

The Defining Moment

Seniors at UT Medical School Match to Residency Programs

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Abeezar Shipchandler and his mother celebrate his acceptance into the internal medicine residency program at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. Photo by Deborah Mann Lake

For medical students, selecting the area of medicine they ultimately want to practice often comes down to one defining moment.

Abeezar Shipchandler, a senior at The University of Texas Medical School at Houston, knew the instant his father had emergency surgery to clear heart blockages that he wanted to practice internal medicine and specialize in cardiology.

For classmate Wallace “Blake” McKinney, a future career in emergency medicine became apparent the moment he jumped onto a gurney to perform CPR on a trauma patient.

These students, along with more than 200 fellow Medical School seniors, came one step closer to fulfilling their career ambitions on March 15 when they participated in Match Day. The annual event is coordinated by the National Resident Matching Program.

This year, more than 15,000 U.S. medical school seniors competed alongside close to 13,000 independent applicants for almost 22,000 residency positions. Competition is intense, and not everyone gets a residency slot, but at the Medical School, all students matched to programs.

The top three areas of medicine Medical School students chose for residency training this year are internal medicine, pediatrics and anesthesiology.

Internal medicine

Christopher Wilson, 27, and 29 other classmates will enter internal medicine residency programs this summer. As a high

school student from Wyoming, Wilson had the opportunity to attend a National Youth Leadership Forum in Medicine in Houston and hear James T. Willerson, M.D., president of the UT Health Science Center, talk about rewarding careers in cardiology and research. In 2000, Wilson returned to Houston to par-



Candace Horney picks up her envelope, which will reveal she is heading to Wake Forest University Baptist Medical Center for her pathology residency. Photo by Natalie Wong Camarata

ticipate in the Medical School’s Summer Research Program in the laboratory of cardiologist Heinrich Taegtmeyer, M.D. Wilson went on to enroll in the Medical School’s M.D./Ph.D. program, and is one of five students in the program who will graduate this year. As a student, he continued

to work in Taegtmeyer’s lab studying cardiac metabolism in obesity. He will do his internal medicine residency at Yale University, and he ultimately wants to practice cardiology and continue his research.

Abeezar Shipchandler, 25, will do his internal medicine residency at University of Alabama at Birmingham. Like Wilson, he hopes to specialize in cardiology, drawn to it after his father and another family member had emergency heart surgeries. “I’m at home and most comfortable in medicine, and I ultimately want to practice in Texas,” Shipchandler said.

Pediatrics

Griselda Meza, former mechanical engineer and mother of two, is one of 24 seniors who will do her residency in pediatrics. Meza, a native Spanish-speaker, was born in the town of Palmar Grande, Mexico. “Growing up we only went to the doctor when it was an absolute emergency, so I know how difficult access to health care is,” Meza says. “I eventually want to work serving an underprivileged community.” Meza, a graduate of Rice University, was the first in her family to attend college. She will do her pediatrics residency at Inova

Emergency medicine

A dozen seniors matched to residency programs in emergency medicine. Among them are:

Daniel Williams, 34, upon learning that he will do his emergency medicine residency at the Medical School, said this is one of his proudest accomplishments. Williams spent almost a decade after high school trying to figure out what he wanted to do with his life. He worked in an auto parts warehouse and later joined the U.S. Army. It wasn’t until a two-week humanitarian mission in 1997 in the African nation of Benin that Williams realized he wanted to become a physician. “We were offering immunizations, and I got to see the doctors interact with the patients. I was impressed by how much they had to offer these people,” Williams said. “I thought, ‘I want to have something that meaningful to offer people.’” Williams hopes to go on more humanitarian missions, and he would ultimately like to practice emergency medicine in a rural area.

Blake McKinney, 31, has been training to handle emergencies since high school. At 17, he joined a volunteer fire department. In college, while studying biomedical science, he trained as an emergency medical technician, often spending time at Memorial Hermann-Texas Medical Center’s Emergency Center. One day, a patient who was in the CT scanner stopped breathing. Legendary trauma surgeon James “Red” Duke, M.D., ordered McKinney to start CPR. “That’s when I knew I wanted to be an emergency physician,” McKinney said. McKinney, his wife and two sons will move to the West Coast for his residency at the University of California, Davis.

Forensic pathology

Candace Horney, 26, is among eight students choosing a career in forensic pathology. Horney has been interested in this field of medicine since the sixth grade. She worked as a forensic examiner in Forensic Consultant Services in Fort Worth during her undergraduate studies at Austin College. Horney is originally from Fort Sumner, a New Mexico town that is still considered a frontier because it has so few residents.

Horney and her fiancé, a senior at Baylor College of Medicine, participated in the couples’ match. After their wedding, they will begin their residency programs at Wake Forest University Baptist Medical Center.

General surgery

This year’s class president, **Christopher Durham**, 26, will do his residency in general surgery at East Carolina University’s Brody School of Medicine. Durham credits his interest in surgery to his many mentors. “I’ve always wanted to be a surgeon, and working with the doctors at Memorial Hermann Hospital and LBJ Hospital confirmed that this is what I want to do.”

Orthopedics

Steven “Brad” Winter, 26, of the Woodlands, is one of 12 seniors who will do residency training in orthopedics at Wake Forest University Baptist Medical School. Winter’s interest in the specialty began when he played sports in high school and college. “I played soccer in college and was the goalkeeper, so I gained a high respect for the doctors in sports medicine, especially after I broke all 10 of my fingers,” Winter said.

“We are very proud of our students,” said Margaret McNeese, M.D., associate dean of Admissions and Student Affairs. “They did exceptionally well this year and have matched in excellent residency programs throughout the United States.” ★

PBS Series Examines Texas’ Innovative Solutions

Personal stories of patients, hurricane survivors, researchers, scientists and doctors are the stuff of “State of Tomorrow,”™ a documentary TV series depicting global issues and solutions on a human scale. Faculty members at the UT Health Science Center at Houston are among those interviewed for the series.

“State of Tomorrow” will debut on Houston’s KUHT-TV, Channel 8, at 11 p.m. Thursday, April 26. The 13 half-hour episodes then will air regularly in Houston on Thursdays at 11 p.m.

The series explores major challenges facing Texans today, including public health, homeland security, energy policy, economic development and education, among others.

“Public higher education offers solutions to many of the major challenges facing Texas, and it is important for Texans to know that whether or not they ever set foot on our campuses, we work to ensure that they are the beneficiaries of education’s

service to society,” said UT System Chancellor Mark G. Yudof.

Faculty from Texas A&M, Texas State, Texas Tech, University of Houston, University of North Texas and University of Texas university systems are featured in the series, representing a collaboration among Texas’ public higher education systems.

The series is co-produced by The University of Texas Foundation and Alpheus Media Inc. in partnership with public television station KLRU-TV, Austin PBS, and is paid for with private funding from sponsors including AT&T Inc., Exxon Mobil Corp., and IBC Bank, among others.

“State of Tomorrow” will air on all 13 PBS stations in Texas. The show has already launched in Austin and some of the other markets, and it will air on the remaining stations beginning in April.

Each episode addresses advances made possible by higher education. ★

Fairfax Hospital in Virginia.

Anesthesiology

Amy Graham-Carlson, 29, of Deer Park, and 21 of her classmates will do residencies in anesthesiology. After graduating from UT Austin with an undergraduate degree in nursing, she worked in the medical field as a nurse for three years before attending medical school. “I’ve always known I wanted a career in the medical field, and I wanted to get my feet wet in the industry before I made the long-term commitment,” said Graham-Carlson. She will stay at the Medical School.

Other specialties

OB/gyn

Gus Zamora, 32, is among 11 students who are entering residency programs in obstetrics and gynecology. Zamora, a native of El Paso, will not only be the first doctor in his family, but was also the first to complete college. He became interested in ob/gyn because of the many challenges the women in his family faced. “It has been a long road for me, but many hardships have inspired me to continue with this career,” Zamora said. “My sister had a very difficult pregnancy, and my aunt raised a daughter with Down syndrome.” Zamora will begin his residency this summer at the Medical School’s ob/gyn program at Memorial Hermann-Texas Medical Center.