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External News - *Olivia Scholes, OMS III*

Nicknamed the “tridemic”, COVID-19, RSV, and influenza infections are back with a vengeance this winter. In November, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) unsuccessfully bid for a declared national emergency as hospitals filled and now continue to fill with patients with severe respiratory infections.

As hospitals reach capacity and medication shortages continue to complicate providing care, it is now as important as ever to advocate for vaccinations in our communities. For a great list of ways to get involved in advocating for vaccines, visit the Vaccinate Your Family website [HERE](#).

Read more about the AAP guidelines to combat the rise in respiratory illness [HERE](#).

Read more about the downtrending of influenza vaccination rates [HERE](#).

Internal News - *Miranda Willis, OMS II*

Starting the year strong, the SOMA January advocacy focus is healthy communities. SOMA members past and present have shown through their actions and resolutions that the health of our community is incredibly important. The following resolutions are just a few examples of the actions SOMA members have taken to better their communities.

Most recently, SOMA presented a resolution to the AOA House of Delegates (HoD) titled “Recognizing the Disproportionate Prevalence of Cardiovascular Disease in the African American Population as a Public Health Issue.” As mentioned in the September issue of this Newsletter, the title was changed to “Recognizing the Disproportionate Mortality from Cardiovascular Disease in the African American Population as a Public Health Issue” and adopted. At this same HoD, SOMA also put forth a resolution titled “Support for Increased Crisis Intervention Team Training for Law Enforcement,” which was adopted. This resolution was initially presented in 2020 to the SOMA HoD and resolved that SOMA recognize the police use of force against communities affected by mental health disorders and other disparities as a public health issue and advocate for legislation that encourages continued education for officers that reduce negative outcomes between officers and those with mental health disorders.

In 2019, SOMA members from the Burrell College of Osteopathic Medicine submitted resolution, S-19-02, “SOMA Overdose Prevention Taskforce and Overdose Prevention Project.” This resolution led to the development of the OPTF, which helps to provide Naloxone training to COMs as well as educates students on proper terminology to use in reference to opioid use disorder.

These are only a few examples of the resolutions created by SOMA members that focus on the health of the community. As a whole, SOMA members have advocated for different problems to be recognized as public health issues, inclusion of health topics previously lacking in our education, and much more. With the start of the new year, SOMA has another 365 days to create resolutions that will continue to improve our communities and the lives of those in them.

Spotlight - *Isabella Mazzei, OMS II*

Cassie Hold, OMS-II, Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine, Erie

Meet Cassandra Holub! Cassie is an OMS-II at LECOM-Erie from Chagrin Falls, OH. She currently serves as President of her chapter and is Region I Trustee – Elect for the 2023 – 2024 National SOMA Board! Cassie has been involved in a number of advocacy opportunities, resolutions, and she even helped to charter a new SOMA chapter. Keep reading to learn more about Cassie and her time in SOMA.

Why did you join SOMA?

Full transparency, I joined SOMA because I heard they put on great anatomy review sessions. I had zero intentions of running for a leadership position, and truthfully didn't know what advocacy was! I got coffee with our chapter's SOMA president at the time and told her that I wanted to run for the presidency of ACOS, but she talked me out of that and the rest is history. It wasn't until Spring Conference in DC that I fell in love with the organization and wanted to get more involved nationally.

You've contributed to quite a few resolutions! What have been your favorite so far?

I have to say my favorite resolution so far has been F-22-23. This idea came about in Chicago at our Summer Leadership Meeting over Thai food. This resolution has taken collaboration and brainstorming from different campuses and a lot of research, and we are excited to work with the SOMA Foundation to make the resolution even better and present it in the Spring. This is my favorite because it shows how one idea can bring people together from literally all over the country, and it emphasizes the best parts of SOMA: advocating for DO students and teamwork.

At OMED I believe you made a motion to help another school start a chapter... can you tell me about that?

Yes! LECOM opened up another campus in Elmira, NY last year. One of my good friends from the MMS program is a second year there, and she has spoken wonderful things about their school. After getting to meet the President-to-be and NLO-to-be and seeing their passion for advocacy, the decision was extremely easy to motion for them to be a part of our SOMA family! Already, this chapter has had fantastic participation in our region and had great ideas for the upcoming year. I can't wait to see what they accomplish!

Favorite SOMA advocacy memory?

This wasn't at a SOMA conference, but this past summer I participated in the Summer Institute for Medical Students. At this internship, I attended inpatient rehab programming for patients with substance use disorder, along with patients who had been there for varying lengths of time. On my last day at the rehab facility in our large group session, I vowed to the women I was with that I would spend my career advocating for people with substance use disorder- for people just like them. Right before I left for the day, my "buddy" I was assigned to gave me a big hug and said "Thank you for being an advocate. It gives me hope that there are doctors like you who care about people like me". It was that night (with tears in my eyes, that I wrote Resolution F-22-02.

Thank you, Cassie, for your hard work and dedication to SOMA! We can't wait to see what you accomplish!

NOMINATE AN OUTSTANDING SOMA MEMBER FOR MEMBER SPOTLIGHT [HERE](#)

Olivia Scholes, OMS II

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