



THE NEW MINORITY FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM-YOUTH SCHOLARS FY 2016-2017

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Minority Fellowship Program-Youth (MFP-Y) at the American Nurses Association (ANA) is pleased to introduce the 2016-2017 scholars.



Halima Al-Khattab PhD, RN, is currently enrolled in the Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (PMHNP) program at Indiana University School of Nursing (IUSON) in Indianapolis, IN. Dr. Al-Khattab

attended Indiana University for her BS in Cytotechnology (2003), BS in Nursing (2009) and PhD in Nursing Science (2016). As a predoctoral student, she was an IUSON T32 Behavioral Nursing Research Trainee, she completed the IU School of Medicine Leadership Education in Adolescent Health (LEAH) training fellowship, and served as a co-coordinator of the interdisciplinary LEAH program. She also received an individual predoctoral F31 fellowship award from the National Institute of Nursing Research.

For her dissertation, Dr. Al-Khattab examined depression management and mental health treatment utilization of African American adolescents by completing a qualitative study with both community-based and clinic-based participants. She is completing the PMHNP program so that she may serve minority adolescents and young adults as a resource in the community, and to enhance her future research. Dr. Al-Khattab intends to pursue postdoctoral training that will focus on addressing mental health disparities of minority youth.



Shin Daimyo, RN, is currently a student at the Yale School of Nursing, studying to become a psychiatric nurse practitioner. He also currently acts as Senior Advisor for Mental Health at Partners In Health (PIH),

providing key service delivery, training, research, strategy, management, and capacity building advisement for PIH's mental health programs throughout the world. He managed the scale-up of community-based mental health services in the

Central Plateau and Artibonite region of Haiti, and acts as Co-Investigator for the scale up of mentoring and supervision of health center nurses to address severe mental disorders in the Burera District of Rwanda. He also provided advisement for the creation and integration of community-based mental health systems into the public sector primary care systems of Lesotho, Malawi, Peru, Mexico, and Russia. He has also advised local NGOs in Pakistan and India to work with local government primary care systems to build sustainable solutions for resource-poor communities with unmet mental health needs, and worked as a Policy Fellow at the World Health Organization. Mr. Daimyo has also authored white papers and policy briefs related to the Affordable Care Act and acted as Director of the Obama Florida Health Care Policy Committee for the 2008 Presidential election. Mr. Daimyo is the first-ever nursing student to be awarded the Paul and Daisy Soros Fellowship, and is a graduate of the Boston University School of Public Health and the University of Southern California.



***Alexandria Davis, RN**, is currently pursuing her Masters of Science in Nursing at the University of Illinois at Chicago to become a Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (PMHNP). Once she

receives her Master's degree and becomes a PMHNP, Mrs. Davis wants to provide psychiatric/mental health services to underserved children and adolescents in a community setting. She hopes to work alongside her husband, a social worker, in this endeavor.

Mrs. Davis earned her Bachelor of Arts in Psychology at Northwestern University. She then completed the Graduate Entry Program at the University of Illinois at Chicago to become a registered nurse (RN). She has eight years of work experience with inpatient children and adolescents as both a mental health counselor

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and an RN, and is currently the charge RN on the adolescent girls unit of a behavioral health hospital in Chicago, IL.

Mrs. Davis is a member of Sigma Theta Tau Honor Society and the American Nurses Association.



Chantel Dawkins, BSN, BA, RN,

is a Master of Science in Nursing-Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner student at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She earned a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree from Winston Salem

State University and received her Bachelor's of Arts in Psychology from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. Prior to attending graduate school, Ms. Dawkins obtained a broad range of knowledge and nursing experience within her nursing career that spans over a decade. Some of her experience is inclusive of child and adolescent inpatient psychiatric units, a male juvenile detention center as well as urgent care.

Ms. Dawkins is very passionate about working with all populations, particularly adolescents and young adults. Her goal is to provide mental health care that is culturally-competent and inclusive of all patients. She is committed to providing mental health care to underserved communities. Ms. Dawkins is a member of the American Nurses Association, North Carolina's Nurses Association, the National MS Society, and Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.



Lori Frias, RN, was brought up in a humble but loving home, in a family that included her parents, seven sisters and three brothers. Early in life, she developed a strong work ethic working every summer as a migrant

worker that included picking cotton and green chili in New Mexico to planting and harvesting onion, fieldwork of sugar beets and sugarcane in Texas and Colorado where they finally settled. Her parents were very old-fashioned, very strict and did not have the means or knowledge of the importance of an education, therefore, their goal for Ms. Frias and her sisters was to get married, which she accomplished at

the age of 17. She is proud to be the first generation in her family to earn a college degree, although it happened later in her life. She has obtained an associate degree in nursing, accepted at UNC for her BSN then accepted at the University of Colorado where she is currently studying to complete the Family Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner program.

She will complete the FPMHNP program by the end of 2016, and will help her community with mental health illnesses and substance use disorders. She is fluent in Spanish language and looks forward to helping the Latino community. Her strengths are the values she learned while growing up that include respect, honesty, compassion, and commitment. This advanced nursing degree will increase her responsibilities and will use her strengths to help patients reach their full potential and quality of life while incorporating health promotion and disease prevention. Ms. Frias would like to reach out to the low-socioeconomic and underserved populations and to improve conditions and opportunities for the youth population.



Joe Garcia, RN, is a first year Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (PMHNP) student at Yale University School of Nursing. Mr.

Garcia currently works for Yale Child

Study Center as part of the Intensive In-Home Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Services (IICAPS) team that addresses the comprehensive needs of children with psychiatric disorders whose families need assistance in managing their behaviors to keep them safe in the home and community. At the Yale Department of Psychology, Mr. Garcia also works as a research clinician in a study that focuses on the effects of CBT and behavioral weight loss in patients who have undergone bariatric surgery.

Prior to his enrollment at Yale, Mr. Garcia served a clinically diverse range of people in the healthcare field. He graduated from UCLA with a B.S. in psychobiology. While on campus, Mr. Garcia volunteered at Ronald Reagan hospital on the pediatric and pediatric oncology units. He worked as a resident assistant for UCLA's office of residential life and developed programs that focused on social justice awareness, leadership, and health. Mr. Garcia also conducted research at UCLA's Department of

Neurobiology that focused on estrogen effects on the brain. He also has experience tutoring youth and community outreach in underprivileged areas around California.

Mr. Garcia enjoys participating in sports in his spare time. As a Health and Wellness Student Government Leader at Yale, he started the first official intramural sports team in Yale School of Nursing's history.

Mr. Garcia hopes the combination of his passion, education, and experience will help him become a well-known leader in the psychiatric mental-health community so that he may have the platform to advocate for under-represented populations throughout the world.



Emily Gitau, BSN, RN, is currently, enrolled full-time at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, pursuing Masters of Science in Nursing to become a Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner, expected

graduation date, May 2017. Emily obtained her Associate Degree in Nursing at Wilson Technical Community College in May, 2007, and earned her BSN at Winston Salem State University in December 2014.

Ms. Gitau's nursing career includes neuro science intermediate unit at Wakemed Health and Hospitals, in Raleigh, NC. Medium Forensics psychiatric unit at Central Regional Hospital in Butner, NC. Psychiatric admission unit at Dorothea Dix Psychiatric Hospital, in Raleigh, NC, now known as Central Regional Hospital in Butner, NC.

Her goal upon graduation is to provide services to minority and the underserved particularly the youth population. She is a member of the American Nurses Association and North Carolina Nurses Association.



***Cheedy JaJa, PhD, MPH, MN, RN**, Dr. Jaja's clinical and health sciences credentials include a registered nursing license, a master of nursing, a master of public health genetics degree from the University of Washington; and a certificate in clinical and

translational science from the Georgia Regents

University. He was the inaugural Pharmacogenetics, Ethics and Public Policy Postdoctoral Fellow at the Indiana University School of Medicine Center for Bioethics. Dr. Jaja's research focuses on sickle cell disease analgesic pharmacogenetics. He is currently pursuing a psych and mental health nurse practitioner MSN program at Indiana University. Dr. Jaja is currently leading a collaborative Sickle Cell Disease (SCD) pilot research project in Sierra Leone, a country currently rebuilding its healthcare infrastructure decimated by a recent Ebola epidemic. The collaborative project will establish an infrastructure for a pilot SCD newborn screening, health maintenance and mental health wellness programs, and a framework within which SCD-related epidemiologic, translational, clinical research and educational initiatives will be developed.



Esther W. Jones, BSN, RN, is currently enrolled at Maryville University's MSN-Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (PMHNP).

She received her BSN from Marymount University in Arlington, VA and also has a BS in Biology from the Xavier University of Louisiana. It is her desire to obtain either a DNP or PhD in Nursing with a clinical practice/research area focusing on women with mental health issues with a special concentration in mood disorders, sexual trauma and abuse in pregnant women and teenagers.

Ms. Jones has also worked as a psychiatric nurse at a local psychiatric hospital working on an inpatient adolescent and pediatric unit and is an International Board Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC) with membership in the International Lactation Consultant Association. She is an active member of Black Nurses Rock, American Nurses Association, American Association of Nurse Practitioners and former inductee in Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing.



***Lisa Persad, BSN, RN**, is a full-time student in Hunter College's Masters of Science in Nursing, Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner Program, and a clinical instructor at the Vocation Education and Extension

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Board(VEEB) School of Practical Nursing where she began her nursing career a decade ago. She is experienced in community health, behavioral health, long-term care, and social services.

Ms. Persad is dedicated to improving the lives of others, particularly minority and disadvantaged youths and young adults. She hopes to address the profound absence of mental health wellness education and preventative programs in minority schools and communities. As a program manager for a homeless shelter, she developed a life-skills workshop for clients that successfully addressed self-awareness, self-regulation, communication, and appropriate boundaries.

Ms. Persad's goal is to help adolescents and young adults find their center, recognize the importance of mental health and wellness and learn tools such as stress management, mindfulness and cognitive behavior techniques to foster self-actualization for themselves and future generations.



Sonata Poon, BSN, RN, is currently pursuing her Master of Science in Nursing in the nurse practitioner concentration with the dual specialization track focusing on Family Nurse Practitioner & Psychiatric

Mental Health Nurse Practitioner. She attends the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. Sonata received her Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Auburn University at Montgomery.

Ms. Poon's nursing experience has included the neonatal intensive care, and she is currently working in pediatrics. She has always had a passion for helping others and fulfilling her purpose by making a difference. Sonata is a member of the American Nurses Association and Black Nurses Rock Incorporated.



Alexis Williamson, BSN, RN, is currently pursuing her Master's Degree as a Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner at Hunter College. She began her nursing career as a nurse assistant and later obtained

certification as a License Practical Nurse. Ms. Williamson has since broadened her professional skills through continuing education and graduated with honors from Rockland Community College where she achieved an associate degree in nursing. She subsequently earned a Bachelor in Nursing degree from Felician College and anticipates her upcoming graduation in the Spring of 2017.

Through personal and professional experiences, Alexis has long recognized disparities in the treatment of individuals with mental illnesses. As a registered nurse, she eagerly began her work in mental health and has worked as a psychiatric nurse for over eight years. Ms. Williamson is experienced in infectious diseases, substance abuse, inpatient and acute psychiatry. By virtue of her career, she has recognized the prevalence of mental illness and substance use amongst minorities. Ms. Williamson appreciates the need for mental health practitioners within these communities. Upon the completion of her master's program and certification as a psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner, she plans to focus her attention on the education and treatment of mental illnesses in adolescent and young adult minority patients and their families, particularly in underserved communities.



Shailoah Wilson, BS, RN, is a current MSN student at Vanderbilt University School of Nursing pursuing the specialty Psychiatric-Mental Health. She began her education in nursing at Vanderbilt last year as a part

of the accelerated program. She also earned her Bachelor of Science in Child Development at Vanderbilt University. She is a full-time student and will graduate in August 2017.

Upon graduation, Shailoah hopes to work with children in underserved areas who have experienced trauma or children who are in the juvenile justice system. She currently serves as president of the VUSN Black Student Nurses Organization and is a member of the American Nurses Association.



Avi Wofsy, RN, is a second-year master's degree student at the University of California San Francisco. Her background is in psychology and adolescent risk behavior research.

Ms. Wofsy's experience includes substance dependence research in the emergency medicine department of a Level 1 trauma center, an HIV clinic that serves clients in the American South, and clinical training at San Francisco General Hospital and Trauma Center.

Ms. Wofsy's research interests include harm reduction models, emergency services recidivism, and mental health care access issues. Her current rotations are a mental health clinic and a public school district in Northern California. She is a member of the American Nurses Association and the Alpha Eta chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International.