. We are blessed with the support of Wayne Lerner, DHA, MSHA, and Peter Butler, MSHA, former HSM chairs, who have graciously agreed to collaborate on the center's development.

Finally, as I prepare to step down from the HSM chairmanship later in 2026 and begin easing into retirement, I want to express my heartfelt thanks to the friends and colleagues who have supported me throughout the years. My time at Rush and within the health management community has been deeply meaningful and a privilege. While I have invested much in this work, I am profoundly grateful for colleagues, friends and family. Any contribution I made was matched—and truly surpassed—by the support, kindness, and camaraderie you all have shared with me. Happy New Year, everyone!



Diane M. Howard, PhD, FACHE
Professor and Chairperson,
Department of Health Systems
Management



Alums, please let us know what you are doing so we can share your successes in the monthly HSM newsletter! Email your updates and pictures to Rush_HSM@rush.edu.

Mission, Vision and Values

Mission

Our mission is to prepare individuals for roles of increasing leadership in the field of health care management, with the ultimate goal of transforming health care organizations to deliver the highest-quality patient care and improve the lives of patients, their families and the community.

Vision

We will be recognized as the premier graduate health care management program for developing leaders who transform health care.

Values



#5

U.S. News & World Report
Best Graduate Schools

Health Systems Management

 RUSH UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF HEALTH SCIENCES

About Health Systems Management

The Department of Health Systems Management, or HSM, at Rush University in Chicago, established in 1978, was accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Management Education, or CAHME, and graduated its first class in 1981. Since its inception, nearly 900 students have graduated from the Master of Science in Health Systems Management, or MS-HSM, program.

HSM offers residential full-time and part-time tracks with approximately 25 full-time and up to six part-time students each year. HSM recently enrolled its fifth cohort into the Master of Science in Health Systems Executive Track for working professionals with over five years of health care experience. The executive HSM cohorts include physicians, nurses, therapists, other clinicians and clinical support, IT, research, finance professionals, managers and consultants.

Supported by the College of Health Sciences, the program brings together eight core faculty members with deep expertise in health policy, economics, health services research, health management, insurance, informatics, sustainability and process improvement. An industry-expert program director and program manager, who provides day-to-day leadership and coordination, complete the HSM team. HSM supplements its teaching needs in the classroom and internships by deploying the teacher-practitioner philosophy where practitioner leaders act as internship preceptors, course directors, lecturers and mentors in their areas of expertise, such as patient experience, accounting, human resources, law and ethics, marketing and planning and quality, as well as various elective courses. The teacher-practitioner model allows the student to work closely with practitioners as professional role models as they move into the world of work.

The Rush HSM program is widely recognized for its integrated first-year internship experience. Entering students interview for half-time roles at Rush University Medical Center during their first year. Students are assigned preceptors, who evaluate their performance and provide competency-based feedback. HSM assists students in securing summer and second-year employment opportunities in health care organizations across Chicago, the Midwest and the country. In addition, each student is assigned an academic counselor who monitors their academic achievement and, based on their interests, an alum mentor and a second-year HSM peer coach.

HSM supports the mission, vision and values of Rush University System for Health and Rush University.

By the numbers: Master of Science in Health Systems Management



Program Types:

Full-Time or Part-Time Residential and Executive Tracks



Program Length:

2 Years (Full-Time and Executive)
3 to 4 years (Part-Time)



Location:

On Campus (Full-Time and Part-Time)
Hybrid (Executive)



Average Class Size: 25



2024-2025 Tuition:

\$1,283 per credit hour

93% Student employment post-graduation (five-year average)



HSM by the numbers, continued

2025 Post-Graduate Positions

- ✓ Hospital Operations: **23%**
- ✓ Consulting: **18%**
- ✓ Fellowship: **18%**
- ✓ Other: **14%**
- ✓ Insurance: **5%**

Undergraduate
universities
represented

55

Racial/Ethnic
Diversity

Residential

53%

Executive

42%



Current Enrollment

Residential

- Part-Time: **14**
- First-Year (full-time): **27**
- Second-Year (full-time): **19**
- Median Age: **24.5**

Executive

- First-Year: **25**
- Second-Year: **23**
- Median Age: **39.5**

Bridging Classroom and Practice:

How HSM Students Gain Real-World Experience Across Rush

Practical, hands-on learning has long been at the heart of the Master of Science in Health Systems Management program at Rush University. Since 2009, all full-time residential students have been required to complete a minimum of 440 hours of experiential learning through their first-year internship courses. Part-time students fulfill this requirement through a project-based internship designed to align with their professional commitments.

To ensure a strong start, first-year students participate in a preparatory module during the first six weeks of the fall semester focused on Excel and data management, Outlook and Teams proficiency, and project management tools. These sessions equip students with the technical and organizational foundations needed to thrive in their internship environments. Thank you to Tom Webb, DBA, Elena Delahera and Shital Shah, PhD, who help provide these tools.

Students then begin their placements in mid-October and participate in structured 30-, 60-, and 90-day check-ins with the course director to monitor progress, reflect on learning outcomes, and demonstrate skill growth. The goal of the HSM department is to ensure that first-year students are involved in work experiences that provide quality projects and exposure to leadership to successfully fulfill the internship goals.

Article continues on page 10



2025-2026

Rush Internship Sites

Preceptors

Ambulatory Care Services

Justine Zilliken, MBA, MHA

BMO Institute for Health Equity

Anisa Jivani, MHSA

College of Nursing Faculty Practice

Annika Gorenz, MS

Community Engagement and Health Equity

Traci Simmons, DrPH(c), MPH

Diagnostic Radiology and Ophthalmology

Yin (Will) Tseng, MHA

Emergency Department

Michael Cadiz, MS-HSM ('25)

Environmental Sustainability

Jinia Sarkar, MS

Finance - Hospital

Shaun Cooper, MS-HSM ('02)

Internal Medicine

Tam Nguyen, MS-HSM ('06)

Lab Operations

Sarina Rodriques, MSH

Neurosciences Service Line

Maggie Wurtzebach, MPS

Patient Care Services - Nursing Finance

Shonda Morrow, JD, MSN

Patient Relations

Phil Shaw, MEM

Perioperative and Interventional Services

José Torres, MS

**Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation,
Women's Leadership Council**

Sheila Dugan, MD

Revenue Cycle

Alison Weston, AM

Strategy & Marketing

Ryan Nagdeman, BS

Surgery & Urology

Taylor Hilderbrand, MHA

Social Work and Community Health (strategy)

Bonnie Ewald, MA

Social Work and Community Health (operations)

Michelle Newman, MPH

Social Work and Community Health (research)

Alison Wagner, AM

Supply Chain

Melanie Ball, MHA

Treasury

Jeff Tack, MBA

Student Perspective: Olivia Norton



Second-year student Olivia Norton ('26) exemplifies the HSM program's commitment to experiential learning and professional development.

Norton completed her first-year internship with Rush Children's Hospital as an administrative project assistant and returned for a second year, supporting all 17 divisions within the children's hospital. Olivia was responsible for maintaining monthly dashboards, such as the quality, NICU and divisional dashboards that track key performance metrics, and assisting in operational tasks on an ad hoc basis.

"A notable project I am particularly proud of was developing a proforma to support the expansion of the Breastfeeding and Lactation Medicine Clinic. This clinic was successfully expanded and is improving maternal infant health across the Chicagoland area. This project allowed me to leverage the skills I have learned in the classroom as well as through my preceptorship."

Through her time as an HSM student, Norton has developed a broad range of skills that have shaped her professional growth.

"Through various experiences over my time as an HSM student, I have gained valuable skills in many different areas. A skill I would like to highlight is the ability to critically evaluate challenges and use available resources to generate solutions before having to ask for help. This allows me to become proactive in problem solving and practice critical thinking at a deeper level. I have also made significant strides in data management and analysis, which I was eager to strengthen from the start of my internship. I can now confidently pull reports, analyze data and present meaningful insights."

Olivia found that classroom learning complemented her practical experience, helping her connect coursework to operational processes at Rush.

"My classroom learning helped me make deeper connections to my internship work. For example, participating in the Quality and Safety Improvement course allowed me to understand the importance of the Pediatric Quality and Safety Committee's monthly dashboard and appreciate the real-world impact of maintaining the dashboard each month."

Her internship has given her a comprehensive view of hospital operations and strengthened her desire to work in health care administration.

"My internship allows me to see all the inner workings of hospital operations and pushes me to pursue a career focused in that same space. From experiences

focused on revenue cycle to clinical outcomes, I have gained perspective on the importance of health care administration and the unique ability to balance operations, equity, and finance within a hospital."

Norton's experience also deepened her understanding of teamwork and Rush's I CARE values.

"The leadership team had complex issues arise often, and they are able to collaborate and provide excellent solutions aligning with Rush I CARE values. The values of I CARE resonate with my work in Rush Children's Hospital as I am committed to exercising excellence in my internship work no matter how small or large the task may be. I am constantly asking my preceptor for feedback to push myself to produce the best possible deliverables. I also display accountability by recognizing mistakes and exhausting all solutions in a problem-solving mindset."

When asked what advice she would offer to first-year students beginning their internships, Norton stated:

"Reflecting on my first year with Rush Children's Hospital, my advice for students entering their internships is to explore every space of your internship you are able to by asking questions and meeting with individuals to get to know their role. To be confident in your work, it's essential to understand it thoroughly, allowing you to become the subject matter expert. Health care is interdisciplinary and accumulating as much knowledge as possible is going to set you up for success!"

Norton reflects with pride on how far she has come and how the internship has shaped her future career path.

"My final months of being an intern for the Rush Children's Hospital have sparked drive and passion for improving health care in the community, the hospital and the outpatient settings. I am most proud of my growth and my ability to confidently say I am ready to embark on my future role as a health care consultant. The preceptor model has fostered an environment for learning and developing a skillset I would not have otherwise. I am so grateful for my experience at the Rush Children's Hospital, and I am so incredibly thankful for my preceptor Madison Maynard ('23)."

Article continues on page 23

Generous Support for HSM

HSM received generous support from our alums, faculty and friends. These gifts went a long way toward helping future leaders enter the MS-HSM program and support their professional development. A summary of their kindness appears below:

HSM Endowed and Immediate-Use Funds

Alumni Association of Health System Management

Supports HSM Alumni Association activities and events, including the ACHE reception and alumni weekends.

Barri Falk ('88) Memorial Scholarship

Supports scholarships for students.

Gail & Lois Warden Fellowship in HSM

Supports scholarships for students enrolled in the HSM program with preference given to nurses and other allied health professionals.

Health Systems Management Alumni Endowed Scholarship

Supports scholarships for students.

Irwin Press Patient Experience Research Award

Supports current and future research endeavors in patient experience and satisfaction by Rush faculty and students.

J. Robert Clapp Jr. Endowed Student Education Fund

Supports student participation in regional and national case competitions, research projects and graduate work presentations at professional conferences and attendance at professional events.

Mary K. Krause ('94) HSM Student Career Development Fund

Supports professional development programs and activities for students.

Don Oder Excellence in Administration Fund

Supports the HSM faculty and student professional development.

The Mayur Patel ('88) Innovations Award Endowed Fund

Supports student fieldwork in environmental sustainability and global health.

Rush Center for Health Leadership

Supports a variety of innovative leadership initiatives, including Planetary Health Report Card participation.

The Shekleton-Clement ('81) Families Endowment for Gerontological Scholarship

Supports students enrolled in the Rush College of Nursing or the Rush College of Health Sciences' HSM Program who partner together on a joint project involving geriatric patients and/or services.

Tamara Smith ('82) HSM Scholarship

Supports students who have demonstrated a commitment to health equity. Additional consideration may be given to experiences that reflect a dedication to building resiliency when addressing observed or experienced inequities.

Are you in a position to join this cherished group of donors? We welcome your support to make an impact. Please contact Jenna Plakut, MSW, at jenna_plakut@rush.edu. Or, if you would like to donate to one of the existing funds, please use this QR code.



Celebrating Diane Howard

Dedicated Trailblazer, Coach and Mentor

Howard to retire in summer 2026.



Bottom: Diane Howard & Wayne Lerner

When **Diane Howard, PhD, MPH, FACHE**, accepted an administrative fellowship at Rush in 1977, she was drawn to the institution's nontraditional practitioner-teacher model. "I admired the philosophy and believed in how it was practiced," she said. Nearly 50 years later, Howard embodies that philosophy as chair of HSM in the College of Health Sciences. She is a fearless advocate for Rush students, a leader among faculty, an accomplished researcher and a confident counselor to all who seek her advice along their chosen career paths.

"The HSM program would not be where it is today if it weren't for Diane," says Wayne Lerner, DPH, FACHE, former chair of HSM, who hired Diane in 1979 as an administrative assistant at Rush Presbyterian-Saint Luke's Medical Center. "Diane is a quiet but strong force who is unmovable when she sets her sights on a goal. She has made it her personal mission to contribute to the future of health care by encouraging HSM graduates to innovate while remaining focused on improving health for all."

Thanks to Howard's leadership, the HSM program is consistently ranked among the top five in the nation by U.S. News & World Report. Besides being recognized as a premier educator, Howard has shaped national policy, elevated community health priorities, and consistently advocated for increased diversity in industry leadership roles.

Howard took on increasing administrative responsibilities at Rush from 1978 to 1985. The first black woman appointed to the executive team, she helped establish the HSM program by working on applications for approval from the Illinois Board of Higher Education and accreditation from the Higher Learning Commission. In 1985, she left Rush to work in leadership roles at the American Hospital Association, Lake Hospital System in Cleveland, US Healthcare in Philadelphia and Aetna in Washington, DC. These experiences formed her teaching when she returned to Rush in 2005 after earning her PhD from the University of Illinois at Chicago. Over the past 20 years, Howard has advanced from assistant professor to professor and chair of HSM. She has published one book, 20 peer-reviewed articles and nine book chapters, received numerous awards, edited the newsletter for two organizations, served in leadership roles for multiple professional organizations and coached 20 teams participating at the National Association of Health Services Executives Case Competition.

In 2008, Howard served as an inaugural member of the Rush Diversity Leadership Council, or DLC. The DLC paved the way for Rush's later commitments to diversity, equity and inclusion—commitments that are now part of Rush's mission.

Join us in celebrating an accomplished career.

As Howard prepares to retire, **Rush has launched an initiative to continue her legacy** with a career and leadership center named in honor of her many contributions to the HSM department. The center will provide support and guidance to the students and alums Howard cares about so deeply. We invite you to honor Howard's career and continue her legacy of teaching service and research by supporting the center. Your gift will enable us to recruit current and past Rush leadership alumni and department faculty to provide support and guidance to residential- and executive-track HSM students and alumni in need of advice. The center will differentiate the HSM program in the academic world and serve as a valuable asset as Rush recruits new students and faculty.



To make a gift or to learn more, use the QR code or contact **Jenna Plakut, MSW, senior director, alumni giving, Rush University System for Health, at jenna_plakut@rush.edu or (773) 368-2087.**



Diane (center) saying goodbye to the Executive HSM class of 2025 as they finish their final summer semester onsite week.

Howard was recognized by the National Association of Health Services Executives, or NAHSE, Chicago Chapter, for her remarkable legacy of leadership, service and advocacy for the next generation in health care. She served as president of the NAHSE Chicago Midwest Chapter from 1985 to 1986 and has been a longstanding champion of equity, professional excellence and Black advancement in health care administration. NAHSE is a non-profit association of Black health care executives founded in 1968 to promote the advancement and development of Black health care leaders and elevate the quality of health care services rendered to minority and underserved communities.

In April 2025, Howard was recognized by the Chicago Health Executives Forum with the American College of Healthcare Executives Regent Career Achievement Award for her impact on the health care industry. The award honors health care professionals who have demonstrated an active commitment to advancing health care leadership as a profession and who have served as role models in their organization and community. The Chicago Health Executives Forum is the regional chapter of the American College of Healthcare Executives.

Adjunct Faculty Spotlight

Leading the Way with His Teaching



John Diederich, MHA, MBA, FACHE, president and CEO of Rush Copley Medical Center, exemplifies what it means to be a chief executive officer. When students matriculate at Rush, the Health Systems Management program takes the students through a career decision-making exercise. Invariably, when presented with 17 career choices after graduation, first-year students will select the hospital CEO role. To educate students about this position, HSM introduces them to “superman,” John Diederich. Using the Harvard Business Review article, “The CEO’s Calendar,” as a guide, Diederich shares his journey from being a 17-year-old bottle washer in the Copley Hospital kitchen to his current role as CEO.

Diederich brings the best of the practitioner-teacher role to life. As the co-course director of the Professional Skills and Capstone courses, he shares insights from his calendar regarding how he spends his time in the Rush University System for Health, Rush Copley Medical Center and various community meetings and events. Although his personal time is limited, he authentically conveys the rigors of his job. John represents the CEO students aspire to be — honest, straightforward, humble and smart. With a BS, MHA and MBA from the University of Iowa and as an ACHE fellow, he is a loyal Hawkeye and avid Chicago White Sox fan.

Diederich contextualizes his career by reflecting on his upbringing in Aurora and his connection to the history of Rush Copley Medical Center. He shares that Aurora City Hospital was founded in 1886 and became Copley in 1932. The affiliation with Rush began in 1987, and Copley officially joined the Rush University System for Health in 2017. Rush Copley Medical Center is now a 210-bed hospital with net revenue of \$441 million.

Students often ask, “What do CEOs actually do?” Diederich opens a PowerPoint that displays his weekly calendar populated with onsite and remote meetings to answer the question, referencing the Harvard Business Review article. He reveals that he works 10.5 hours a day, conducts business on 80% of his weekends for an average of one hour a day, conducts business during 50% of vacation days and spends 80% of his time onsite at Rush Copley, with 20% of his time spent visiting other locations and traveling. According to his Fitbit analysis, he sleeps 6.2 hours a night. After this presentation, he asks, “Do you want to be a CEO?” He then continues his presentation with a discussion on coaching, mentoring and succession planning.



Drawing from his successful career, Diederich shares significant lessons throughout different phases of his professional journey. In the early career phase, he advises students to speak up; during mid-career, he encourages finding one’s passion; and in the later career stages, he emphasizes the importance of paying it forward and giving back. These lessons resonate deeply, aiming to inspire the next generation of leaders.

Thank you, John Diederich, for all you do for Rush HSM.

New Rush University Leadership

Over the past 18 months, Rush University has welcomed the following new leaders.



In 2024, **Robert S.D. Higgins, MD, MHA**, returned to Rush and initiated efforts to recruit a new provost and vice provost for the university. Higgins holds the James A. Campbell, MD, Presidential Chair for Rush University and is the chief clinical academic officer and senior vice president for Rush University System for Health. Higgins successfully led the recruitment of **Julie Hoff, PhD, RN**, as Rush University Provost. Hoff is a 1986 Rush University College of Nursing graduate and returned to Rush this past May after serving as dean of the Fran and Earl Ziegler College of Nursing at the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center and interim chief nurse executive for OU Health, University of Oklahoma Medical Center. In addition, **Deborah Martin, PhD**, was appointed vice provost of student affairs this past year after serving as dean of student engagement and student life at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago for more than 17 years.



In early 2025, Rush also welcomed a new System Chief Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officer, **Ildemaro Gonzalez, MBA**, who will oversee all the Rush University efforts as well. Gonzalez served in chief diversity roles at Emory Healthcare, Dana-Farber Cancer Institute and Parkland Hospital. We are excited to have his leadership.

To close out the year, we were pleased to announce that **Jason Turner, PhD, MAE**, was appointed dean for the College of Health Sciences, or CHS. Turner has been at Rush since 2018 and served as the interim dean of CHS since 2024. In his new role, he leads 16 allied health professional programs within CHS, including HSM. In addition to his administrative duties, Turner teaches Finance Fundamentals and Managerial Finance and serves as a role model, educator, mentor and friend to HSM students.



Left: Robert Higgins, MD, MHA, welcomes students, friends, and families to the 2025 Rush University Commencement ceremony in May. Right: Rush leaders gather at the diversity leadership awards celebration in September (from left to right) Ildemaro Gonzalez, MBA; Julie Hoff, PhD, RN; David Ansell, MD, MPH, senior vice president for community health equity; and Robert Higgins, MD, MSHA.

Faculty News



Kristen Smith, PhD, LMSW, has been selected as one of Rush University's BMO Institute for Health Equity Research Scholars, beginning in October 2025 and continuing through 2027. During her tenure, she is collaborating with Theodore Corbin, MD, MPP, chairperson, Department of Emergency Medicine, Rush University Medical Center, to design and implement a hospital-based violence intervention program, or HVIP. The program will connect patients with cable locks for guns and provide education on safe storage practices to reduce firearm violence.

Smith was also selected as one of the American Public Health Association's New Investigator Awardees to analyze National Violent Death Reporting System, or NVDRS, data. She is currently working on a paper that examines the impact of economic distress on firearm-related deaths.

In addition, Smith was selected as one of this year's Schaalman Senior Voices Faculty Fellows from the Rush University Center for Excellence in Aging. As part of her fellowship, she will work alongside the Center for Excellence in Aging leadership to develop a curriculum for HSM students, focused on supporting age-friendly health systems.

Lastly, she has been awarded seed funding from Rush University's College of Health Sciences to conduct community focus groups in Rush's anchor mission communities. The goal of the focus groups is to better understand community members' perceptions of firearm storage and firearm violence, as well as identify what the barriers and facilitators are for adopting best practices for safe firearm storage. The focus groups will assist Smith in designing an intervention to educate and prepare patients in the Rush Emergency Department, helping them stay safe from gun violence.



Tricia Johnson, PhD, was featured on the Bodacious Optimist podcast, where she discussed the return on investment of breast milk with Sasha Mayer, the founder of Mamava, which provides innovative lactation pods found in thousands of public spaces across the country. Listen to the interview at mamava.com/bodacious-optimist-podcast-trisha-johnson.

She was also an invited panelist for the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine's September roundtable on addressing training site and slot shortages across health professions. She and other panelists discussed the lack of high-quality training opportunities, the challenges related to education programs, the financial burden of clinical placements for trainees and the need for more data on the return on investment of training future health professionals. Johnson, along with Julie Hoff, PhD, RN, FNAP, FAAN, attended the culminating workshop in Washington, D.C., October 15 through 16, 2025.

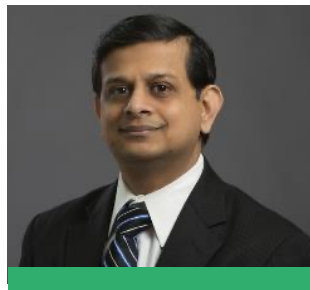
For more than seven years, Johnson and her collaborator, Aloka Patel, MD, have been testing whether an innovative economic intervention can help overcome poverty-related barriers to maternal breastmilk provision. The economic intervention, called ReDiMOM, or Reducing Disparity in the Receipt of Mother's Own Milk in Very Preterm Infants, offers a conditional cash transfer to mothers for each day they provide their breastmilk while their baby is in the neonatal intensive care unit.

Johnson and Patel received a five-year, \$2.97 million award from the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development to study the neurodevelopmental, health and economic outcomes at preschool age for former preterm infants enrolled in ReDiMOM. This award marks the third cycle of funding to support their research, which aims to reduce disparities and increase the duration of mothers' own milk feedings for very preterm infants hospitalized in neonatal intensive care units. This phase of the research will follow children enrolled in the ReDiMOM intervention from age two through preschool. They hypothesize that children exposed to the ReDiMOM intervention will demonstrate improved IQ and lower health care and education costs through preschool age.



Matthew DePuccio, PhD, has accepted the role of Teaching Committee Co-Chair for the Health Care Management, or HCM, Division of the Academy of Management. As the leader of the Teaching Committee and a member of the Division's Executive Committee, DePuccio is responsible for developing and leading educational workshops to enhance the quality of teaching and instruction in graduate-level programs for health care administration. The HCM Division collaborates with practitioners to examine the performance of health care organizations, as well as public policy issues such as access to care, competition, cost control, and quality of care, and their implications for managing health care organizations.

Faculty Promotions



Congratulations to Chien-Ching Li, PhD, MPH, FGSA, and Shital Shah, PhD, MS, on their promotions to full professor. Chien-Ching Li has been with HSM since 2013. He teaches Managerial Epidemiology and Master's Project I and II. Li chairs the HSM Faculty Research Committee. Both Shital and Chien-Ching serve as academic advisors for our residential HSM students. Shital has been a member of the HSM faculty since 2005, where he serves as chair of the HSM Curriculum Committee and teaches Quality, Safety & Operational Improvement and Master's Project I and II.

Advancing Leadership for Sustainable Health Care



In March, the Geneva Sustainability Centre, or GSC, continued its annual presence at the ACHE Congress in Houston. GSC's senior leadership development advisor and HSM faculty member, Andy Garman, PsyD, led the "Unlocking Leadership Skills for Resilient and Lower-Carbon Healthcare Boot Camp." He was joined by special guest presenters Jonathan B. Perlin, MD, PhD, and Kevin Zacharyasz, M.En, from Joint Commission International, as well as Carrie Owen Plietz, MHA, from Kaiser Permanente. Garman also led the "Healthcare Leadership in Environmental Sustainability: Debunking the Myths" session with Kyle Tafuri, MBA, vice president, sustainability, Hackensack Meridian Health. Participants were encouraged to challenge misconceptions about sustainability.

Research, Publications, Presentations

Research Grants:

CAHME/Canon. Planetary Health Report Card for Health Administration - Pilot Project (Amount: \$5,000; Faculty Sponsor: **Andrew Garman**)

National Institutes of Health / Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD). Point of Care Maternal Milk Concentration Device Optimizing Neonatal Growth with Targeted Nutrition Support: Establishing Clinical Evidence of Benefit as an Alternative to Milk Sourced Fortification (Amount: 3,013,097; Co-I & Site PI: **Tricia Johnson**)

National Institutes of Health / Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD). Neurodevelopmental, Health, and Economic Outcomes at Preschool Age in Former Very Preterm Infants Randomized to An Economic Intervention to Support Mother's Own Milk (Amount: \$2,900,000; MPI: **Tricia Johnson**)

National Institutes of Health / National Heart Lung and Blood Institute (NHLBI). Optimizing Effectiveness and Implementation of COPD Self-Management Treatment (Amount: \$3,240,540; Co-I: **Tricia Johnson**)

Rush BMO Institute for Health Equity. Community Led Intervention for Promoting the Safe Storage of Firearms within Emergency Departments (Amount: \$10,000; PI: **Kristen Smith**)

Rush University. Cardiometabolic Health of Mother-Child Dyads after Very Preterm Birth (Amount: \$100,000; MPI: **Tricia Johnson**)

Rush University. Community Perceptions of Firearm Storage Practices and Facilitators and Barriers to Implementing Best Practices (Amount: \$10,000; PI: **Kristen Smith**)

Rush University. Artificial Intelligence-Assisted Prioritization of Social Determinants of Health Screening in Geriatric Populations: Optimizing Resource Allocation and Clinical Outcomes (Amount: \$49,602; Co-I: **Steve Wightkin**)

Science Philanthropy Alliance. Assessing the Impact of Ambient AI-assisted Documentation in Oncology Care (Amount: \$250,000; Co-I: **Steve Wightkin**)

Peer-Reviewed Publications:

Smith, K. (2025). Suicide and Ageism: Understanding Risk and Tools for Prevention. Grand Valley State University, School of Social Work.

Johnson, TJ, Vondracek, H, Moro, T, White, CD, & Ailey, SH. (2025). The societal cost of behaviors of concern among individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities residing in small residential group homes. International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health. International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, Jan 26;22(2):168.

Hurley VB, Brewster AL, DePuccio MJ, Hung DY, O'Malley AJ, Shifferdecker K. (2025). Organizational characteristics associated with sustained participation in internal quality improvement: Findings from two waves of a national sample of physician practices in the United States. Social Science and Medicine, Mar:369:117826.

Johnson TJ, Medina-Poeliniz C, Meier PP, Parker LA, Hoban R. (2025). Pumping Behaviors, Pumped Milk Volume, and Maternal Opportunity Cost for Breast Pump-Dependent Mothers of Preterm Infants in the First 14 Postpartum Days. Breastfeed Med. Jul;20(7):502-511.

Longcoy J, Isgor Z, Suzuki S, Lynch E, Wang H, Ansell D, Johnson TJ. (2025). Use of Different Inclusion Criteria to Compare COVID-19 Hospital Admission Rates by Race and Ethnicity: A Cohort Study. Healthcare. Feb 11;13(4):381.

Patel AL, Wilson J, Holmes M, Johnson TJ. (2025). Mother's Own Milk Provision During the First 12 Weeks of Life by Gestational Age. JAMA Network Open. 8;(3):e250024.

Professional Presentations:

Appelhans B, French SA, Martin MA, Lui K, Bradey LE, Johnson T, Wang H, Janssen I, Suzuki S. (2025). Home-delivered Pediatric Weight Management for Low-income Families: A randomized controlled trial. *Pediatrics*. Apr 1;155(4):e2024069282.

Sierra Morales F, Ouyang B, Miravalla A, Osen A, Johnson TJ. (2025). Socioeconomic Determinants of Clinical Outcomes in Multiple Sclerosis Patients. *Multiple Sclerosis Journal Experimental, Translational and Clinical*.

Buchholz SW, Daniel M, Kitsious S, Schoeny M, Halloway S, Johnson TJ, Vispute S, Wilbur J. (2025). Working Women Walking Program: A Sequential Multiple Assignment Randomized Trial. *Journal of Physical Activity and Health*.

Lavater R, Basterrechia S, Garman A. (2025). International Healthcare Leadership: The Global Pursuit of a Healthier Future. *Frontiers of Health Services Management*. 41(4):4-9.

Tseng TS, Li CC, Lin HY, Witmeier KN, Zeng C, Chiu YW, Celestin MD, Trapido EJ. (2025). Multi-level factors associated with low dose computed tomography lung cancer screening in the United States. *Journal of the National Medical Association*.

Garman, AN & Din, T. (2025). Climate Change, Planetary Health and IO Psychology (invited chapter). *Sustainable Development through the World of Work: Translating Insights from Organizational Psychology* (Oxford University Press).

Larsen N, Johnson TJ, Patel AL, Dyrland M, Fischer C, Dobies K, Meier PP, Kadakia S. (2025). Racial Disparities in Mother's Own Milk Feedings Persist After Discharge from the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit. *Breastfeeding Medicine*.

Negron Price A, Dakin T, Jayram A, Crowder R, Roschnik S, Garman A. (2025). Evaluation of a Novel Learning Simulation for Organizational Leadership in Environmental Sustainability. *Journal of Climate Change and Health*.

Smith, K, Dawdy D, Magness C, Smith T, Johnson G, Dubiasi S, Ewell Foster, C. (2025). Perceptions of Assessing and Managing Suicide Risk (AMSR) Training Among Clinicians in Correctional Settings. *Corrections: Policy, Practice, and Research*.

DePuccio MJ, Coates A, Auxier B, Sullivan EE. (2025). "This stuff matters": Rural health care leaders and meaningfulness at work. *Health Care Management Review*. 50(4):p 262-270.

DePuccio MJ, Torrez D, Hsu E, Lynch E, Bergmans R, McCarthy RJ. (2025). A Multilateral Qualitative Study of Perspectives on Enhancing Clinical Trial Diversity Among Historically Underrepresented Groups. *Clinical Therapeutics*. Nov;47(11):971-980.

Garman A, Tafuri T, Brooks K. Healthcare Leadership in Environmental Sustainability: Debunking the Myths. American College of Healthcare Executives Congress. March 2025; Houston, TX.

Garman A, Brooks K, Perlin J, Plietz KO. Unlocking Leadership Skills for Resilient and Lower-Carbon Healthcare. American College of Healthcare Executives Congress. March 2025; Houston, TX.

Smith K, Dawdy D, Johnson G, Magness, C. Smith, T, Dubiasi, S., Ewell Foster, C. A. Qualitative Analysis of Corrections Mental Health Professionals' Perceptions of Assessing and Managing Suicide Risk Training. *Suicide Research Symposium*. April 2025; Virtual.

Smith K. Supporting Employee Wellness in Healthcare: Strategies for New Managers. National Center for Healthcare Leadership Spring Excellence Summit. April 2025; Columbus, OH.

DePuccio MJ, Torrez D, Hsu E, Lynch E, Bergmans R, McCarthy R. Characterizing Barriers and Facilitators to Underrepresented Patient Engagement in a Chronic Pain Clinical Trial. *United States Association for Pain Studies*. May 2025; Chicago, IL.

Greenwood H, Garman A. Unleash your superpowers: Peer coaching for sustainability success. *CleanMed*. May 2025; Atlanta, GA.

Jager A, Wenger R, Garman A. De-siloing hospitals' climate initiatives: resilience and community assessments. *CleanMed Conference*. May 2025; Atlanta, GA.

Jager A, Garman A, Johnson S. American Hospital Association Community Health and Environment Technical Expert Panel Moderator. American Hospital Association Community Health and Environment Workshop. May 2025; Scottsdale, AZ.

Yassaie R., Garman A (co-chairs). BMJ Leader Live: Planetary Health Leadership. *BMJ Leader Webinar: Planetary Health Leadership*. June 2025; Virtual.

Wightkin, S. The Hidden Cost of AI Assistance: Exploring Cognitive Debt. *Rush AI Learning Community*. June 2025; Virtual.

Garman A. Planetary Health in International Context / Experiential Education using a Policy Simulator, RUSH University Planetary Health Faculty Development Program. June 2025; Chicago, IL.

Professional Presentations Continued

Smith K. Addressing the Student Mental Health Crisis: Balancing Empathy and Accountability. Association of University Programs in Health Administration. June 2025; Columbus, OH.

Li CC, Wilson K, Natafagi N, Haddock S. Charting Global Solutions: Models for Healthcare Management Study Abroad Experiences. Association of University Programs in Health Administration. June 2025; Columbus, OH.

Howard D, Wainio JA, Malte R, O'Brien K. Beyond Transactional Education: Bridging Generational Values and Principles for Career Success. Association of University Programs in Health Administration. June 2025; Columbus, OH.

DePuccio MJ, Coates A, Auxier B, Sullivan EE. "This stuff matters:" Healthcare leaders and meaning at work. Academy of Management Annual Meeting. July 2025; Copenhagen, Denmark.

Tietschert MV, Garman AN, DePuccio MJ, Negron Price A, Van Raaij E. Do No Harm? How Healthcare Management Research Can Advance Environmentally Sustainable Health Care. 85th Annual Meeting of the Academy of Management. July 2025; Copenhagen, Denmark.

Gutberg J, Porter T, Mitchell C, Cauley M, Pinto A, DePuccio M, Peck J, Mok Z. Practice Incubator: Bridging the practitioner-academic gap in research and careers. Professional development workshop. 85th Annual Meeting of the Academy of Management. July 2025; Copenhagen, Denmark.

Garman, A. Leadership competencies for health care sustainability. World Health Organization-Alliance for Transformative Action on Climate and Health Summit, Session 1. Sept. 2025; Virtual.

Garman, A. Leadership competencies for health care sustainability. World Health Organization-Alliance for Transformative Action on Climate and Health Climate and Health Leadership Summit, Session 2. Sept. 2025; Virtual.

Smith, K. The Role of AI in Emotional Support. Rush AI Learning Community. Sept. 2025; Virtual.

Johnson TJ, Patel AL. The ReDiMOM Study (Reducing Disparity in Receipt of Mother's Own Milk): A randomized controlled trial designed to improve access to mothers' own milk (MOM). Medela's Breastfeeding & Lactation Symposium Series 2025. Sept. 2025; Itasca, IL.

Johnson TJ, Hoban R. Making the Economic Case for a Lactation Program to Increase Infants Receiving Mother's

Own Milk at Discharge. Medela's Breastfeeding & Lactation Symposium Series 2025. Sept. 2025; Itasca, IL.

Johnson TJ. Health Systems, Accreditation and Regulatory Perspectives. National Academies, Addressing Training Site and Slot Shortages Across the Health Professions: A Workshop. Sept. 2025; Virtual.

Tietschert MV, Van Raaij E, Garman AN. Leading transitions: board-level and clinical leadership that promote sustainable health care practices. Planetary Health Annual Meeting. Oct. 2025; Rotterdam, NL. Virtual.

Wightkin S. Do Students Know You Use AI? And Should it Matter? Rush AI Symposium. Oct. 2025; Chicago, IL.

Wightkin, S, Hatrzman M, Dechan, M. Technology Risk Management: WHY You Should Care and WHAT You Can Do! First Illinois HFMA Fall Summit 2025. Oct. 2025; Lisle, IL.

Wightkin S, Webb, T. AI and Cognitive Debt. Rush Health Systems Management Alumni Weekend, Oct. 2025; Chicago, IL.

Garman A, Yassae, R. Planetary Health Leadership Webinar. BMJ Leader. Oct. 2025; Virtual.

Schultz S, Baginskis, D. Planetary Health Report Card - Healthcare Management Pilot Project. Climate Health & Sustainable Care 2025 Annual Symposium. Oct. 2025; Toronto, Canada.

Li CC, Hu T, Wu S, Mei S, Matthews AK. Barriers and Facilitators of Indoor No-Smoking Policy Implementation Among Older Chinese American Women. Gerontological Society of America Annual Meeting. Nov. 2025; Boston, MA.

Li CC, Hu T, Mei S, Wu S., Paun O. A Culturally Tailored Web-Based Decision Aid to Support Dementia Care Planning Among Chinese American Family Caregivers. Gerontological Society of America Annual Meeting. Nov. 2025; Boston, MA.

Van Bruggen M, Garman A. Navigating Net Zero Masterclass. 48th IHF World Hospital Congress. Nov. 2025; Geneva, CH.

DePuccio MJ. The Value and Promise of a Peer Coaching Program. National Center for Healthcare Leadership Fall Leadership Excellence Summit. Nov. 2025; Chicago, IL.

Faculty Development

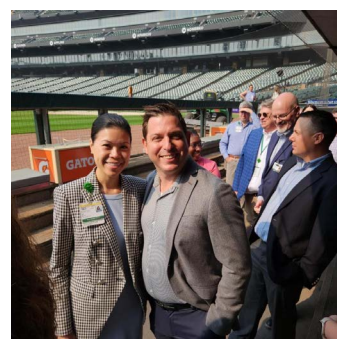
Faculty and Rush leaders gather for the All-Faculty HSM Retreat.



With more than 80 core and adjunct faculty, HSM takes its faculty development seriously. Throughout the year there are several opportunities for faculty to learn, network and contribute to HSM's ever evolving and improving curriculum. This past year, HSM held weekly core faculty staff and research meetings and monthly meetings of the Faculty Affairs and Development Committee. HSM Faculty enjoyed a day learning together at the 2025 Health Systems Management All-Faculty Retreat, "Shaping the Future of Healthcare Leadership," held on July 31, 2025, at Guaranteed Rate Field, home of the Chicago White Sox. **The annual retreat brings together educators, alumni and industry leaders to reflect on progress and shape the future of health care education. Four panels explored the following themes:**

- **Academics and Operations:** Aligning education with Rush's operational goals under the "One Rush" philosophy
- **Teacher-Practitioner Model:** Co-creating solutions with students to tackle real-world health care challenges
- **Classroom Credibility:** Enhancing engagement through practical strategies and reflective teaching
- **Alumni-Employer Reflections:** Preparing students for evolving roles in health care and beyond

Key takeaways from the retreat included an emphasis on digital fluency, generative AI and system-wide collaboration. There were calls for curriculum updates, including new tracks and real-world case competitions. The importance of employer feedback highlighted the need for adaptability, emotional intelligence and strong communication skills.



Top: Over 40 core faculty, adjunct faculty, alumni and Rush leaders gathered for the 2025 All-Faculty HSM Retreat in July.

Above: Rush leaders enjoyed teaming in the Chicago White Sox dugout during a break at the HSM All Faculty Retreat.

Right: Tam Nguyen, MS-HSM ('06), administrator, Department of Medicine, Rush University Medical Center, clinical instructor, Rush University; and Rick Goddard, MS-HSM ('09), senior vice president market alliances, Lumeris.

"We co-create with students to find solutions to health care problems. That's the power of the teacher-practitioner model, said John Diederich, MBA, MBA, FACHE, president and chief executive officer, Rush Copley Medical Center."

The retreat also celebrated faculty achievements, welcomed new members, and previewed the upcoming accreditation visit. Attendees enjoyed a vibrant setting, including lunch, a raffle and a group photo at the ballpark.

Faculty Awards

2025 Excellence in Teaching Award

Recognizes the HSM faculty member who has distinguished themselves the most in the classroom setting.

Residential Class Awardee

Kristen Smith, PhD, Assistant Professor, Health Systems Management, Rush University

Executive Class Awardee

Wayne Lerner, DPH, LFACHE, Associate Professor, Health Systems Management, Rush University



Robert Gallagher (right) bestows the Excellence in Teaching Award to Wayne Lerner, DPH, MHSA, FACHE.

2025 Bruce C. Campbell Award

Honors the adjunct faculty member who the students feel has been most helpful to them throughout their educational experience at Rush University.

Residential Class Awardee

Richard Kuerston, DBA, Adjunct Faculty, Health Systems Management, Rush University

Executive Class Awardee

Isabel Fulcher, PhD, Adjunct Faculty, Health Systems Management, Rush University



Vidhi Patel ('25) presents the Bruce C. Campbell Award to Richard Kuerston, DBA, MBA.

2025 Commencement Hooder Award

Given to the faculty member the students most wish to honor for their involvement within the program. The Hooder participates in the graduation ceremony by presenting the Health Systems Management hood and "hoods" the graduating students as they receive their diploma.

Awardee

Shital Shah, PhD, Professor, Health Systems Management, Rush University



Vidhi Patel ('25) and Robert Gallagher ('25) present the Hooder Award to Shital Shah, PhD, MS.

2025 Rush University Commencement Marshal

Diane Howard, PhD, had the honor of serving as the 2025 Rush University Commencement Marshal in May 2025.



Left: Diane Howard, PhD serves the 2025 Rush University Commencement Ceremony macebearer. Right: The 2025 Faculty Awardees (pictured left to right) include Kristen Smith, PhD; Isabel Fulcher, PhD; Shital Shah, PhD; and Richard Kuerston, DBA, and Kuerston's son. Not pictured is Wayne Lerner, DHA.

Bridging Classroom and Practice:

How HSM Students Gain Real-World Experience Across Rush

More Student Perspectives

Continued from page 10



The internship experience is not only a learning opportunity, but also a defining feature of Rush's leadership development approach. Under the mentorship of dedicated preceptors and faculty, students are immersed in meaningful projects that expose them to the realities of hospital operations, community health initiatives, and system-level challenges.

▶ **As first-year student Emily Garman ('27) explained,** "One of the great things about Rush is how we become integrated into the system. The teacher-practitioners show us how everything we learn is directly applied within Rush. Once we start our internships, we take that applied knowledge and get to dive even deeper."



▶ **For some students, the internship provides an avenue to connect professional passions with larger system goals. Second-year student Sydney Schultz ('26) reflected,** "My internship at Rush has been such a meaningful experience, it's where I've seen how sustainability can truly shape the way we care for people. Being part of projects that connect environmental responsibility with community health has deepened my sense of purpose and shown me what impactful, values-driven work looks like."



▶ **For first-year students, the internship represents both an opportunity and a motivation for choosing the HSM program. Karen Almachi ('27) shared,** "The internship element of the HSM program was a major factor that I considered when looking into graduate programs. For me, the internship offers the opportunity to reinforce coursework learning with practical experience while keeping the momentum from my previous health care work experience. I'm excited to apply everything I've been learning in my upcoming internship in the Emergency Department this year!"

The opportunity to work while attending classes is a differentiator of the HSM program and is one of the key reasons HSM attracts high-caliber students to join Rush. Students often say the work experience sets them apart when they search for their first post-graduation job. By gaining practical work experience while attending classes, students are equipped to apply what they learned in class to real-world problems thereby developing their I CARE (innovation, collaboration, accountability, respect and excellence) values, improving knowledge retention, accelerating skill development, and advancing their leadership competencies.

HSM Class of 2026 and 2027 Student Cohorts

Class of 2026



Residential

Allen Abraham, Hannah Ahmed, Syed Yaseen Ali, Anissa Ashraf, Perpetual Assem, Caroline Austgen, Sara Ayala, Darius Baginskis, Shreya Dhingani, Melissa Francis, George Henry, Nick Jara, Hani Maali, Eleanor McGregor, Kishan Mehta, Hina Mujahid, Fatema Nomani, Olivia Norton, Nilima Patel, Sydney Schultz, Bartosz Stefaniuk, Daniel Torrez



Executive

Sarah Astudillo, Adriana Bermeo Ovalle, Ajla Comes, Maria Cuevas, Meaghan Gildea, Syed Haq, Elisha Harris, Kathleen Javor, Katie Kean, Anil Kesavan, Rebekah Langford, Brian MacGregor, Daniel Madrigal, Hector Martinez, Eric Moyer, Payal Patel, Karen Reyes Rodriguez, Craig Schmidt, Boris Shur, Katarzyna Siano, Rachael Simoneau, Sanjeev Singh, Gregory Varghese

Class of 2027



Residential

Camille Adao, Oreofeoluwa Ajayi, Karen Almachi, Dylan Alphonse, Pradyumna Chintalapalli, Haider Choudhry, Gabrielle Connelly, Alexa Escamilla, Maria Garcia, Emily Garman, Maria Joseph, Zain Khambaty, Bianca Ledesma, Kushi Madadakere, Manuel Meneses, Hafsa Mirza, Jade Moranetz, Courtney Murphy, Pranav Narayanan, Laher Oberoi, Charles Omohundro, Jill Patel, Neha Rajappa, Grace Rajendran, Edith Rosillo, Emily Sandoval, Ali Shahzad, Sheri Stewart, Lauren Tate, Ryan Thomas, Kaitlyn Yi



Executive

Mohammad Anadani, Melissa Banuelos, Liz Barkus, Jamie Cvengros, Nicole Dammann, Sheana Dyson, Elizabeth Gresey, Nancy Guinansaca, Lori Hilmert, Nusrat Jahan, Ann Lally, Daniel Lavey, Mary McNally, Aaron Murdock, Lisa Phalen, Chandan Saini, Jessen Schiebout, Tisha Suboc, Hussam Suradi, John Tackett, Hambartzoum Tchilingarian, Mandisa Upton, Katherine Wido, Antoinette Williams, Ada Xhuba

Congratulations to the Graduating Classes of 2025



Residential

Left to right, starting with back row: Robert Bracy, Asra Ahmed, Kinnera Nayudu, Madeline Rosen, Ishan Bhatia, Dale Pendleton, Ozair Ali, Muzzamil Farooqi, Luke Bentley, Mohemmed Al-Husseiny, Dominic Campo, Radhika Mahendru, Myesha Williams, Timmy Tran, Anupa Saji, Daniela Hernandez, Amina Shuaipaj, Harsimran Kaur, Mayra Garcia, Nikita Patel, Vidhi Patel, Toral Patel, Minha Siddiqui, Aneta Kwak



Executive

Left to right, starting with back row: Nathaniel Conviser, Austin Floistad, Brandi Jacobs, Aatif Hashmi, Carmella James, Imran Desai, Kyunghoon Rhee, Brian Walker, Clarice Bartelsen, Cindy Quiles, Viral Mehta, Sarah Jackson, Patricia Underwood, Cassandra Jackson, Kelly Dunlay, Sylvie Brick, Akbar Razvi, Robert Gallagher, Maria del Rosario Ramos, Rosemarie Culen, Fareesa Khan, Michael Cadiz, Thomas Molina, Sara Ruesewald, Colleen Madden, Hanna Mielke-Maday, Kelly Gentile, Elizabeth Lee, Emma Penn

Student Awards

2025 College of Health Sciences Dean's Award

The College of Health Sciences Dean's Award celebrates graduating students with a 4.0 GPA in the HSM program.

Awardees: Ozair Ali, Ishan Bhatia, Muzzamil Farooqi, Kinnera Nayudu, Timmy Tran, Hanna Mielke-Maday, Thomas Molina, Sara Ruesewald, Robert Gallagher and Patricia Underwood

2025 Upsilon Phi Delta Health Administration Honors Society Award

The Upsilon Phi Delta Health Administration Honors Society Award recognizes graduating students in the top 10% of their class.

Awardees: Ozair Ali, Ishan Bhatia, Muzzamil Farooqi, Kinnera Nayudu, Timmy Tran, Hanna Mielke-Maday, Thomas Molina, Sara Ruesewald, Robert Gallagher, and Patricia Underwood

2025 Executive HSM Excellence Award

The Executive HSM Excellence Award is presented to a graduating executive student who best exemplifies the Rush ICARE values of innovation, collaboration, accountability, respect and excellence through their outstanding leadership and professionalism.

Awardee: Robert Gallagher ('25)



2025 Residential HSM Outstanding Student Award

The Residential HSM Outstanding Student Award is presented to a graduating residential student who exhibits exemplary academic performance and professionalism throughout the entire program.

Awardees: **Dominic Campo ('25)**

2025 Rush Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Leadership Student Award

Rush University presents the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Leadership Award to individuals for their exceptional understanding of diversity and inclusiveness by organizing events that serve the community and serving as a role model of respect.

Awardees: **Daniela Hernandez ('25)**



Student News

CAHME Award and The Planetary Health Report Card



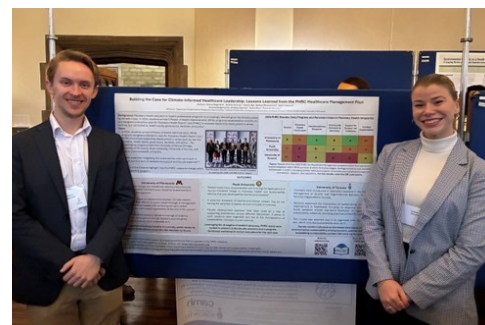
Alex Negron Price, MS-HSM ('21), led a project to develop and pilot a new Planetary Health Report Card for the health care management programs. The consortium included Sydney Schultz, MS ('25), and Darius Baginskis, MS ('25), and students from Virginia Commonwealth University, the University of Illinois Chicago, the University of Minnesota and the University of Toronto.

Price accepted the Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Management Education, or CAHME, Canon Award for Sustainability in Healthcare Management on behalf of the Healthcare Management Consortium on Planetary Health at the ACHE Congress in Houston on March 23, 2025. "CAHME award recipients exemplify the dedication and excellence of programs shaping the future of health care leadership," said Anthony Stanowski, DHA, FACHE, president and CEO of CAHME. "These prestigious awards recognize programs that go beyond academic achievement, demonstrating an unwavering commitment to innovation, advocacy and meaningful change in health care."

The Rush student team presented the consortium's work at the University of Toronto's Climate, Health & Sustainable Care 2025 Annual Symposium on October 30, 2025.

Left: Alex Negron Price, MS-HSM ('21), pictured with Sadie Joba, MS-HSM ('24), recipient of the inaugural CAHME/ Joint Commission Fellow in Sustainability, accepted the Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Management Education, or CAHME, Canon Award for Sustainability in Healthcare Management on behalf of the Healthcare Management Consortium on Planetary Health at the ACHE Congress in Houston on March 23, 2025.

Right: Sydney Schultz, MS ('25), and Darius Baginskis, MS ('25), presented at the University of Toronto's Climate, Health & Sustainable Care 2025 Annual Symposium on October 30, 2025





Pictured from left to right are HSM students Minha Siddiqui, Harsimran Kaur, Dominic Campo, Vidhi Patel, and Kinnera Nayudu who received the 2024 Health Studies Student/Administrative Fellow Leadership Award at the Chicago Health Executives Forum.

Chicago Health Executive Forum Recognizes Rush Students

Members of the HSM Career Services and Student Government Committee were recognized with the **2024 Health Studies Student/Administrative Fellow Leadership Award** for their efforts to enhance student career opportunities in the metropolitan Chicago area and nationwide at the Chicago Health Executives Forum in January. Team members and their roles after graduation included: Dominic Campo, ('25); Consultant II, Guidehouse; Harsimran Kaur, ('25); Kinnera Nayudu, ('25), project implementation specialist; LeanTaaS; Vidhi Patel, ('25,) administrative fellow, Cleveland Clinic; and Minha Siddiqui, ('25), financial analyst, Rush University Medical Center.



Dale Pendelton ('25), Chien-Ching Li, and Aneta Kwak ('25) present their research during the master's project presentations last March.

Student Manuscript Accepted for Publication

Under the leadership of Chien-Ching Li, PhD, part-time HSM students, Aneta Kwak and Dale Pendelton, have had their research manuscript accepted for publication. Look for their paper, **“Mental Health Impacts of Extreme Heat Exposure in the United States: Results from a State-Level Analysis,”** in an upcoming issue of the *Journal of Psychiatric Research*.



Top left: Caroline Austgen at Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago. Middle left: Kishan Mehta UCLA Ronald Reagan Medical Center. Bottom left: Vidhi Patel ('25), current administrative fellow with HSM student and summer intern, Anissa Ashraf, at Cleveland Clinic. Top right: Bart Stefaniuk (back row left) with other Plante Moran summer interns. Middle right: Hani Mali (left) with Blake Dobrich ('18) during his summer internship at UChicago Medicine. Bottom right: Ellie McGregor, WVU Medicine Summer Internship

Student Summer Internships

Full-time residential students are encouraged to continue building their experience during the summer between their first and second years. Some students chose to continue working at Rush, while others explore new health care organizations across the country, including the following:

Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago

Aurora West Allis Medical Center

Cleveland Clinic

Mayo Clinic

Rush AFFIRM

Rush BMO Institute for Health Equity

Rush Children's Hospital

Rush Hospital Finance

Rush Internal Medicine

Rush OBGYN

Rush Perioperative and Interventional Services

Rush Sustainability

Rush Primary, Virtual First

Rush Supply Chain

Plante Moran

Premier Inc.

Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center

UChicago Medicine

Wipfli LLC

WVU Medicine

Executive HSM Students Use Their Research Skills to Make a Difference



At their final on-site session in August, the second-year executive HSM students presented their master project findings to classmates and Rush leaders. This event marked the culmination of two terms of work that began in January 2025. Special thanks are due to the project champions who devoted their time and expertise to guide the student teams.

Topics covered included:

- **Rush Sustainability** – Students assessed the impact of conservation measures implemented after Hurricane Helene and the Baxter IV shortage, examining both financial and clinical outcomes. **Project champion: Jinia Sarkar, MS, sustainability manager**
- **Digital Health** – Teams evaluated the Suki pilot at Rush, analyzing how ambient AI scribe technology affects provider documentation time and overall efficiency. **Project champions:**

Juan Rojas, MD, MS; Caroline Canning, MD, MBI, and Jason Stanghelle, PhD, MDiv, data analyst

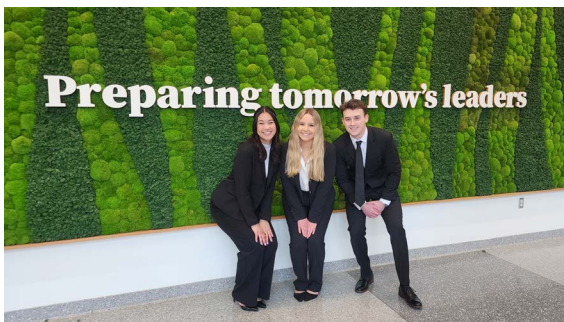
- **Health Equity** – One group explored the relationship between food insecurity and systolic blood pressure, emphasizing the link between social needs and clinical outcomes. **Project champions: Juan Rojas, MD, MS; Caroline Canning, MD, MBI; and Jason Stanghelle, PhD, MDiv, data analyst**
- **Patient No-Shows and Visit Adherence** – Students investigated the drivers of late cancellations and missed appointments, focusing on the role of social determinants of health and the effectiveness of text message reminders in improving adherence. **Project champions: Lauren Nikiforak, MBA, access program manager, and Steve Behnke, product manager, clinical applications**





Student Governing and Professional Committee

The HSM residential and executive tracks each have a Student Governing and Professional Committee, or SG&P, that provides support for students enrolled in the HSM program. SG&P engages students' ideas to develop and plan events and opportunities that will aid HSM students in their professional and personal development. SG&P discusses current issues facing students and provides representation on departmental committees, including Career Services and Curriculum, to provide student perspectives.



Members of the residential SG&P meet with incoming HSM students during their August orientation

Residential HSM

SG&P President:
Darius Baginskis

SG&P Vice President:
Sheri Stewart

Career Services Representatives and Committee Members

Representatives:

Daniel Torrez and Neha Rajappa.

Members:

Anissa Ashraf, Gabrielle Connolly,
Melissa Francis, Emily Garman,
Kishan Mehta, Nilima Patel,
Lauren Tate and Kaitlyn Yi

Curriculum Committee Representatives

Ozair Ali

Kishan Mehta

Alumni Association Representatives

Dylan Alphonse

Ellie Edwards

Other Representatives

Part-Time Track Representatives:

Perpetual Assem, Emily Sandoval,

Thanda Kim

Community Service Chairs:

Shreya Dhingani, Laher Oberoi

Social Chairs:

Sydney Schultz, Grace Rajendran

Marketing Chairs:

Ellie McGregor, Edith Rosillo

Executive HSM

SG&P President:
Maria Cuevas

Career Services Representatives and Committee Members

Syed Haq

Lori Hilmert

Katie Wido

Curriculum Committee Representatives and Members

Jamie Cvengros

Maria Cuevas

Other Representatives

At-large Members

Meaghan Gildea

Rebekah Langford

Karen Reyes

Career Services

Inaugural Chicago Healthcare Marketplace Expo Held

In September 2025, Rush University and Loyola University in collaboration with the Chicago Health Executives Forum and American College of Healthcare Executives, launched the first Chicago Healthcare Marketplace Expo at MATTER in Chicago's historic Merchandise Mart. The event attracted representatives from Chicago-area administrative fellowship sites and health care systems, such as UChicago Medicine, Rush University System for Health, Trinity Health, Mercy Health and Fresenius Medical Care, along with Oak Street Health, Medical Group Management Association, Health Care Services Corporation, Healthcare Financial Management Association, ECG Management Consultant and many others.

The evening provided ample time for networking with peers, fostering conversations between future leaders and executives, a panel discussion focused on innovation and leadership and a scavenger hunt.

Lunch and Learn Sessions



The HSM Career Services Committee members dedicate the entire year to planning, organizing and conducting special Lunch and Learn sessions that enhance and improve the students' professional development and career opportunities. HSM students took part in the following sessions:

Site Visits

Each year, HSM students participate in site visits to Chicago-based companies to gain insights into their corporate culture and business models. During these visits, students spend several hours meeting with leaders. Organizations that welcomed HSM students this past year included, American Hospital Association, Deloitte, Guidehouse and Vizient, Inc.

- Vizient, Inc. with Katie Davis, MS-HSM ('13) and Nicole Spatafora, MS-HSM ('96)
- Team-Building Improv with John Wightkin, MBA
- American Medical Association with Ana Paula Gonzalez, MS-HSM ('22)
- Ochsner Administrative Fellowship
- Investor-owned Practice Management with Kevin Schofield, MS-HSM ('21)
- Houston Methodist Administrative Fellowship
- Professional Skills: Negotiating Your First Job with Alexandra Abowd, MS-HSM ('21), Benjamin Gonzalez, MS-HSM ('17), Aubree Larson, MS-HSM ('21), Gia Gradowski, MS-HSM ('22)
- Health Policy Translation with Karen Born, PhD, assistant professor, Institute of Health Policy, Management and Evaluation, the University of Toronto
- Planetary Health Report Card with Alex Negron Price, MS-HSM ('21), Darius Baginskis ('26), Sydney Schultz ('26)
- The Health Care Landscape with Scott Becker, JD, founder and publisher, Becker's Hospital Review and Becker's Healthcare
- Vizient, Inc. with Molly Allen, MS-HSM ('11) and Jake Langley, MS-HSM ('11)
- Sutter Health Fellowship
- Endeavor Health
- Keck Medicine at USC Administrative Fellowship
- Rush Finance with Patricia O'Neill, MAE, chief financial officer, Rush University System for Health
- HSM Mock Interviews
- MedStar Administrative Fellowship with Radhika Mahendru, MS-HSM ('25)
- Emerson Health Summer Internship and Administrative Fellowship
- ECG Management Consultants
- Vizient Performance Improvement and Healthcare Analytics Fellowships with Myesha Williams, MS-HSM ('25)
- Cleveland Clinic Summer Internship with Vidhi Patel, MS-HSM ('25)
- HSM Summer Internship Panel
- Rush C-Suite Leadership Panel with Dr. Omar Lateef, President and CEO, Matt Walsh, MHA, executive vice president, chief operations officer, and Patricia O'Neill, MAE, chief financial officer, Rush University System for Health
- Adopt-a-Family Wrapping Party



Rush HSM students celebrate the launch of the Chicago Healthcare Marketplace Expo. Pictured from left to right are first-year HSM students Gabrielle Connolly, Neha Rajappa, Lauren Tate, Emily Garman; Professor and Chair Diane Howard, PhD; and second-year HSM students Daniel Torrez, Bartosz Stefaniuk, Nilima Patel, Hannah Ahmed, and Melissa Francis.



Nearly 150 Chicago-area students attended the first annual Chicago Healthcare Marketplace Expo held at MATTER in the Merchandise Mart in September. Students above listened to the Expo's panel discussion of leaders.

Case Competitions

HSM students participate in case competitions where teams analyze and solve complex, real-world challenges within a set timeframe. They present their recommendations to a panel of expert judges. These competitions allow students to apply their classroom knowledge in time-sensitive situations, helping them to connect with industry executives and network with peers and experts in their field. Through these events, students develop and demonstrate a wide range of skills, including critical thinking, problem-solving, public speaking and teamwork. Our students' travel, lodging, and registration for case competitions are supported through the generosity of the Don Excellence in Administration Fund and J. Robert Clapp Jr. Endowed Student Education Fund.

2025 UCLA Case Competition

Team 1

George Henry
Radhika Mahendru
Madeline Rosen
Timmy Tran

Team 2

Ishan Bhatia
Mayra Garcia
Fatema Nomani
Anupa Saji

2025 University of Alabama at Birmingham Case Competition

Nilima Patel
Minha Siddiqui
Sydney Schultz

2025 Ohio State University Case Competition

Caroline Austgen
Melissa Francis
Bart Stefaniuk

2025 National Association of Health Services Executives Case Competition

Emily Sandoval
Daniel Torrez
Lauren White

2025 Pennsylvania State University Case Competition

Team 1

Gabrielle Connolly
Karen Almachi
Jade Moranetz
Sheri Stewart

Team 2

Ellie Edwards
Maria Joseph
Charles Omohundro
Neha Rajappa



Top: Daniel Torrez, Lauren White, and Emily Sandoval at National Association of Health Services Executives case competition in Pittsburgh. Bottom: Tricia Johnson, PhD, Minha Siddiqui, Sydney Schultz and Nilima Patel at UAB case competition in Birmingham.

Student Fieldwork

Shekleton-Clement Scholarship

The Shekleton-Clement Scholarship brings together two students from HSM and two students from the Rush College of Nursing to collaborate on a project focusing on improving the lives of older adults in Chicago. Funded by sisters Maureen Shekleton, PhD (Rush CON '82), and Dolores Clement, DrPH, MS-HSM ('81), the Shekleton-Clement Scholarship highlights the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration in the Allied Health Sciences.

This year, in partnership with Little Brothers Friends of the Elderly, a Chicago nonprofit working to reduce loneliness and isolation among older adults, HSM students **Caroline Austgen ('26)** and **Nilima Patel ('26)** partnered with two College of Nursing students to assist with the scalability of a First Responder Toolkit for assisting older adults in need. The nursing students are creating a toolkit that provides first responders with the tools to connect older adults to appropriate resources and support services. Meanwhile, the HSM students are scaling the project to help reach more first responders and create an evaluation plan to ensure the implementation is efficient and effective. The toolkit will help older adults age with dignity. Austgen and Patel's contributions will help ensure more older adults get the resources they need to reduce loneliness and isolation. The students are advised by HSM core faculty member **Kristin Smith, PhD**.

Press Endowment Award

Mayra Garcia ('25) received the 2025 Press Endowment Award for her project titled, "Patient Narratives as an Aid in Understanding and Reducing Disparities in the Patient Experience."

Garcia's work examined disparities in patient experience at Rush University Medical Center through a qualitative analysis of feedback from the eight Atrium inpatient units and outpatient obstetrics clinics. By analyzing patient comments from Press Ganey and NarrativeDx, the project uncovered recurring concerns related to communication breakdowns, lack of respect and feelings of being dismissed, particularly among Black and Asian patients.

The project was guided by the following goals:

1. Evaluate low survey ratings and associated comments to better understand the stories behind the scores.
2. Examine variations in patient narratives across care settings and demographic groups.
3. Leverage analytic tools like Press Ganey and NarrativeDx to surface meaningful patterns.
4. Improve how narrative data were shared with managers by designing more efficient, theme-based reporting formats.

The project was completed under the guidance of Francis Fullam, MA, and Irwin Press, PhD, a renowned expert in patient experience. Press established an endowment to support HSM students' tuition and provide them with unique academic opportunities.



Mayra Garcia ('25) received the 2025 Press Endowment Award.

2025-2026 Alumni Association Board



President, Gianna Gradowski, MS-HSM ('22)
WaveMark Strategic Success Manager,
Cardinal Health



Secretary, Melissa Silva, MS-HSM ('22)
Product Advisor, Vizient, Inc.



President-Elect, Kaila Mitchell, MS-HSM ('18)
Division Administrator II, Medical College of
Wisconsin



Member-at-Large, Mark Andre Adalin, MS-HSM ('24)
Program Manager, Northwell Health



Treasurer, Alexandra Abowd, MS-HSM ('21)
Senior Manager, Coker



Member-at-Large, Bryanna Jeske, MS-HSM, RN ('24)
Nursing Manager, Northwestern Medicine

In Memoriam

Dolores Clement, DrPH, MS-HSM, FACHE, was a respected figure in academic administration and known for her thoughtfulness and kindness. After a successful role in the Peace Corps in Sierra Leone, Clement received her Master's of Health Systems Management degree from Rush in 1981. Following this, Clement pursued a doctorate at the University of California-Berkeley. She spent 38 years as a faculty member at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, VA, retiring as Professor Emerita.

Clement and her sister, Maureen Shekleton, PhD, a Rush Nursing graduate, established the Shekleton-Clement Scholarship at Rush to promote interdisciplinary dialogue between nursing and health management colleges that support student research in the field of aging. This past year, HSM honored Clement's contribution to Rush and the health management field during the 2025 Alumni Weekend celebrations.



Dolores G. Clement, DrPH, MS-HSM
March 28, 1949 – August 21, 2025

Alumni Events

The HSM Alumni Association, or HSMAA, hosted several special events this past year. The first event was a reception for all HSM alums at the ACHE 2026 Congress on Healthcare Leadership in Houston this past March. Alums, students, Rush leaders and friends enjoyed an evening together. The group will return to Houston for the 2026 ACHE Congress from March 2-4, 2026. **We hope to see you there!**



The next event was an informal gathering during the Association of University Programs in Health Administration's Annual Meeting in Columbus, OH, in June.



In September, the association hosted a happy hour to kick off the new school year at Kaiser Tiger, an event space in Chicago.



Finally, the 2025 HSM Alumni Weekend was another roaring success. HSMAA hosted its second annual Alumni Weekend from October 24-25. The weekend kicked off with an informal networking event on Friday evening at River Roast on the Chicago River, followed by a half-day symposium.

Rush University President Robert Higgins, MD, MSHA, opened the event by facilitating an expert panel of HSM alums, which included, Jamila Trimuel, MS-HSM ('05), founder and CEO, Ladies of Virtue Mentoring and Leadership Program; Jordan Wirtz Frazzetta, MS-HSM ('19), director, Neurosciences Service Line, UChicago Medicine; and Uddish Mondal, MS-HSM ('23), manager, Sustainability Program Services, Vizient. After networking and lunch, the day wrapped up with a special Hot Topic Session on AI by HSM faculty members, Steven Wightkin, PhD, MS-HSM ('06) and Thomas Webb, DBA, MBA.



HSM alums Jordan Frazzetta ('19), Jamila Trimuel ('05) and Uddish Mondal ('23) present at HSM Alumni Weekend.

Alumni Spotlight



Pictured from left to right at the alumni awards presentation are Andy Garman, Diane Howard, Jason Girzadas, Jordan Wirtz Frazzetta, Aubree Larson and Jason Turner.

2025 Distinguished Alumni of the Year

Jason Girzadas, MS-HSM ('94) **CEO, Deloitte US**

This year, the Distinguished Alumni of the Year Award was presented to an esteemed alum who has not only contributed to Rush University and the HSM program through involvement and advocacy, but has also paved a path for the aspiring health care leaders. Jason Girzadas, MS-HSM ('94), served as the HSM alumni president in 2010, and perhaps not coincidentally, the same period when the HSM program improved its national rankings from 24th to 9th. He has continued to engage with students and alums by providing guest lectures, connecting and advising faculty.



In his current role at Deloitte US, Girzadas oversees the largest professional services organization in the U.S. With more than 170,000 professionals, Deloitte provides audit and assurance, tax, consulting and risk and financial advisory services to a broad cross-section of corporations and governmental agencies.

Girzadas has a proven track record of helping clients navigate the challenges of large-scale, strategic, technology-driven change. He is actively engaged with clients and global alliance relationships. He has served as the managing principal of Businesses, Global and Strategic Services of Deloitte US, as well as the Clients & Markets leader and Life Sciences & Health Care industry leader for Deloitte Consulting LLP. He has also held previous leadership roles inclusive of Global Consulting leader, Deloitte Global and serving on the Deloitte Global Board of Directors.

Girzadas is not only a trailblazer in his career and active HSM alum, but he is devoted to shaping policies and programs that enhance the public good. He serves on the board of directors of the Partnership for New York City and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. Additionally, he is a member of the Wall Street Journal CEO Council, the Fortune CEO Initiative and the American Heart Association's CEO Roundtable.

Girzadas is dedicated to making a difference in the health care arena, provides unwavering support to HSM, and truly embodies the spirit of the Distinguished Alumni of the Year Award.

2025 Mid-Career Alumni of the Year



Jordan Wirtz Frazzetta, MS-HSM('19)
Director, Neurosciences Service Line,
UChicago Medicine

This year's Mid-Career Alumni of the Year Award recognizes Jordan Wirtz Frazzetta, MS-HSM ('19), whose leadership, impact and commitment to advancing health care exemplify the highest ideals of the HSM program.

In her current position, Frazzetta leads clinical and operational strategy across one of UChicago Medicine's most complex and high-performing service lines. Throughout her career, she has demonstrated an exceptional ability to drive results while fostering the development of those around her. She previously held leadership roles as assistant director and practice manager of Neurosciences at UChicago Medicine and held prior roles at Rush University Medical Center and the Cleveland Clinic. Among her many accomplishments, her leadership excellence was recognized during her administrative fellowship at UChicago Medicine, where she received the American College of Healthcare Executives Administrative Fellow Leadership Award.

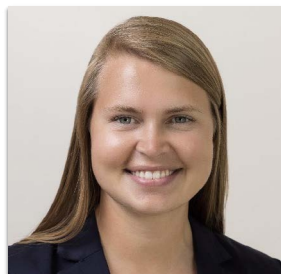
Frazzetta is deeply committed to mentoring and developing future health care leaders. She actively supports students and early-career professionals through the UChicago Medicine internship and administrative fellowship programs and she serves as director-at-large for Neuroscience Executive Resource for Visionary and Emerging Leaders in Science.

Her dedication to advancing the field of health care and uplifting the next generation of leaders embodies the spirit of this award.

2025 Early Career Alumni of the Year

Aubree Larson, MS-HSM ('21)
Strategic Project Manager,
UChicago Medicine

Aubree Larson, MS-HSM ('21), is recognized as an emerging leader in her field and gives copious time, insight and guidance to the HSM program. She launched her career with a highly competitive administrative fellowship at UCLA, where she gained hands-on experience in hospital operations and strategic planning, notably crafting the enterprise's five-year strategic plan. In her current role, Larson serves to drive key initiatives that enhance operational efficiency, patient outcomes and performance improvement across the system.



Beyond her professional achievements, Larson has been a guiding light for HSM students. Over the past four years, she has served in multiple leadership positions on the HSM Alumni Association as member-at-large, treasurer, president-elect and president. Notably, she created the Rush Alumni Mentorship Program, which allows alumni and students to foster mentor-mentee connections and networking opportunities.

Today, Larson serves as an adjunct faculty member, supporting Diane Howard, PhD, in the Professional Seminar course and continues to support the Career Services Committee, Student Governing and Professional Board, HSM Alumni Association and Curriculum Committee in an advisory capacity. The HSM team is grateful for all Larson does for the program.

HSM Core Office



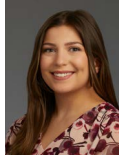
Diane N. Howard, PhD
Chair and Professor



Tricia J. Johnson, PhD
Professor



Kristen Smith, PhD
Assistant Professor



Elena Delahera
Program Manager



Chien-Ching Li, PhD
Professor



Joyce Anne Wainio, MHA
Program Director and Instructor



Matthew J. DePuccio, PhD
Assistant Professor



Shital C. Shah, PhD
Professor



Steven P. Wightkin, PhD
Assistant Professor



Andrew N. Garman, PsyD
Professor



We look forward to our continued collaborations and friendships to develop leaders in our field.
Wishing you all a happy and prosperous new year!

Rush University
Department of Health Systems Management

New address:

600 South Paulina Street, Suite 1044
Chicago, IL 60612

[**rushu.rush.edu/hsm**](http://rushu.rush.edu/hsm)

Donate



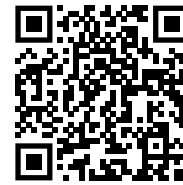
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