

# Alumni Newsletter

Fall 2011

Issue 11



## Message From The Director

Greetings Everyone,

The Class of 2013 has arrived – 22 bright, energetic students – and the new academic year is off to a good, although a bit shaky, start. It was disaster central for the first couple of weeks after they arrived. First, we felt the Virginia earthquake, then Hurricane Irene arrived and that was followed by torrential rains and flooding in and around Baltimore. We are hoping for calm the rest of the year!

The second year students are doing well in their field placements. We have several new ones this year: San Francisco Health Plan, Medstar Health/Washington Hospital Center and Shands Medical Center at the University of Florida. The preceptors at two of them, SFHP and Medstar, are program grads. It's extremely rewarding to see our grads moving up sufficiently in their careers that they can now be preceptors.



As I am writing this, three of our second year students (Fadi Ramo, Jessica Gundel and Nisha Jain) are enroute to Las Vegas to compete in the 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Everett V. Fox Student Case Competition sponsored by the National Association of Health Services Executives. Although we have participated twice before in the NAHSE competition, we haven't sent a team in about 10 years so we certainly wish this team the best and, hopefully, we will be able to participate on a regular basis. In February, we'll enter a team again in the University of Alabama – Birmingham competition. We continue to offer our internal case competition for first year students in the spring. Anyone have any interesting cases for our students to consider? Think of it as free consulting, perhaps you can be a judge.

This past summer, Ann-Michele and I worked with the newest Pacific Rim DrPH cohort when they were in Baltimore for several weeks. We taught a special combination course that combined MHSO and Approaches to MHSO into a single six-credit offering. Once they finished their coursework, they celebrated with a Baltimore tradition – a crab feast at Captain James Landing in Canton. Many of the first group are progressing towards their final defense and a couple have already finished.

Before signing off, let me thank all of you who took the time to complete our alumni survey. We'll continue to accept responses through the end of the month. Please get in touch with Teresa if you need the link to access the survey. Also, please get in touch with her at [tschwart@jhsph.edu](mailto:tschwart@jhsph.edu) if you're going to be in San Francisco on Thursday, October 20<sup>th</sup>. Teresa and 2<sup>nd</sup> year student Molly Zhang will be at the B Restaurant from 5-7:00 PM.

Once again, it looks to be a busy year for us and we will continue to keep you updated with program news. Likewise, please share your news with us and we'll be sure to include your announcements in our e-newsletter.

Cheers,  
*Bill*

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## Welcome the MHA Class of 2013!



By the time the Class of 2013 arrived at the Gundlach home for their welcome party, they were already well acquainted thanks to Facebook and email. All but one of the incoming class of 22 students attended the party on August 21<sup>st</sup>. This year's class includes only one native of Maryland and the student who traveled the greatest distance is from Beijing; three students join us from Texas. As has been the case the past few years, we attracted students from the University of Michigan, UNC, Emory and JHU. The Class of 2013 includes two JD's, two nurses, and a Teach for America alum.

Who would know from looking at this photo that this was the only spot in the Baltimore metropolitan area that did not experience torrential downpours on the 21<sup>st</sup>! This group must have incredible powers. You'll be reading more about their accomplishments in future e-newsletters.

## Program Site Visit to New York City

With so many alumni living and working around Manhattan, it makes perfect sense to give current students the opportunity to meet with alumni in their area. Although we can identify at least a dozen program alumni in the area, only four were able to join Teresa and current 2<sup>nd</sup> year students Eliza Medearis and Karthik Rao on Wednesday, September 14<sup>th</sup> at the Opal Restaurant. Pictured are Eliza, Megan Bowes (2008), Arvin Mejia (2002), and Jason Hallick (2005). Karthik, completing his field placement at Holy Name Medical Center in Teaneck, NJ, arrived later with Purvi Shah (2011), who was hired on at Holy Name after graduation. Eliza is working for Alvarez & Marsal during her field placement year.



## Nik Buescher, Class of 2004, Receives Outstanding Recent Graduate Award

Although we celebrated Nik's achievement at our May 2011 alumni and preceptor dinner, it was not until August 25<sup>th</sup> that Nik actually received the prestigious University award from Dean Michael Klag. The JHU Alumni Awards Ceremony followed a panel discussion in Sheldon Hall "Navigating Politics to Achieve Public Health Goals". Panelists included JHSPH alumni leaders Nils Daulaire, MD, MPH, Director, Office of Global Affairs, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services; Diane Rowland, ScD, Senior Executive President, The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation and Joanne Katz, ScD, Director, Global Disease Epidemiology & Control Division, Department of International Health, JHSPH.

Attending the awards ceremony and dinner with Nik, were his father and all of the program directors. Even though Nik's visit corresponded with Hurricane Irene, we hope that he and his father enjoyed their visit to Baltimore and will be back to visit soon. Nik is currently the VP of Oncology, Mountain States Health Alliance. In addition to being a "recent" graduate of the JHSPH, Nik also earned his B.A. from Hopkins.



## Meet Current MHA Students

### OMAR HAJJI, MHA Class of 2012



Omar Hajji was born in the frigid northlands of Minnesota and grew up amongst trees and wolves in the woods outside of a small town called Cannon Falls. He traveled next to Silicon Valley in California and there developed his twin interests in technology and healthcare. As an undergraduate at UCLA, Omar was staunchly on the path to medical school and began his clinical journey by investigating the functions of the mind through his double major in Biological Psychology and Neuroscience. In his time outside of the classroom Omar worked as a student health educator and triage provider, and moonlighted as a nerve-injury researcher.

Omar's personal mission is to improve the quality of life of his community and towards fulfilling this goal Omar took a hiatus from his medical pursuits to join Teach for America as a high-school teacher. Omar founded a physics program in an underserved community in Los Angeles and was honored to see over 80% of his students attend four-year colleges with scholarships upon graduation. Humbled and inspired by the impact a community leader may have towards propelling meaningful change, Omar determined that he could have a broader impact on the field of health by focusing on leadership in healthcare rather than clinical service. With his new destination in mind, Omar began investigating health administration programs as his next step after teaching. Omar's wanderlust struck again, and he journeyed to the east coast to join the Johns Hopkins MHA class of 2012 where he developed his understanding of healthcare operations and the economic forces behind health policy. While at Bloomberg, Omar was known for speaking passionately about the role computers and software-driven informatics would play in traditional clinician activities such as diagnostics and treatment planning.

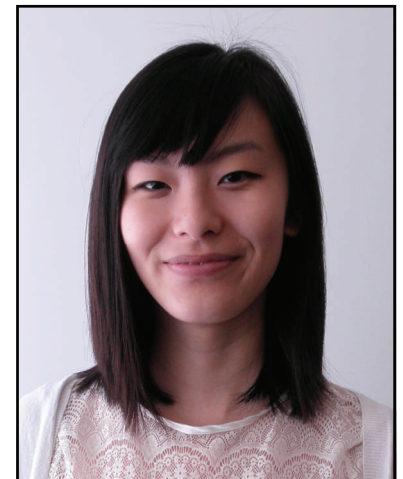
Omar is currently performing his administrative residency at Deloitte Consulting LLP. While working in a healthcare consulting firm with clients in all aspects of healthcare, Omar appreciates the broad exposure and perspective on the industry that he gained while pursuing his studies at the Johns Hopkins MHA program. Since joining Deloitte, Omar has worked on large work proposals for community health programs, investigated novel revenue sources for pharmaceutical companies, and has spent the majority of his time working with a national healthcare client coordinating a multi-organization hospital merger and IT platform implementation.

### MOLLY ZHANG, MHA Class of 2012

"I've always been interested in healthcare," says Molly Zhang, a native of New Jersey, "When I was young, I used to play with toys that were really parts used to model organic molecules. I was practicing to be a doctor!" She continued in this vein by pursuing medicine at Rutgers University until a fateful day in which she signed up for a class and found the academic love of her life—public health. "The class was so fascinating, she reminisces, "I loved the idea of being able to save millions of people at a time." Since then, Molly spent her remaining undergraduate years in public health classes and working in various health-related settings such as health departments and pharmaceutical companies.

When asked why she chose to pursue health administration, Molly replied that she thought that it was the "perfect coalescence of [her] two greatest passions—people and healthcare". Molly reports that this is exactly the case at San Francisco Health Plan, where she is currently completing her administrative residency. "The people who work here have passions and backgrounds similar to my own, and it's great to be able to work alongside them for an important cause," Molly says. Her days in sunny San Francisco are spent working on a variety of projects that utilize the many skill sets she gained from her first year in the Hopkins MHA program. Two of Molly's favorite projects are the Rate Development Submission, which challenged her analytical and data manipulation skills, and the Scope of Practice project, which gave her hands-on experience with current healthcare trends and policies.

The San Francisco Health Plan residency is flexible and based on the resident's interests. Molly has been involved with internal projects thus far, but plans on working with SFHP's providers and members in the future. She looks forward to learning more about the convoluted world of healthcare, exploring the west coast, and reuniting with her Hopkins cohort in May.



## ALUMNI UPDATES

**Inga Adams Pizarro, Class of 2002**, left her position as Director of Operations and Development at the Maryland Patient Safety Center to become a consultant for Booz Allen Hamilton in Rockville, MD.

**Angelina Chang, Class of 2002**, recently moved from San Francisco to Los Angeles. She is now with Providence Health & Services as a Senior Epic Analyst in the California region.

**Tracy Chang, Class of 2010**, started medical school at New York Medical College and was selected to participate in the Chairman's Roundtable on Leadership and Health Policy at the Westchester Medical Center.

**Ahmed Elsayed, Class of 2010**, is now the Primary Care Medical Home Program Consultant at CareFirst Blue Cross Blue Shield in Baltimore, MD after two years as an associate consultant at KPMG.

**Jason Hallick, Class of 2005**, moved to New York after 6 years at the JHSOM Clinical Practice Association to become the Director of Finance in the Clinical Trials Office at Columbia University Medical Center.

**Ben Huang, Class of 2008**, recently joined the Internal Audit Department of New York Presbyterian Hospital.

**Kirat Karode, Class of 2004**, formerly of St. Christopher's Hospital for Children in Philadelphia became VP/COO for Liberty-Health and the Jersey City Medical Center, a 332 bed Level II trauma Center, in Hudson County, NJ.

**Megan Maguire-Priolo, Class of 2010**, left CMS in July to return to her residency site, Greater Baltimore Medical Center, where she is now a Project Manager working with fellow alumni Colin Ward and Amber Taylor.

**Michael Poli, Class of 2010**, was promoted within HMA, Inc., and is now the Associate Administrator at Hernando Healthcare at Brooksville, FL.

**Sanjay Saha, Class of 1997**, will be leaving the University Health Systems of East Carolina to join Wake Forest Baptist as the executive vice president (EVP) of operations.



## What's New With You?

The program office encourages you to share your information via email/internet. Let us know if you have changed positions, addresses, etc. Also, if you have some updates you would like us to include in upcoming newsletters, we'd be happy to do so. We would love to hear from you!

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