

**Clinician Update**  
**January 2, 2025**  
**Special Edition: Medical Education**

**A Message From Richard Paluzzi, MD**  
**Director of Medical Education, Designated Institutional Official**



Richard Paluzzi, MD

As we approach 2025, it's remarkable to reflect on the strides Virtua has made in academic growth. Five years ago, the acquisition of the Lourdes Health system laid the foundation to begin the transformation of Virtua from an outstanding community health system to a widely recognized academic institution. This transformation has enhanced our reputation, attracted top talent, and fostered innovation in clinical programs, research, and workforce development. Key to this progress has been our affiliation with Rowan University, which created the Virtua Health College of Medicine and Life Sciences of Rowan University. This affiliation with Rowan has driven collaboration across education, research, and scholarship, enabling the development of new programs and opportunities, such as expanded medical student and physician assistant rotations and the recruitment of nationally recognized experts. This year, the Office of Undergraduate Medical Education has been able to offer more than 600 rotations for medical students from Rowan Virtua SOM.

Our investment in Graduate Medical Education has been pivotal to our academic growth as we have expanded significantly from sponsoring approximately 32 trainees in programs in family medicine, podiatry, pharmacy, and dentistry. As of July 2024, we now sponsor 12 [residencies](#) and fellowships with 160 Virtua trainees. This includes programs in [family medicine](#), [psychiatry](#), [internal medicine](#), [general](#)

[surgery](#), [obstetrics-gynecology](#), [cardiology](#), [geriatrics](#), geriatric psychiatry, [osteopathic neuromusculoskeletal medicine](#), [podiatry](#), and [pharmacy](#).

Undergraduate medical education is foundational in the development of a physician. It teaches necessary principles and tools which are then honed through real-world experiences during graduate medical education. The transition from UME to GME is intuitive and seamless. We will further highlight Virtua's GME programs in a future Medical Education edition newsletter.

None of this progress would have been possible without the dedication of Virtua leadership and numerous colleagues who have embraced the role of educators. Teaching doesn't require perfection—it starts with sharing your experiences and guiding learners through observation, interaction, and role modeling. Many faculty members have found immense satisfaction in mentoring future health care professionals, and we encourage everyone to consider this rewarding endeavor.

Best wishes to all for a successful New Year!

### **A Message From Anu Munshi, MD** **Director of Undergraduate Medical Education**



Anu Munshi, MD

Happy New Year! With 2025 now upon us, there is much to be excited about and grateful for as our academic accomplishments continue to expand. Essentially, we are working to answer the growing needs of our community. I am glad for this opportunity to share an update and welcome all of you to this overall endeavor as we continue to grow.

Lack of access to primary care providers, unprecedented wait times for specialists, and a predicted shortage of 100,000 physicians 10 years from now are all urgent calls for making sure the next

generations of physicians and allied health professionals are well-trained and ready for the challenge. The circle of medical education is truly complete when we are able to give back to the community the way generations of medical educators before us gave back and taught us. We owe it to them and to our future to train the next generations.

Virtua and Rowan University joined hands in January 2022 when they signed an affiliation agreement to create a new academic health system and to further distinguish South Jersey as a regional hub for innovation, research, and clinical discovery. This affiliation reimagined the School of Osteopathic Medicine (SOM), created an entirely new school of nursing and health professions, and led to the creation of the Virtua Health College of Medicine and Life Sciences. Now known as Rowan-Virtua School of Osteopathic Medicine (RVSOM), the school hosts the largest entering class in the state of New Jersey. Rowan University is a Carnegie R2 institution and the fourth-fastest growing public research university, offering its medical students hands-on research opportunities with nationally recognized research faculty.

Thanks to this affiliation, we are now hosts to 100 third- and fourth-year medical students completing their clinical rotations. Virtua is officially Rowan-Virtua SOM's largest clinical hub site and offers clinical rotations in family medicine, psychiatry, internal medicine, general surgery, obstetrics-gynecology, pediatrics, emergency medicine, critical care, cardiology, infectious disease, anesthesiology, endocrinology, neurology, gastroenterology, orthopedics, pathology, and LGBTQ medicine. Students are also able to do sub-internships within Virtua departments that have a residency program. Virtua also offers clinical rotations to a few other select medical schools in the region.

We are thrilled to see that many students choose to stay at Virtua to pursue their residency training—and even become part of the Virtua family as full-time physicians!

Interested in teaching medical students or residents? Please check out our [residency websites](#) to acquire more information and contact the residency program director noted on the respective website or email the Undergraduate Medical Education Office at [UME@virtua.org](mailto:UME@virtua.org) if you would like to work with medical students. Preceptors of Rowan-Virtua SOM students can obtain a faculty appointment at the School of Osteopathic Medicine.

## **Preceptor of the Year Awards**

At the end of each academic year, the Rowan-Virtua School of Osteopathic Medicine third-year students vote on preceptors who have gone above and beyond in teaching, mentoring, and guiding them. Here are the Virtua preceptors who were nominated and selected for such a prestigious honor:



Karel Paul, MD, hospitalist at Virtua Willingboro Hospital, with Anu Munshi, MD



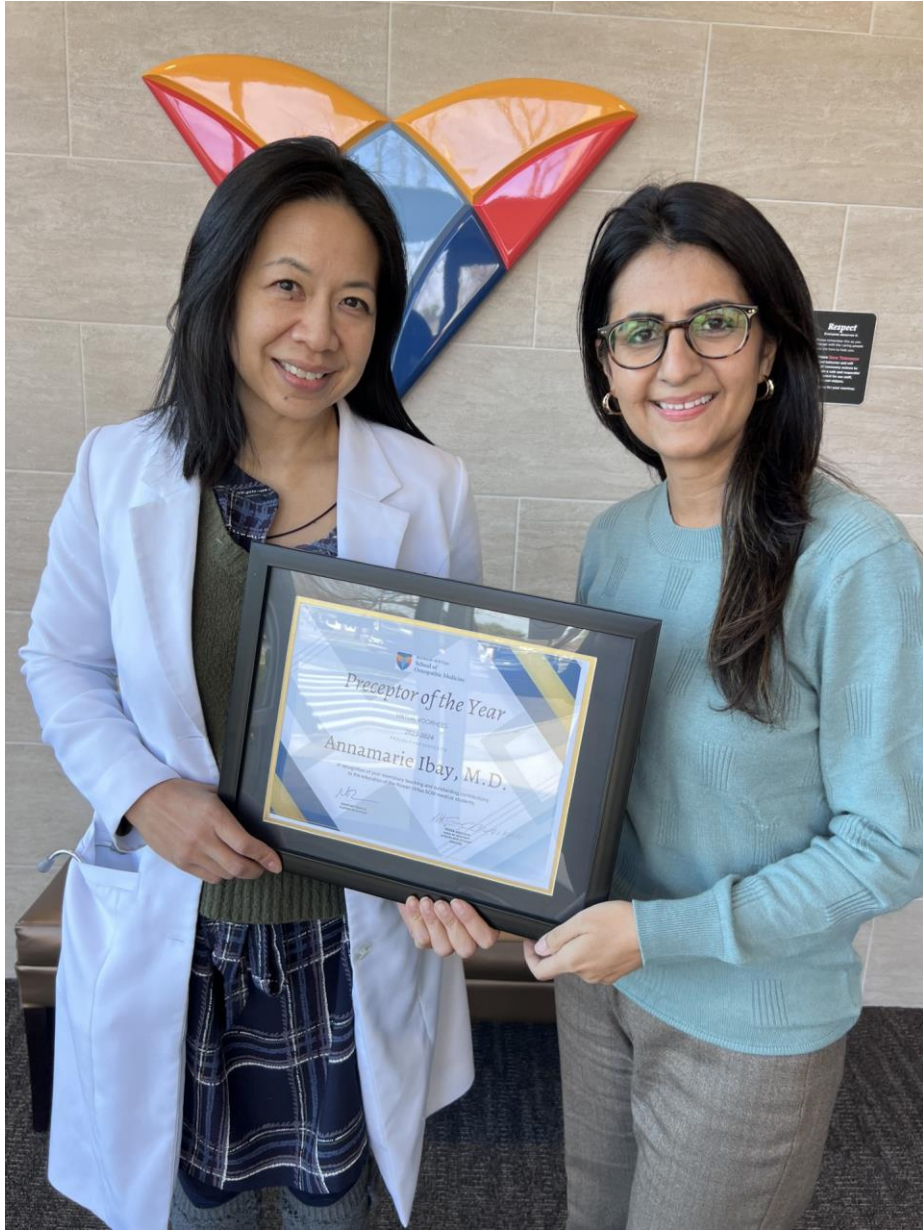
On the right, Michael Meltzer, DO, primary care physician at Virtua Primary Care – Hainesport, is joined by third year RVSOM medical student Yarin Trabelsi.



David Roat, DO, psychiatrist at Virtua Mount Holly Hospital



Michael Boulos, MD, hospitalist at Virtua Marlton Hospital



Annamarie Ibay, MD, primary care physician at Virtua Primary Care - Voorhees at 2225 Evesham Road, with Anu Munshi, MD

### **Preceptor Highlight**

**Get to Know Rick Levine, MD**





Rich Levine, MD

Rick Levine, MD, is a primary care provider and family medicine rotation preceptor at Virtua Primary Care - Cherry Hill and Virtua Pride Primary Care.

**Can you tell us about what led you to pursue a career in medicine?**

I became a physician because I truly wanted to help people. To be a part of a patient's life is a blessing and an honor.

**What is your favorite part of being a preceptor?**

I love being a preceptor to convey the joy I find in helping people and to provide a safe, fun environment for a student to learn.

**What is the most rewarding part of working at Virtua?**

Virtua is a family to me—patients, staff, and colleagues.

**What's a memorable teaching moment you have had with a resident or student?**

Reminding students that patients and staff observe everything they do! Case in point—my current student was mentioned in a patient satisfaction survey regarding her empathy and professionalism.

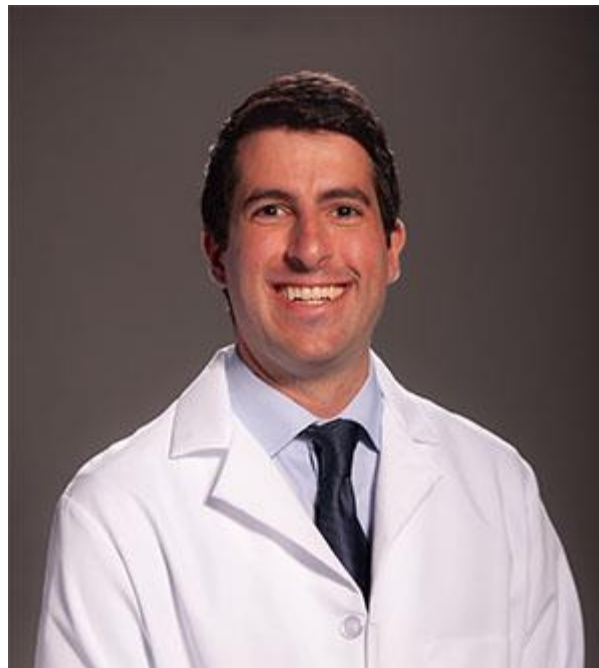
**What do you enjoy outside of medicine?**

Outside of medicine, I enjoy trying to learn Spanish on Duolingo, my family, and especially my dogs! I also enjoy exercising so I can practice what I preach.

## What Students Are Saying About Our Preceptors

One of our fourth year Rowan-Virtua SOM medical students, Niraj Shah, recently said this about Charles Snyder, MD, gastroenterologist at VMG:

“I’m reaching out to request that a faculty member receives a distinction for phenomenal mentorship. Through my third and fourth years, I was able to see various teaching styles. One mentor, Dr. Charles Snyder from Virtua GI, was unequivocally the strongest mentor I have had. Not only was his teaching phenomenal, but he also advocated for us students every step of the way. He gave advice on applications, reached out to schools, and found ways to assist us even outside of the rotation. Additionally, his patient care was unparalleled. His kindness radiates through his patients, colleagues, and students.”



Charles Snyder, MD

Virtua’s UME program thanks all those involved in medical education the past few years. It is with great excitement to see where we are now and what 2025 will bring. Happy New Year, everyone!

Again, if looking to learn more about teaching opportunities, please reach us at [UME@virtua.org](mailto:UME@virtua.org).