Dr. Lois Young-Thomas, Class of 1960, was the School of Medicine’s first black female graduate. In 1969 she returned to the School to teach Ophthalmology and rose to the rank of Professor in 1980. Dr. Young-Thomas was dedicated to helping the disadvantaged and worked diligently to foster medical education. The Lois Young-Thomas, MD, Memorial Lecture has been presented in her honor annually since 1999.

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This makes us proud!
Our country has wide disparities in health and healthcare. Where you live and work, and what you earn, can have an enormous effect on your health.

In fact, research has shown that a person’s health depends in large part on income level, education, neighborhood, and ethnicity.

To better understand this phenomenon, and to decrease these inequalities, the Program in Health Disparities and Population Health at the University of Maryland School of Medicine (UM SOM) Department of Epidemiology & Public Health has several initiatives in Baltimore, in other Maryland communities, and even in other countries.

We know that a person’s living environment, income, and access to quality health care play a huge role in health,” says Jay Magaziner, PhD, MS, MS, Hyg, Professor and Chair, Department of Epidemiology & Public Health (EPH), one of the largest departments in UM SOM. “In a city like Baltimore, with so much poverty, we see this all around us every day. With our work in this area, we hope to learn more about what can be done about it, and to work with our partners to design and evaluate novel strategies that will improve health and well-being.”

Glenn Ostir, PhD, Professor, EPH, and Brian Browne, MD, Professor and Chair, Department of Emergency Medicine, are working to provide better emergency care for the growing number of older residents in Maryland. The Sandtown community of West Baltimore is one of three areas in which they are working in partnership with FutureCare. Drs. Ostir and Brown are leaders in the school’s Program in Aging, Trauma, and Emergency Care (PTeC), a partnership between the Center for Research on Aging, the Shock, Trauma and Anesthesiology Research (STAR) Center, and the Departments of Emergency Medicine and Epidemiology & Public Health.

Another project focuses on disparities in cancer care and cancer outcomes. Joanne Dorgan, PhD, MPH, Professor, EPH; Kate Tracy, PhD, Associate Professor, EPH; and Soren Bentzen, PhD, DMSc, also an EPH Professor, are collaborating with the University of Maryland Marlene and Stewart Greenebaum Cancer Center (UMMCC) to study African-American cancer patients to better understand how the disease differs among that population. They are looking at patients’ survival rates and quality-of-life outcomes.

Sania Ame, MD, Professor, EPH, focuses on occupational health and works in the community to prevent and treat chronic diseases, job-related injuries, and environmental illnesses such as lead poisoning, chemical exposures, pollutants, toxins, asbestos, and heat stress.

The Program in Health Disparities and Population Health (PHDPh) combines research, education, and service aimed at addressing critical health problems faced by people of different, race, ethnic, gender, age and socioeconomic backgrounds. Led by
Dr. Tracy and Wendy Lane, MD, MPH, EPH Associate Professor, the Program consists of over 40 faculty from EPH and other SOM departments. It focuses on cancer disparities, disparities in maternal and child health, aging and health disparities, population health, global health, HIV, and women’s health. The effort was formerly known as the Program in Minority Health and Health Disparities in Education and Research, and was led by Claudia Baquet, MD, MPH, who retired last year after two decades at the school.

The program will continue to use a rigorous scientific approach to furthering population health and to the identification, investigation, and elimination of health disparities,” said Dr. Tracy.

Dr. Tracy is also the associate director of the Center for Health Informatics and Biomaging (CHIB), and Research Director of the Center of Excellence on Problem Gambling. She works with Dr. Magaziner and University of Maryland Medical System (UMMS) Senior Vice-President and Chief Medical Officer Walter Ettinger, MD, MBA, on issues of population health.

Dr. Lane is associate director of the preventive medicine residency program and director of community outreach for the Master in Public Health program. She also serves on the UMMC Child Protection Team. Her research and advocacy are focused on health disparities in child health promotion and child maltreatment. She is involved in two programs to protect vulnerable children in the city and the state: the Baltimore Citywide Child Protection Team, a program to prevent and treat abuse and neglect of children, and B-More for Healthy Babies Upton/Druid Heights, a community-based program that identifies pregnant women, provides pregnancy and parenting education, assesses their health care and psychosocial needs, and connects them to needed services.

“We plan to expand our community outreach and research partnerships to strengthen population health, improve care in community settings for the most vulnerable citizens, and reduce hospital admissions,” said Dr. Lane.

EPH also houses a graduate degree program in public health, which offers concentrations in epidemiology, community and population health, and global health, three critically important components of health disparities education and research. EPH also sponsors the Renee Royal-Schaler Annual Lecture in Health Disparities, which brings in top scholars and policymakers to present work on key issues in population health and health disparities.

For the past seven years, the Blue Ridge Institute for Medical Research has ranked EPH in the top five nationally in public health and preventive medicine among public medical schools.
It was a day filled with emotion at Baltimore’s famed Hippodrome Theater on March 18, when the medical students in the Class of 2016 at the University of Maryland School of Medicine received their matches in the infamous event known as Match Day.

At exactly noon, medical students here and around the country received an envelope telling them where they will do their residency training. This year, 155 UM SOM students matched at 73 different hospitals in 26 states.

The National Resident Matching Program (NRMP) conducts the Match nationwide, using a computer algorithm that aligns the preferences of applicants with the preferences of residency programs in order to fill thousands of training positions available at U.S. teaching hospitals.

Many of the students had taken unusual paths to medical school. Jessie Werner, a former sixth grade teacher, decided to go to medical school after realizing that she wanted to follow in her parents’ footsteps—both are doctors. She matched to Brown University.

Manoj Racherla did a “couples match” with his wife, who goes to Drexel Medical School in Philadelphia. They were ecstatic to be assigned to the University of Maryland. She found out 90 minutes before him and texted him constantly as he waited. She couldn’t tell him where she got matched, because he didn’t want to know ahead of time. As soon as he found out, he called her on Facetime to share the news.

Another student, Elaine Bigelow, had been a star rugby player while at Princeton. After graduating, she moved to Baltimore to do research, and continued to play on a local women’s team. Once she entered medical school, she still played, finding time for three practices a week and games on weekends. In her third year, though, she had to take a break because her studies were so demanding. Now that she has matched to Johns Hopkins Hospital in Ear, Nose and Throat, she plans to continue playing for her team.

Tim Costales worked very hard in medical school, but he also found time to help write and produce a series of hilarious and widely-seen YouTube music videos parodying pop songs with med school themes and lyrics. He matched to the University of Maryland Medical Center, and was excited because it meant he “could stay with all of his friends.”

Every student selected their own soundtrack for their walk to the stage. Many students danced their way up, to applause. Fifty-six members of the Class of 2016 will stay in the state of Maryland for their residency training; last year, the number was 35.

Nationwide, more than 41,000 U.S. and international students applied for one of the approximately 30,000 first-year residency positions offered in this year’s Main Residency Match, according to the National Residency Matching Program (NRMP). Even though more students than ever are enrolling in medical schools, the United States is still facing a significant physician shortage, according to the Association of American Medical Colleges, because the number of residency slots available has not caught up with the demand for them. Doctors cannot practice medicine independently in the United States without first completing a residency.

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