

ACADEMIC INSIDER



DHRHealth
Graduate Medical
Education

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DHRHealth

UNDER THE DIRECTION OF



Jessica Martin, MD, MHA
Senior Vice President of Medical Education
Designated Institutional Official

Congratulations to Internal Medicine PGY-2 Resident Dr. Prince Shah-Riar!



Congratulations!

We are proud to recognize **Dr. Prince Shah-Riar**, our outstanding **PGY-2 resident**, for being selected as winner of the **Andy Diehl On Being a Doctor Creative Writing Competition** on behalf of the **Texas Chapter of the American College of Physicians**. His submission **“He Walked In...”** can be found inside!

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

GRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION

EMERGENCY MEDICINE & FAMILY MEDICINE

The **Emergency Medicine Residency Program**, in collaboration with the **Family Medicine Residency Program**, held an **Interprofessional Pediatric Conference at the GME Recreational Center**. This joint didactic session provided residents with an in-depth exploration of key pediatric emergency care topics, including:

- Pediatric Fractures
- Naughty Newborns
- Pediatric ED Pathways
- Rash Decisions

Key speakers — **Dr. Rafael, Dr. Disla, Dr. Lalich, and Dr. Vezetti, specializing in Pediatric Emergency Medicine** — shared their expertise through case discussions and interactive learning activities.

The conference fostered collaboration across specialties, emphasizing **teamwork** and comprehensive care in pediatric emergency medicine. Events like these continue to strengthen interprofessional education and advance the mission of **DHR Health's Graduate Medical Education** programs.



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

GRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION

GENERAL SURGERY



Dr. Gabriel Loor, a distinguished surgeon with expertise in cardiac surgery and transplantation, gave an exceptional *Pioneers in Medicine talk on Innovations in Donor Management for Lung Transplantation*. Our General Surgery residents greatly valued the chance to learn from his knowledge!



Wellness Day: The **General Surgery Program** recently organized its inaugural wellness event of the year, providing residents with a much-needed respite from their rigorous schedules. *This time, the group enjoyed a delightful and creative outing to a paint-and-sip studio, where they had the opportunity to express their artistic talents while unwinding in a nurturing atmosphere.* We are eager to arrange more wellness activities that foster balance and camaraderie among our residents!



The **General Surgery Residency Program** recently hosted the **ACGME site visit for Continued Accreditation**. Our committed faculty, residents, and staff all played a vital role in ensuring the visit was a resounding success. We are excitedly awaiting the final report, which will provide essential insights and guidance to aid us in further enhancing the program!

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

GRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION

INTERNAL MEDICINE

He Walked In...

By Prince Shah-Riar, PGY-2, Internal Medicine Resident, DHR Health, Edinburg, TX

In 2017, I was working in a small hospital in Narshingdi, Bangladesh. It wasn't a major medical center—just a modest facility, staffed by a dedicated cardiologist and a handful of young doctors like me. We had no cath lab. In fact, we were the only hospital in the region with even a basic focus on cardiac care. The nearest advanced centers were hours away: Dhaka, about 60 kilometers behind us, or Mymensingh, more than 120 kilometers to the north, at least three to four hours away, due to high traffic and road conditions.

One afternoon, a man arrived in our emergency department. He had been traveling by bus from Dhaka to Sylhet—a long and tiring journey—when he began experiencing chest pain somewhere along the way. As the pain worsened, he asked the driver to stop. He got off in Narshingdi and walked the rest of the way to our hospital.

I remember how ordinary he looked. He wasn't in visible distress—no clutching at his chest, no collapse at the door, no shouting. Just a man who looked exhausted, with a quiet urgency in his eyes. We brought him in immediately. I remember saying, "Let's get an EKG."

We connected the leads. Seconds later, the machine began printing, and before the tracing even finished, he started to go limp. He collapsed right there in front of us. We began CPR and called a code, but there was nothing more we could do. Within a minute of entering the hospital, he was gone.

The cath lab he needed wasn't here. It was either back where he came from—or ahead, in a city he would never reach.

We called his family. Arranged an ambulance. I remember standing outside as they wheeled him out, zipped in a body bag. He had walked in—and now he was leaving, silent, lying down.

There are moments in medicine that stay with you—not because of what you did, but because of what you couldn't do. This was one of those moments. None of us failed him. But the system did. The distance between survival and loss, in this case, wasn't measured in minutes—but in kilometers and missing infrastructure.

I think about him often. About how the simple act of walking through a hospital door should bring hope. About how his final steps were the last choice he would ever get to make. I wonder what would have happened if he had stayed on the bus. If the pain had started later. If he had walked into a different hospital, in a different city.

That moment, brief as it was, taught me more than any textbook or lecture ever could. It reminded me that being a doctor is not only about knowledge or diagnosis. Sometimes, it's about witnessing the tragedy of being too late—not because you didn't act fast enough, but because the system couldn't act with you.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

GRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION

OBSTETRICS & GYNECOLOGY



Lucinda Hinojosa, MD

We are excited to announce that **Dr. Lucinda Hinojosa** has been chosen to join the **ACOG District XI Junior Fellow Advisory Council** — a remarkable honor that highlights her leadership, commitment to women's health, and dedication to the advancement of **Obstetrics & Gynecology**.

Her participation in this council signifies not just her individual achievements but also her enthusiasm for advocacy, education, and teamwork within our field. We are delighted to witness her ongoing influence on the future of OB/GYN care in Texas and beyond.

Our **Orthopaedic Surgery** residents convened for an informative didactic session facilitated by **Dr. Rodriguez**. The focus of the discussion was on intricate case evaluations, surgical decision-making processes, and evidence-based strategies for **patient care**. *These weekly didactic sessions offer a significant opportunity for residents to learn directly from faculty, share insights, and enhance their clinical reasoning.*

ORTHOPAEDIC SURGERY



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

GRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION

UROLOGY

Our program is thrilled to highlight **Urology Chief Resident Dr. Octavio Herrera**, who had an eventful and inspiring month of September. First and foremost, *we extend our warmest congratulations to Dr. Herrera and his wife, Esmeralda, on welcoming their first child — a joyous milestone for their family!*

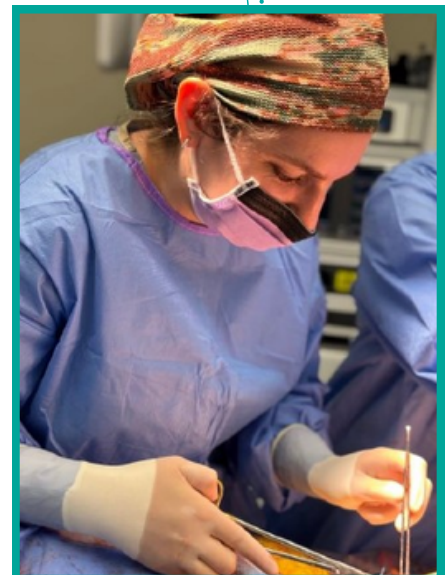
In addition to this exciting personal news, **Dr. Herrera** continues to demonstrate exceptional leadership and dedication to community outreach. On his day off, *he led a hands-on surgical skills workshop for second-year medical students at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley*, providing invaluable exposure to the field of surgery. He also volunteered as a speaker at the **LASER College & Career Fair, hosted by DHR Health, where he presented “Becoming Healers – The Journey Starts Here.”** His talk provided invaluable insight into MCAT preparation and the path to a career in medicine for high school and early-college students.

Dr. Herrera consistently exemplifies what it means to be a well-rounded leader, educator, and mentor — both within our residency program and throughout the community. We are incredibly proud of his continued impact.

We also extend our congratulations to **Dr. Bernardita Ljubetic**, our exceptional PGY-1 resident, who was *awarded a \$1,000 scholarship to attend the 26th Annual Fall Scientific Meeting of the Sexual Medicine Society of North America*, taking place this October. This recognition is a testament to her commitment to advancing research in sexual medicine, and we commend her dedication to academic excellence.



Congratulations!



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

GRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION

The **Surgical Critical Care Fellowship** had an outstanding educational session led by **Mr. Joe Garza, Director of Respiratory Therapy**. Mr. Garza delivered an engaging and highly informative lecture on the respiratory system, bridging foundational knowledge with real-world clinical application.

As part of the session, *our fellow and residents had the opportunity to observe a live demonstration using pig lungs, providing a dynamic, hands-on learning experience.* Featured in the photo are Mr. Garza alongside our **Program Director, Dr. Skubic**, during the demonstration.

We are deeply grateful to our guest lecturers, like Mr. Garza, who generously share their time and expertise. Their contributions are instrumental to the success of our fellowship and to the continued growth of our trainees.

SURGICAL CRITICAL CARE



BARIATRICS



The **Bariatric Fellowship Program's** Journal Club was a great success, bringing together fellow and faculty for a dynamic and engaging discussion. The *session highlighted the fellow's ability to critically evaluate the latest evidence and apply it to clinical practice.* This fostered meaningful dialogue around surgical outcomes. With thoughtful preparation and active participation, the fellow demonstrated both curiosity and clinical maturity, setting the tone for ongoing academic excellence within the program.

Two articles were reviewed. The first article, Evaluating safety and outcomes of concurrent cholecystectomy in revisional and conversion bariatric surgery: **A Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery Accreditation and Quality Improvement Program case cohort analysis of 72,189 patients.** The second article Outcomes of hiatal hernia repair after Roux-en-Y gastric bypass: largest retrospective cohort study to date. The journal club created an atmosphere of collaboration, mentorship, and shared learning. Thoughts from **Dr. Alfred Lopez**, *"This was a great learning opportunity with excellent comradery and discussion on complex bariatric patients. The surgical experience from the surgical attending's enhanced the conversation and provided a wealth of knowledge. This is great"*.

INSTITUTION HIGHLIGHTS

GRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION

OUR TRIBUTE TO VETERANS



DR. HENRY RUIZ



DR. SAMUEL SERNA



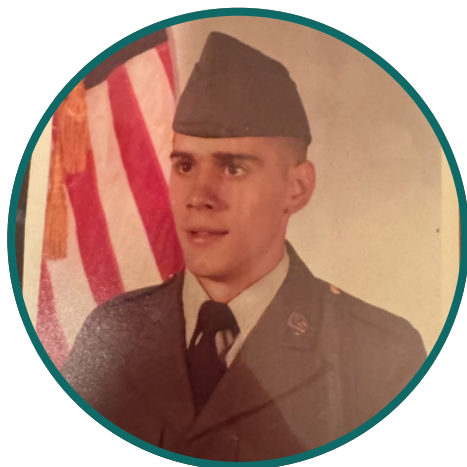
DR. IVAN GARCIA



DR. KIP OWEN



DR. R. DEWAYNE EDWARDS



DR. JOSE MARINA

Thank you

INSTITUTION HIGHLIGHTS

GRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION



Bonding, brotherhood of service to others lasts forever.

Dr. Kip Owen has passed that tipping point. He has finally lapped up enough years in which he has been out of the military as the years he served in the military. Back in 1971, when he was sworn in to the US Navy while at the United State Naval Academy, he walked into an extraordinary place reserved only for those courageous enough to serve and protect the citizens of the United States. It was a stride destined for a very long and enormously successful life of service to others.

Dr. Kip Owen's trajectory through his military career took him to heights that few Americans will ever have the privilege of experiencing. After a model upbringing by his Baptist preacher father and schoolteacher mother, he graduated from the United States Naval Academy in 1975. With a few more years of training under his wings, he was deployed in the Western Pacific on the USS Enterprise in 1978. At that time, he was an F-14 pilot, the Cold War was at its peak and his assignment was to intercept aircraft and defend the carrier. In retrospect, he sees it clearly as a "cat and mouse game," but it is never a game while dealing with an unpredictable adversary. Always ready to protect the United States, Owen and his compatriots in the Navy flew jets with live missiles and guns because they never knew with each flight whether the pilots of the U.S.S.R. were going to fire on them.



Because of his exceptional aviation skills, the Navy selected Owen as an operational test pilot and missile project officer for the F/A-18 Hornet at the VX-4 squadron. He, along with his fellow pilots took the F/A-18 into operational scenarios before releasing the fighter aircraft to the naval fleet and marine corps. The F/A-18 test team pilots were the first to take the Hornet onto an aircraft carrier after engineering clearance flights. Kip Owen had the honor of being only the 13th naval aviator to land the F/A-18 Hornet aboard the USS Constellation. Later in the 1990s, the VX-4 and VX-5 squadrons merged and

"Bonding, brotherhood of service to others lasts forever." – Dr. Kip Owen

After completing his work at VX-4 in 1983, Dr Owen moved to Texas A&M. There he worked as a student worker at the veterinary school while preparing to enter graduate school. When faced with the decision to go to vet school or medical school, he became convinced that he was called to continue his life of service to others. He graduated from Texas A&M's College of Medicine in 1988 and went on to study orthopedic surgery at the University of Arkansas Medical Sciences and then complete a sports medicine fellowship with the team physician's at the University of Oregon. He ultimately moved to the Rio Grande Valley of Texas in 2001 and retired from the military in 2002 (fleet reserve in 2013).

The transition from his military career to civilian life was a long process. A 10 year journey began in 1983 when he left active duty which lasted until 1993 when he began to practice orthopedic surgery. With 27 years in, most of his life had been military affiliated, so it took some adjustment to full time civilian life.

It was in his work as a physician that Owen became acquainted with the Kniesstedt Foundation President, James Kniesstedt. He attended a shooting competition at the Gravick Ranch for the benefit of the Diabetes Foundation. He sees the Kniesstedt Foundation as "a great resource for enjoying nature and wildlife, camaraderie, and insightful instruction." He still visits the ranch for training and hunting because he enjoys the mix of civilians, veterans and professionals whom he meets there. He appreciates the opportunity to reconnect with fellow veterans.

He likes weekend reprieves from the fast pace of life. As both a physician and veteran, he knows that reconnecting with fellow vets can be healing. For those in high stress, active duty situations, it gives veterans a chance to decompress. Whether enlisted or commissioned, there is something extraordinary about the camaraderie among military veterans. Within the vast network of veterans, there exists an undeniable ability to connect because of that special gift of military fellowship.



Dr. Owen recognizes that needs are very different depending on the situations each veteran endured. He, himself, was a cold warrior. Although he experienced a tremendous amount of stress in his job as a fighter pilot, he understands that this is a decidedly different type of pressure than dealing with a hot war. Not having to endure hot action and being able to avoid the horrors associated with a battlefield helped him tremendously in his transition to civilian life. The horrors of war can be very tough for vets to resolve. Interacting with fellow veterans is part of the healing process, and utilizing resources such as the Kniesstedt Foundation is an exceptional opportunity to do so. The ability to divide one's burden by connecting with others can heal a veteran's heart. The ability to relieve another by taking in their story is enormously healing and affirming for the listener as well. Kip Owen puts it rather simply: "The bonding and brotherhood of service to others lasts forever."



Dr. Kip Owen resides in McAllen where he offers orthopedic surgery from the Orthopedic Sports Medicine Center and at Doctors Hospital at Renaissance. When he is not with his patients, he enjoys the Brush Country and time with his wife Paula, children, and 10 month old grand daughter Ryan Kaye Quin.

For more information about Dr. Kip Owen's practice, contact:

<http://www.osmsportsmed.com>

INSTITUTION HIGHLIGHTS

GRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION

Marco Antonio López

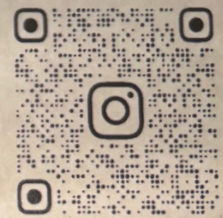
McAllen, Texas (2021)

“Tzayanalli en el Metzli”, “Tepatiliztli”, “Tratando Nehnemi”, are a series of self-portraits created by the artist after suffering a serious injury to his left leg after he rolled an ATV on to it which resulted in Compartment Syndrome, crippling him for months. This collection is a tribute—a visual chronicle of his healing journey after surgery under the care of Dr. Skubic and his dedicated team. Each tlacatl (person) captures a moment of his recovery: the painful yet hopeful days on the hospital bed, the silent relief of slowly walking again, and the grounding determination and joy of making strides towards full recovery. Created with deep gratitude, this body of work honors the expert care received to save his leg and is a testament to resilience, shaped by patience, and the steady pulse of creating while healing.



About the artist

Marco Antonio López is a multidisciplinary artist from McAllen, Texas. His work spans acrylic painting, linoleum block printing, screen printing, jewelry making, flint knapping, papier-mâché, and cosplay. Deeply inspired by Mexica (Aztec) culture, his art emerged from a need to find revolutionary imagery that reflected his own experience—imagery he found missing or misrepresented. Confronting this cultural erasure, López uses his work to reconnect with his indigenous roots and borderland identity. Drawing from Mexica codices and Pre-Cuitlahuac traditions, he blends ancestral symbolism with contemporary and futuristic *temique* (dreams). As a community organizer, he views propaganda as a powerful tool for mobilization, using art to invite others into collective action and cultural reclamation.



@SHIPLEYSART



DHR Health GME Well-being Services

We at GME Cares are now offering well-being support services for those in Graduate Medical Education. Our **GME Behavioral Health Specialist, Dr. Jennifer L. Ortega**, is available for all GME Residents, Fellows, Faculty, and Staff who are in need of support and guidance.

GME CARES hopes that Dr. Ortega can be your **first line of support** when dealing with mental, emotional, and professional concerns. However, should you need further specialized care, Dr. Ortega will refer you to our Comprehensive Behavioral Health Care partners or other support services for further assistance.

Dr. Ortega is available **Monday-Friday from 8am-5pm** for in-person and virtual support sessions.

All support services with Dr. Jennifer L. Ortega are **confidential**.

Support Services Offered:

- Individual and Group Support Sessions
- Consultation & Life Coaching
- Didactics
- Wellness Retreats & Workshops
- Grand Rounds
- Balint Group



“Dr. Ortega is an exemplary mental health therapist, knowledgeable educator and a beacon for compassionate care. Her graduate medical education wellbeing services enhanced my residency experience by promoting resilience through insightful lessons and activities. Her work rejuvenated my mind through reflections, group bonding activities, deep discussions and self-care tasks that taught me adaptive coping strategies and skills to approach patient care. I highly recommend her support services because she is one of the best I know.” - Morayo Ejiofor, MD

For More Information or To Schedule an Appointment:

Email: jennifer.ortega@dhr-rgv.com

Cell: 956-358-4895

WELLNESS SUPPORT

The Comprehensive Behavioral Health (CBH) Department at DHR Health provides free, confidential mental health support, resources, and access to appropriate tools for self-screening for every resident. Counseling services provided to residents and faculty are available Monday - Friday from 8 AM - 8 PM and on weekends from 9 AM - 6 PM.

Call **956-362-2732** or the 24/7 registration department at **956-362-2755** to schedule an appointment.

White Coat Dry Cleaning

- Alternate Fridays - Drop off/Pickup

"DM the DIO" DROP BOXES:

- Located in classrooms and call rooms; encouraged to drop any confidential messages

DHR WORKPLACE SAFETY:

- <https://app.convercent.com/enus/Anonymous/IssueIntake/LandingPage/Oc318ea9-5439-ea11-a972-000d3ab9f062>

RLDATIX SAFETY & RISK MANAGEMENT:

- <https://srm.rldatix.com/landing/DHR/>

CONFIDENTIAL REPORTING PORTAL:

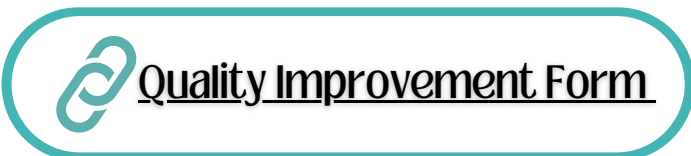
- <https://www.dhrhealth.com/education/graduate-medical-education/confidential-reporting/>

SECURITY PHONE NUMBER: 956-739-0717

- ACGME IR: III.B.7.d).(5) - safety and security measures appropriate to the clinical learning environment site

COVID-19/SICK-DAY PROTOCOL: All staff shall notify Employee Health as soon as they receive a positive test result or request a sick day. Staff may may not return to work until cleared by Employee Health. Clearance includes submission of your "Medical Clearance Certificate" to your program coordinator.

- Phone: **(956) 362-3655**
- Email: EmployeeHealth@dhr-rgv.com



DHR Health - Institute for Research and Development IRB Office

Human Subject Research or Quality Improvement Project:
One-on-One Sessions

- QIP
- Case Report / Case Series
- Research Protocol Development
- IRB Submission



SCAN TO SCHEDULE

For more information, please call/email Liz Elias-Calles Cabanillas

Phone: 956-362-2379
Email: lcalles@dhr-rgv.com