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**Masonic Medical Research Institute (MMRI)
Welcomes 19 Students to Prestigious Summer Fellowship Program**

UTICA, NY – MMRI is thrilled to welcome 19 undergraduate students to its highly esteemed 2024 Summer Fellowship program. For ten weeks, these Summer Fellows will study under MMRI’s principal investigators (PI) gaining invaluable scientific research experience, as well as with administrative executives, gaining insights into MMRI’s operational endeavors.

This rigorous and competitive program selects students based on academic excellence, innovative scientific project ideas and demonstrated drive.

“We are delighted to welcome our largest class to date into MMRI’s coveted Summer Fellowship program,” said Maria Kontaridis, Ph.D., executive director and Gordon K. Moe professor and chair of biomedical research and translational medicine at MMRI. “The halls of MMRI are bustling, and we look forward to seeing the culmination of their research experiences at the end of this program. This is a testament to our mission, which includes our commitment to training future generations of science and medicine.”

Throughout the program, the Summer Fellows will engage in hands-on research using cutting-edge methodologies, such as induced pluripotent stem cells and targeted drug delivery. They will also participate in professional development workshops covering topics like applying to medical and graduate schools, the scientific code of conduct and didactic lectures on various scientific disciplines. The program will culminate in a graduation ceremony on Friday, July 26, 2024, where the Fellows present their research to MMRI staff, colleagues, families and community members.

MMRI is proud of its legacy and the success of its fellows, with many moving on to top tier graduate schools, medical schools, pharmacy schools, veterinary schools and more. It has trained hundreds of aspiring scientists, many of whom have gone on to have diverse careers in research

and medicine, some of which have been employed locally at local health systems, such as Mohawk Valley Health System, or nationally at organizations such as the Lupus Research Alliance. Many of these Summer Fellows have even returned to MMRI as postdoctoral fellows or research assistants, a true testament to the program's success.

The 2024 MMRI Summer Fellowship program includes:

Maria Kontaridis, Ph.D.:

Rebecca Caruso, Bucknell University
Richard Chen, University of Michigan
Mariah Foster, SUNY Fredonia
Afomiya Kassie, Albany College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences
Nay Linn, Binghamton University
Alexandra Volo, Syracuse University

Chase Kessinger, Ph.D.:

Dmytro Davydenko, Davidson College
Raegan Weems, University of Florida

Zhiqiang Lin, Ph.D.:

Gianna Frank, Syracuse University
Houze Li, Worcester Polytechnic Institute

Jason McCarthy, Ph.D.:

Hope Garramone, Clarkson University
Alinur Jaboldinov, Hamilton College
Julia Sassower, Syracuse University

Tongbin Wu, Ph.D.:

Zhijie Han, Syracuse University
Reaghan Sassower, Binghamton University

Nathan Tucker, Ph.D.:

Emily Hemstrought, Nazareth University
Anna Zamperetti, Le Moyne College

Varun Balaji:

Alexander Seeley, Clarkson University

Millie Occhionero:

Owen Trela, St. Lawrence University

The 2024 MMRI Summer Fellowship Program was made possible thanks to the generous support from its sponsors, including:

- M&T Bank / Partners Trust Bank Charitable Fund of the Community Foundation
- Drs. Atul and Amita Butala
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“We’d like to thank our program funders,” said Stephen F. Izzo, principal development officer at MMRI. “Without their support, MMRI could not have fielded one of its largest classes of Summer Fellows!”

Read more about the MMRI Summer Fellowship, here:

<https://www.mmri.edu/summerfellow/>

Photo attached: 2024 Summer Fellows: (from left to right) Emily Hemstrought, Hope Garramone, Anna Zamperetti, Zhijie Han, Julia Sassower, Afomiya Kassie, Alexandra Volo, Gianna Frank, Reagan Sassower, Mariah Foster, Raegan Weems, Richard Chen, Houze Li, Nay Linn, Alinur Jaboldinov, Dmytro Davydenko, Alexander Seeley, Rebecca Caruso and Owen Trela.

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