



Duke

MARGOLIS CENTER
for Health Policy



Margolis Scholars Program Overview

2023-2024

About Our Center

The mission of Duke University's Robert J. Margolis, MD, Center for Health Policy is to improve health and the value of health care through practical, innovative, and evidence-based policy solutions. Duke-Margolis catalyzes Duke University's leading capabilities, including interdisciplinary academic research and capacity for education and engagement, to inform policy making and implementation for better health and health care.

Overview of the Scholars Program

The Margolis Scholars program is a prestigious program for Duke University students that demonstrate strong interest in and commitment to a career in health policy and management, as well as leadership potential to improve health policy. Named in honor of Robert Margolis, M.D., the founder of Duke-Margolis and a pioneer of innovative integrated care delivery models, the Margolis Scholars program provides promising students with the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities to be the next generation of health care leaders. Margolis Scholars is a competitive program open to students at all learner levels. Selected Scholars are engaged in the program for 1 to 2 years, depending on their program of study.

In the 2023-2024 academic year, we have 34 Margolis Scholars coming from the undergraduate and graduate level at Duke. Students are mentored by our Faculty Director, Margolis Core Faculty, and Senior Research Staff throughout their program tenure.

Program Components

The Margolis Scholars program has four key components: knowledge building, skills enhancement and training, professional development, and community building and networking. Activities offered across the four components include, but are not limited to:

- Knowledge Building: health policy coursework, bi-weekly Margolis Seminars and other public convenings, health policy foundations workshops, and journal and book club discussion series
- Skills Enhancement & Training: research, communication, career, and leadership skills labs and/or modules, research and teaching assistantships, health policy internships, and health policy leadership event organization
- Professional Development: tailored academic and professional advising/mentorship and support for relevant conference attendance and other professional trainings
- Community Building & Networking: annual Margolis Scholars event, informal and formal peer mentoring, "meet an expert" sessions and other coordinated opportunities to meet leaders in the health policy field, annual Margolis Center Retreat and Margolis Scholar social events, and community service projects

Meet the Margolis Scholars



Alexa Chronister, 2nd-year Scholar

Alexa is currently a third-year law student. During law school, she interned at Duke's Health Justice Clinic where she assisted clients living with serious health conditions on a variety of legal matters. She also interned at BioCryst Pharmaceuticals, a biotech company developing rare disease therapeutics. Before starting her third year of law school, Alexa was a summer associate Reed Smith, a law firm with a large healthcare practice. At Duke, she has served on the board of the Health Law Society, worked with the Healthcare Planning Project, and volunteered with Root Causes. Before law school, Alexa worked for United States of Care, a non-profit organization dedicated to ensuring that everyone has access to quality, affordable health care. Alexa is also the founder and current President of Fight Like A Warrior, a non-profit organization working to unite, empower, and advocate for those battling chronic health conditions. Alexa's interests include health equity, access to care, and improving healthcare for chronic and rare disease patients.



Allison Chu, 1st-year Scholar

Allison is a medical student in the Duke University School of Medicine Primary Care Leadership Track. She's interested in pursuing a specialty in which she can advance primary care and women's health. She completed her Master of Biomedical Science at Duke University in 2020 and a Bachelor of Science in Psychology at Carnegie Mellon University in 2019. Her research interests lie in understanding how human behavior, policy and advocacy, and other social and community factors impact the healthcare system and patient outcomes. As a Margolis Scholar, Allison is excited to collaborate with students and faculty across disciplines to broaden her perspectives and gain new skills to effect positive change at both systemic and individual levels.



Ashna Sai, 1st-year Scholar

Ashna Sai is a member of the Class of 2025 in the Duke Trinity College of Arts & Sciences. She is pursuing a self-designed Program II major titled “Health Policy and Racial Disparities in Healthcare.” At Duke, Ashna is the Founder, President, and Editor-in-Chief of the Duke Journal for Health Equity - Duke’s first student-run publication on health disparities and health policy. She is also an undergraduate researcher for both the Tata Lab studying pulmonary cell biology and a Bass Connections project team that is combatting Durham’s racial disparities in hypertension prevalence and treatment. Ashna additionally serves as a Community Resource Navigator for the Lincoln Community Health Center and is a long-term volunteer for her local free clinic. As a Margolis Scholar, she is excited to collaborate on projects with the vast network of faculty and fellow Scholars, learn more about leadership building, and engage in healthcare transformation discussions. After graduating, she aims to be a physician focusing on preventive medicine and healthcare for the underserved.



Ben Verschoore, 1st-year Scholar

Ben is currently pursuing an MBA at the Fuqua School of Business with a certificate in Health Sector Management. Before Fuqua, Ben worked as a Clinical Research Manager at Eko Health, a digital health company developing AI-powered stethoscopes to aid in the detection of cardiopulmonary diseases. At Eko, Ben spearheaded real-world evidence generation efforts to implement data-driven insights into go-to-market strategies. Prior to this role, Ben worked at Vixiar Medical where he supported clinical trial design and execution to guide the development and regulatory submission of the company’s novel medical device. In addition to being a Margolis Scholar, Ben is a recipient of the Manning Family Foundation Scholarship in Health Care Business Leadership. His policy interests include leveraging real-world evidence to drive regulatory decision-making and exploring innovative solutions to address policy barriers to digital care delivery models. During the Margolis Scholars Program, Ben is eager to broaden his understanding of how to effectively approach policy development and implementation and conduct research on advancing health equity via digital health offerings. Ultimately, Ben is looking forward to collaborating with his fellow scholars and Margolis Faculty committed to promoting lasting change in health care.



Breanna Barrett, 1st-year Scholar

Breanna Barrett is a junior at Duke University majoring in Psychology and Global Health. At Duke, she is a SPIRE fellow, Social and Publicity Chair of the Students of the Caribbean Association, and the underclassman liaison of Duke bioSTEMS. In addition to her active involvement in different clubs, Breanna also plays many percussion instruments, including the African drums and participates in fencing games. Breanna is interested in particularly how these policies negatively affect people of color and people in low- and middle income countries, and the interaction between business, law, and healthcare. This summer, Breanna worked with the Medical Legal Partnership project and is looking forward to understand how public health professionals strategize, identify, and target laws and policy changes to advance health justice. She is very excited to learn make new connection in the Margolis Center community. Bre will continue her work with the Medical Legal Partnerships project this Fall.



Elaijah Lapay, 2nd year Scholar

Elaijah is a senior pursuing an individualized degree in Migrant Health and Healthcare on the pre-health pathway. Elaijah is co-leading a 2023-4 Bass Connections project team on food and nutrition security policy and health equity at the federal, state, and local level in Durham County, NC. Elaijah helps facilitate the operations of Root Causes' Fresh Produce Program to coordinate the packing and delivery of fresh produce in English and Spanish to families every weekend in Durham. Elaijah is conducting research on efficacy of produce deliveries, diet, and education sessions on health outcomes among hypertensive and food insecure members of Durham's African American and Latine populations; he has previously conducted research on food insecurity in the Latine community, equitable access for Latine pediatric mental healthcare, and the state of equity in Duke's university-community partnerships. Following a Summer 2021 internship, Elaijah continues to work as a patient navigator at Lincoln Community Health Center, a federally qualified health center in Durham, helping pediatric patients' and families' navigate social and resource needs in English and Spanish.



Erin Van Gessel, 1st-year Scholar

Erin is a candidate in the Accelerated Bachelor of Science in Nursing (ABSN) program at Duke University's School of Nursing. Previously, she earned her BA in Political Science from Middlebury College. She brings a background working on corporate governance issues in New York City and health care public policy campaigns in Washington, DC. She is passionate about improving health education, access, and quality – particularly in rural communities – and advocates for more investment in community health workers, wraparound health services, and technology such as artificial intelligence to help provide preventative care. In addition to her work as a Margolis Scholar, Erin participates in Bass Connections research and advocacy on reproductive health care access, as well as participating in a rural, mobile health clinic as a Mobile Prevention and Care Team (M-PACT) scholar.



Estefania Rodriguez Martinez, 2nd-year Scholar

Estefania is a Master of International Development Policy student. She has a BA in international relations from Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey. Prior to Duke, Estefania worked as a Project Manager of the Food Policy Program at the Nutrition and Health Research Center at the Mexican National Institute of Public Health. She has co-authored journal articles and book chapters on food environment and conflicts of interest in nutrition and health policy. Her interests lie at the intersection of politics, policies, law, and the food environment. As a Margolis Scholar, Estefania is eager to engage with faculty and peers from disciplines across campus in food policy, health and development. She is also eager to broaden her knowledge on topics like social and commercial determinants of health.



Fariha Rahman, 1st -year Scholar

Fariha is a MS population health sciences student at Duke University. She graduated with a BS in health policy and management from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 2021. During her undergraduate studies, she also served as a birth doula at UNC Hospitals and partook in perinatal mood disorders' research. These experiences, notably working with new mothers from diverse backgrounds, inspired her interest in maternal health equity and health policy. She is a firm believer that effective policy changes can address the social and structural determinants underlying maternal health disparities. As an aspiring physician scientist, she plans to intersect her clinical experience, research, and passion for advocacy to drive systemic change that improves women's health through policy.



Freya Gulamali, 1st-year Scholar

Freya Gulamali is a member of the Class of 2025 at Duke University from Bellevue, Washington. She is majoring in Computer Science with a certificate in Health Policy. At Duke, Freya serves as the co-chair of Campus Engagement for the Student Collaborative on Health Policy and works as a research analyst with Dr. Mark Sendak at the Duke Institute for Health Innovation. Her research interests lie at the intersection of health policy and AI, particularly with respect to the capability of machine learning to improve efficiencies in the healthcare system and augment physician capabilities. In recent years, the number of machine learning models developed to solve issues in healthcare have skyrocketed. However, very few have been implemented successfully in real world settings. Understanding the concerns of numerous stakeholders—from patients to regulators, insurers, and physicians—will ensure that the models designed to fill gaps within our current healthcare system work for everyone. Ultimately, Freya hopes to pursue an MD/MBA, translating policy into practice to serve patients and promote health equity. Through the Margolis Scholars Program, Freya is looking forward to connecting with others to learn more about how payment models and AI tools can both play a role in healthcare reform.



Ginny Tsao, 2nd- year Scholar

Ginny is an MBA candidate specializing in health sector management, holding a PharmD from the University of British Columbia. Ginny's professional experience as a pharmacist spans various healthcare settings, including hospitals, pharmacies, health authorities, and non-profit organizations. Throughout her career, she has recognized the significance of upstream policies and interventions in enhancing patient-centered care. This understanding has fueled her passion for exploring the convergence of payers and providers, as well as value-based reimbursement models that promote equitable access to healthcare. Driven by her diverse experiences, Ginny is eager to investigate how policy can shape business standards and facilitate transformative investments, ultimately working towards establishing a sustainable healthcare system. In addition to being a Margolis Scholar, Ginny is a recipient of the Manning Family Foundation Scholarship in Health Care Business Leadership and spent her summer interning at McKinsey & Company. During the Margolis Scholars Program, Ginny looks forward to learning from and collaborating with the Margolis Center faculty and her fellow scholars to help shape the tomorrow of our health care to be more resilient, interconnected, and predictive.



Hudson Hazlewood, 1st-year Scholar

Hudson is a Master of Population Health Sciences student at the Duke University School of Medicine. Before coming to Duke, he graduated from Washington University in St. Louis, double majoring in Philosophy, Neuroscience, and Psychology with a focus in Cognitive Neuroscience, and Anthropology with a focus on Global Health. Hudson's research interests span intersubjectivity in health, social minoritization, and care for chronic and contested illnesses, particularly among minority and incarcerated populations. Hoping to pursue a career in law himself, Hudson authored an honors thesis entitled "Life, Death, and Law: Vulnerability and Agency in the American Right to Die Landscape." As a Margolis Scholar, Hudson hopes to expand his knowledge of policy alongside his studies in Population Health Sciences to better understand the ways in which law impacts the health of marginalized communities.



Jack Pitsor, 2nd-year Scholar

Jack is a Master of Public Policy student concentrating in health policy. Most recently, he worked at the National Conference of State Legislatures in Denver, Colorado as a health policy associate focusing on various access, costs and coverage issues. Prior to NCSL, Jack was an international volunteer in Belize City, Belize through the Jesuit Volunteer Corps, working at a youth prison as a program coordinator. Jack received his B.S. in health administration and policy in 2018 from Creighton University in Omaha, Nebraska. His policy interests include health system costs, medical debt, surprise billing, private insurance affordability and other related health care costs issues. Jack is excited to collaborate with and learn from the Margolis Center staff, faculty and students in order to effectively evaluate policy interventions at the federal, state and local level.



Jada Allen, 1st-year Scholar

Jada Allen is majoring in Public Policy, minoring in Chemistry, and pursuing the Health Policy Certificate. She will graduate with the class of 2025 and is from Lumberton, NC. Her primary research interests are health equity in rural and BIPOC communities, nutrition and health outcomes, and investment in Native healthcare systems. In Durham, NC, she is researching hypertension and self-monitored blood pressure on a Bass Connections team and serves as an Advocate with the Community Empowerment Fund (CEF). Jada is an enrolled member of the Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina. She is currently serving on the National Council of Urban Indian Health (NCUIH)'s Youth Council and worked to address vaccine hesitancy in her tribal community. As a Margolis Scholar, Jada is excited to collaborate with fellow Scholars and Margolis faculty to build on her knowledge and develop innovative, community-centered health policy.



Jillian Foye, 1st-year Scholar

Jillian is a dual-degree Master of Public Policy student at Duke's Sanford School of Public Policy and Juris Doctor candidate at UNC School of Law. Prior to beginning her dual-degree program, Jillian received her bachelor's degree in political science from Wellesley College. Jillian's policy interests include health equity, food security, and improving access to healthcare for marginalized populations in the south. Jillian is excited to work at the intersection of law and policy as an advocate for underserved communities.



Karnika Singh, 1st-year Scholar

Karnika is a Ph.D. candidate in biomedical engineering at Duke. She attended Indian Institute of Information Technology Allahabad, where she earned an integrated Master in biomedical engineering. She worked as a business intelligence and analytics consultant before joining the BIG IDEAS lab at Duke for her Ph.D. Her research involves using digital health technologies, such as smartwatches, for health monitoring and digital biomarker development. She has worked on examining the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on activity and sleep habits using commercial smartwatches and on exploring intelligent COVID-19 diagnostic testing allocation methods using wearable device data. Karnika is currently working on developing digital biomarkers of glycemic health for remote and cost-effective monitoring of diabetes and prediabetes. In addition, she is working on assessing disparity in the ownership of digital health technologies and understanding factors that affect adoption of digital health tools. Karnika looks forward to connecting with the Margolis community and learning more about policy solutions to improve healthcare outcomes using digital health strategies.



Kartik Pejavara, 2nd-year Scholar

Kartik is an undergraduate studying Computer Science. He is particularly interested in improving health database systems for quality of care and the applications of quantitative techniques in driving policy impact. His earliest exposure to health policy was as a researcher for the Center for Policy Impact in Global Health, where he researched how tools published by globally recognized organizations could be used to help struggling countries improve COVID-19 vaccine rollout. As a Summer Fellow at the Alliance for Health Policy, he prepared materials for speaker events and conducted research for planning future events. He is also a Bass Connections researcher, where he worked on a project examining attitudes and behaviors regarding vaccine hesitancy. He is currently working on a project developing a machine learning-based mobile application to detect hemoglobin deficiency. After graduating, he plans to work in health- or bio-technology-based field.



Katherine Marapese, 1st-year Scholar

Katherine Drew is a Master of Business Administration candidate at Duke University's Fuqua School of Business and a medical student at the University of North Carolina School of Medicine. At UNC, she is a member of the Global Health Scholarly Concentration Program and has collaborated on surgical capacity-building research projects in Malawi and Zambia. She volunteers with UNC's Student Health Action Coalition Medical Clinic to provide free health care to underserved and uninsured members of our local community and previously led the care management team. She earned a Bachelor of Science in chemistry from the United States Naval Academy in 2020. In addition to being a Margolis Scholar, Katherine Drew is a recipient of the Manning Family Foundation Scholarship in Health Care Business Leadership. Her research and policy interests include advancing equitable access to high-quality care, exploring value-based care models, and improving population health outcomes. She aspires to a clinical career in surgery. As a Margolis Scholar, Katherine Drew is excited to collaborate with faculty and colleagues across disciplines in pursuit of evidence-based solutions to the complex challenges facing our health care system.



Kathrine Wetherbee, 2nd-year Scholar

Kathrine is a dual Master of Business Administration and Master of Public Policy candidate concentrating in health policy and health sector management. This past summer, Kathrine worked on value-based care strategies for the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services. Kathrine is also a Venture Fellow with Rock Health Capital looking for innovative health tech solutions that improve high-quality equitable access to care. Prior to Duke, Kathrine worked in digital health on next-gen health benefits solutions and improving healthcare access for the gig-economy. In addition to being a Margolis Scholar, Kathrine is a Forte Fellow and Fuqua Impact Scholar. Kathrine is excited to expand her knowledge of the healthcare ecosystem and learn how we can leverage both policy and technology to reduce inequities and improve high-quality care delivery.



Katie Lazar, 1st-year Scholar

Katie is a Master of Public Policy student at Duke's Sanford School of Public Policy. Originally from the Detroit area, Katie graduated from the University of Michigan in 2015 with a BA in political science and French. Prior to starting at Duke, Katie worked at a local public health department in Colorado as part of the COVID-19 emergency response and as a substance use prevention and mitigation policy specialist. Her interests include sustainable public health fiscal policy and innovative policy solutions that consider the social determinants of health in addressing health inequities. As a Margolis Scholar, Katie is eager to collaborate with and learn from staff and peers who share her passion for health policy.



Kristian Wright, 2nd-year Scholar

Kristian is a third-year law student. Prior to attending Duke Law School, Kristian earned a B.S. in general biology from the University of California, San Diego in 2015. Following graduation, Kristian worked as an analyst for the University of California Office of the President in its systemwide health office, where she worked on issues of diversity and inclusion within the university's health professional schools, and a study on improving health care outcomes in California's San Joaquin Valley. Most recently, she worked as a legislative analyst for the California Department of Managed Health Care, where she analyzed legislation addressing issues, such as surprise balance billing, Medicare supplement insurance, and Affordable Care Act waivers. Among other things, she annually assisted with the drafting and editing of a report on prescription drug costs, and regularly assisted constituents with their complaints against health plans. Kristian's interests include prescription drug pricing, health plan regulatory compliance, and improving affordability of health care.



Laura Stilwell, 2nd-year Scholar

Laura is a graduate student in the Medical Scientist Training (MD/PhD) program, doing a PhD in public policy with a concentration in economics. Laura earned her BS in economics from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in 2014. Prior to her graduate studies at Duke, Laura worked for three years as a research assistant to Esther Duflo, PhD, at the Jameel Poverty Action Lab in Cambridge, MA, where she worked on large-scale randomized evaluations of policy interventions. Laura's research broadly explores household decision making with respect to child investments and the impact of policies and programs on child health and well-being. Her current work focuses on three topics areas - housing, child maltreatment, and infant feeding - and includes projects in the US and Pakistan.



Laila Issa, 1st-year Scholar

Laila is a Master of Public Policy candidate at the Sanford School pursuing a concentration in health policy. Prior to Duke, Laila worked as a project analyst at Mathematica, a social policy research and consulting organization. During this time, Laila provided strategic consulting support on several federal policy assessment and program improvement projects, including the evaluation of CMS Innovation Center's Medicare alternative payment models and the implementation state-based Medicaid and CHIP coverage retention programs as the government-mandated public health emergency (COVID-19) ends. Laila received her BA in Public Health in 2020 from the University of California, Berkeley. She is interested in global health law, correctional health and leveraging emerging technology in the interest of public health.



Nikhil Chaudhry, 2nd-year Scholar

Nikhil is a member of the Class of 2024 in the Trinity College of Arts & Sciences at Duke University. He is pursuing a double major in neuroscience and global health with a certificate in Health Policy. At Duke, Nikhil serves as Vice President of Synapse, Treasurer for Duke Best Buddies, and Treasurer of the Global Health Major's Union. Nikhil also participates in research through the Carpenter Lab at the Duke Center for Autism and Bass Connections, working on projects related to health equity. As a Margolis Scholar, Nikhil hopes to continue working on health equity projects and continue exploring other health policy topics introduced to him during his internship at the Margolis Center in 2021. In the future, Nikhil plans on pursuing a medical career and continuing to research health policy. He is excited to meet faculty and other Margolis scholars to learn about effective health policy solutions.



Rewa Malhotra, 2nd-year Scholar

Rewa is a Master of Business Administration student. Prior to Duke, Rewa worked as a Senior Product Analyst at Optum where she worked at the intersection of healthcare policy and digital transformation to implement the CMS Interoperability ruling and CAA provisions for UHC health plans to reduce surprise billing for members. She has also worked extensively in defining growth strategies for Optum Health businesses. Her health policy interests include leveraging strategic interventions for members to accelerate value-based care adoption and exploring synergies in government programs to improve health outcomes. In addition to being a Margolis Scholar, Rewa is a recipient of the Manning Family Foundation Scholarship in Health Care Business Leadership. As a Margolis Scholar, she is looking forward to expanding her understanding of the health care ecosystem and learning from world-class faculty and peers to build a 360-degree perspective of health care.



Rhea Dash, 2nd-year Scholar

Rhea is a third-year medical student. She holds a BS in biological sciences from the University of Maryland and recently earned a Master of Public Health in health policy from Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. While in Boston this past year, she also worked for the Massachusetts state-based insurance exchange, where she designed and implemented a program to lower the cost of high-value medications for Massachusetts ConnectorCare members. Her research and policy interests include advancing value-based insurance design, lowering health system costs, and improving population health outcomes. As a Margolis Scholar, Rhea is excited to engage in a multidisciplinary community of faculty and students, learning how to build equitable and evidence-based solutions to complex health care problems.



Riya Mohan, 2nd- year Scholar

Riya Mohan is a rising senior at Duke University and is pursuing a self-designed major in the Department of Program II Studies titled “The Ethical and Regulatory Issues of Human Genome Editing”. Her research interests lie in the intersection of science development and health policy/ethics research particularly in the realm of genomics, gene editing, germline editing, and genetic data privacy. She is currently named as a Margolis Health Policy Scholar and is an undergraduate researcher at the Heitman Lab in the Duke School of Medicine. In addition, she pursues independent research with the Marcus Center for Cellular Cures, Duke Applied Genomics and Precision Medicine, and Mayo Clinic Biomedical Ethics. At the University, she is also the president of Duke Ethical Tech, a university-based tech think tank, and leads Duke Swords, a student-led sword fighting group. Previously, she has been an Undergraduate Fellow in the Visualizing Cities Lab and was the President of Duke Cyber, the university’s premier tech policy organization. After graduation, she hopes to attend medical school to continue working in the intersection of genomics, patient care, and policy development.



Ro Huang, 2nd-year Scholar

Ro is an avid researcher, reader, and runner. They’re passionate about leveraging data science and econometric tools in their research to shape evidence-based policymaking. Their interests are informed by their research with the Brookings Institution, the Mayo Clinic, and the Duke-Margolis Center, where they’ve worked on topics spanning vaccine financing to family caregiving to emerging technologies. In the classroom, they’re a math and policy nerd, majoring in statistics with minors in mathematics and economics at Duke University’s Trinity School. Outside of the lab and the classroom, they’re a mental health advocate and have volunteered with Threshold Clubhouse, lead NAMI@Duke, and worked with the NC Psychiatric Access Line. In the future, Ro aspires to work at the intersection of academia and government to promote legislation grounded in data-driven approaches.



Rose Lee, 2nd-year Scholar

Rose is a member of the class of 2024 at Duke Trinity College of Arts & Sciences and is pursuing an interdepartmental major in biology and public policy with a minor in chemistry. Her interests lie in improving palliative care for all ages, strengthening caregiver policies, and building a better support system that guides patients beyond diagnosis and treatment and promotes human flourishing. In order to apply the knowledge she learned at Duke, she interned at the National Human Genome Research Institute’s Policy and Program Analysis Branch through DukeEngage DC in the summer of 2021, where she was able to grow and reflect upon important questions about her experience– Who does policy really serve? How can we integrate and communicate policy and science to the public? She is thus thrilled to continue her journey of growth through the Margolis Scholars program with its programming that integrates critical reflection, research, and community-building. Rose also interned at the National Institute on Aging in the summer of 2022 and is currently researching faith-based needs of patients with head and neck cancer through Bass Connections. Ultimately, she hopes to pursue an MD to help build a more supportive paradigm of care for patients and integrate both broad-scale change with policy and individual-level change with medicine.



Sai Rachakonda, 2nd-year Scholar

Sai is a rising Senior at Duke Trinity College of Arts & Sciences pursuing a degree in Program II focused on Personalized Healthcare Innovation and Policy. He is interested in studying emerging personalized care models, implementation of novel health technologies, and health system reform strategies. Sai is involved patient education and clinical research projects as an intern at the Center for Personalized Healthcare, primary care policy review research through Margolis, and a palliative care project through Bass Connections. Additionally, Sai is the Co-Chair of Community-facing committee of the Student Collaborative on Health Policy (SCOHP) helping to facilitate programs to tie local policy-based and public health based organizations to a Duke student workforce to propel impact. Outside of Duke, he works as a Medical Scribe at the NC Heart and Vascular Hospital in Raleigh. In his free time, Sai loves going to the gym, kicking back with friends, and enjoying music production.



Shewit Jaynes, 2nd-year Scholar

Shewit is a PhD nursing student at Duke University. She graduated with a BS in nursing from East Carolina University in 2016, where she also ran cross country and track. Shewit has worked as both a medical-surgical nurse and a postpartum nurse. Her work with new mothers and families inspired her interest in maternal health equity and health policy. In 2021, Shewit graduated with a Master of Science in public health from the Department of Health Policy and Management at UNC Chapel Hill. She is a firm believer that comprehensive policies are needed to address social and structural determinants of maternal health disparities. As a nurse scientist she plans to integrate her clinical experience and passion for advocacy to generate the evidence needed to propel systemic change through policy.



Tim Southam, 1st-year Scholar

Born and raised in Los Angeles, Tim is a J.D. candidate at the Duke University School of Law. Before joining the Duke community, Tim was a consultant for Health Management Associates (HMA), a research and consulting firm specializing in publicly funded healthcare programs, such as Medicaid and Medicare. At HMA, Tim focused on helping hospital systems and health plans learn how to leverage Medicaid funding to provide social services, such as affordable housing and employment assistance, to their patients and members. He is particularly proud of his work in the West Side of Chicago. His health policy interests center around addressing social factors that adversely affect the health of vulnerable, historically marginalized communities. Specifically, he hopes to learn through his time at Duke Law and the Margolis Center how to facilitate collaboration between large healthcare entities and local housing providers to provide at-risk individuals with stable, affordable housing that can improve access to quality care while reducing healthcare costs.



Vibhav Nandagiri, 1st-year Scholar

Vibhav Nandagiri (Class of 2025) is an undergraduate from Cary, NC majoring in Biology and International Comparative Studies with a Health Policy certificate. At the Wray Lab, Vibhav studies how mutations in noncoding regions of the human genome lead to the development of complex diseases. Through a Bass Connections team, he researches strategies to improve access to mental and behavioral health care for Spanish-speaking youth in North Carolina. He also serves as a research intern at NC Integrated Care for Kids analyzing food insecurity screening practices and payment incentivization at pediatric clinics. In addition to these research projects, Vibhav is an executive member of the Duke Student Collaborative on Health Policy (SCOHP) where he works to pair students with nonprofits, research institutes, and companies advocating for improved health equity. Outside of his health policy work, Vibhav spends his time travelling and competing for Duke Club Tennis, planning the annual TEDxDuke conference, and writing for local news outlets. In the future, Vibhav plans to pursue an MD/MPH and hopes to combine future clinical practice with policymaking. He looks forward for the opportunity to learn from leading policy experts through the Margolis Scholars program.



Winifred Edom, 2nd-year Scholar

Winifred is an international student from Nigeria and a second-year student in the Masters of Science in Global Health program. Winifred earned her BSc in psychology and a minor in Health Advocacy at the University of Kentucky in Lexington. During her undergraduate career, Winifred volunteered with the ONE organization as they campaigned for COVID-19 vaccine equity across African nations. Winifred's academic and professional interests center on strengthening existing health systems to offer quality care and financial risk protection. As Winifred transitions from a background in psychology to one in global health, she is excited to immerse herself in the field, learn, and leverage all the opportunities the Margolis Center has to offer. She hopes to make a change and create sustainable health systems where everyone has a chance to access healthcare without fear of impoverishment.

Meet the Margolis Scholars Program Team



Kate Bundorf, Ph.D, M.B.A.
Faculty Director



Tiffany Chan, MS
Program Coordinator



Hilary A. Campbell, PharmD, JD
Policy Fellow

