



# NEWSLETTER

## Sangamon County Medical Society

May 2025

Dear Members,

As we transition into a new month, I want to take a moment to reflect on the incredible engagements we've had as a society over the past few weeks. It has been a dynamic and inspiring time, full of discussions that are shaping the future of medicine and patient care.

One of the standout events these past months was our forum on Medical Informatics and Artificial Intelligence. This session brought together thought leaders, clinicians, and informaticists to explore the transformative potential of AI in healthcare. From predictive analytics and clinical decision support to ethical considerations and bias mitigation, our discussions underscored both the opportunities and challenges that AI presents. The dialogue was robust, and it is clear that AI-driven technologies will play a significant role in our work as healthcare professionals. Thank you to all who participated, asked insightful questions, and shared their expertise.

Another significant session this past month addressed visa issues faced by International Medical Graduates (IMGs). This conversation was particularly timely, as we examined the evolving landscape of immigration policies and their impact on the healthcare workforce. Our expert panel led by Fazila Vaid provided guidance on navigating the visa process, shared personal experiences, and discussed advocacy efforts to support IMGs in securing positions and practicing medicine in the U.S.

Looking ahead, we have an exciting slate of events planned for the coming months, including our annual Springfield Lucky Horseshoes Baseball event, which is planned for June 24th. This is an event where we will invite new interns from all specialties starting their medical journey here in Springfield and will be an excellent opportunity to meet members of the medical society.

As always, I encourage each of you to engage, share, and lead as we continue to push the boundaries of what is possible in medicine. Thank you for your continued dedication to our mission. I look forward to seeing all of you at our upcoming events.

Best regards,

Shreepada Tripathy MD MBA MS-SA FAAP FHM  
President, Sangamon County Medical Society





# NEWSLETTER

## Sangamon County Medical Society

May 2025

### Sangamon County Burn Regulations

#### Leaves and Other Substances

Donald R. Graham, M.D.

#### City of Springfield

Burning of leaves and other materials in the open air creates particulates that are hazardous to the heart and lungs, especially for persons with asthma, bronchiectasis, COPD, and restrictive lung disease. In the late 1980s, the American Lung Association of Illinois helped spearhead, with the assistance of the Sangamon County Medical Society, an ordinance for the City of Springfield to prohibit burning of yard waste, garbage, construction materials, domicile waste (boxes, packages, etc.), and trade waste (refuse from business, government, or institutional activity).

The only exception is for recreational fire pits, which must be placed at least 25 feet from a structure or combustible materials. They must use only dry wood or charcoal, be smaller than 3 feet in diameter and 2 feet in height. Fire pits must have an extinguisher or garden hose within reach. They must be attended constantly until extinguished (deadline is 11 p.m.) Fire pit burning is not allowed when winds exceed 20 mph, during times of high fire danger, or when it poses an imminent health hazard to nearby persons.

#### Sangamon County Outside of Springfield

Jerome: Yard waste burning was banned in 2008. Fire pits are allowed only with a permit from the village.

Leland Grove: Yard waste burning is not allowed. Fire pits and "small fires" are allowed with village permission.

Grandview: Landscape waste may be burned Wednesday through Saturday from 9:00 a.m. through sunset only if winds don't exceed 15 mph. At least one person age 16 or older must watch fires with a hose or extinguisher nearby.

Southern View: Leaf burning is allowed during daylight hours Wednesday, Thursday, and the first and third Saturdays, except holidays (including Halloween). Burn barrels are prohibited.

Chatham: Yard waste is permitted in areas zoned P-1 from Wednesday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Saturday 9:00-noon. No burning is allowed on state or federal holidays. Wind must be less than 12 mph.



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### Sangamon County Burn Regulations Leaves and Other Substances

**Rochester:** Open burning of yard waste is permitted year round from 8 a.m. to sunset when wind speed is less than 15 mph. The fire must be at least 20 feet from the neighbor's house or vehicle, and cannot be on public streets, alleys, easements, or drainage ditches. Open burning is permitted after dark in grills and supervised fire pits.

**Pleasant Plains:** Yard waste may be burned if weather and safety conditions allow.

**New Berlin:** See local ordinances.

**Sherman:** Yard waste may be burned between 9:00 a.m. and sunset when the airspeed is less than 14 mph only on authorized burn dates (Wednesday, the first full weekend of the month when both the first Saturday and first Sunday occur in the same month; the third Saturday and Sunday of each month) between March 1 and April 30 and September 15 and November 30.

**Rural Sangamon County:** Open burning is permitted for waste generated on site, only if atmospheric conditions will "readily dissipate contaminants" and not create a "visibility hazard." Winds must not exceed 20 mph. Burning of agricultural waste needs to be at least 1,000 feet from residences. Burning is allowed year round. Additional burning for trade or garbage waste may be allowed with a specific Environmental Protection Agency permit.

**Auburn:** Burning of leaves and grass is prohibited. Tree limbs and branches may be burned from sunrise to sunset year round except on federal holidays and Halloween. Violations incur a warning, then a fine of \$100, then a fine of \$250, then \$500.

In short, many regulations in our county address legal burning. For most residents, leaf burning is prohibited. However, many residents live in areas of low population, or adjacent to rural areas where burning is allowed. Smoke drifts, whatever the wind speed is, even if not as high as 12, 14, 15, or 20 mph. Moreover, the numerous jurisdictions in the county have a confusing array of dates when burning is permitted. Hence, the Board of Directors of the Sangamon County Medical Society voted in 1988, 2000, 2024, and in 2025 to recommend to the Sangamon County Board that leaf burning be prohibited in all



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### Sangamon County Burn Regulations Leaves and Other Substances

incorporated areas and regions within one mile of such areas. The winds blow in many directions in this county. When our neighbors in the inhabited areas outside the cities of Springfield, Jerome, Leland Grove, and Auburn burn their leaves, the smoke affects the residents of these towns and villages and their neighbors where leaf burning is not allowed.

In short, many regulations in our county address legal burning. For most residents, leaf burning is prohibited. However, many residents live in areas of low population, or adjacent to rural areas where burning is allowed. Smoke drifts, whatever the wind speed is, even if not as high as 12, 14, 15, or 20 mph. Moreover, the numerous jurisdictions in the county have a confusing array of dates when burning is permitted. Hence, the Board of Directors of the Sangamon County Medical Society voted in 1988, 2000, 2024, and in 2025 to recommend to the Sangamon County Board that leaf burning be prohibited in all incorporated areas and regions within one mile of such areas. The winds blow in many directions in this county. When our neighbors in the inhabited areas outside the cities of Springfield, Jerome, Leland Grove, and Auburn burn their leaves, the smoke affects the residents of these towns and villages and their neighbors where leaf burning is not allowed.

With the recent extreme fires in California, Texas, North Carolina, Florida, additional caution is needed before considering outdoor burning. Remember that leaves and other yard waste can be recycled. Please contact your county board representative to express your support for the health of our community.







# NEWSLETTER

## Sangamon County Medical Society

May 2025

### Legal Essentials for International Graduates Event Vidya Sundareshan, MD

On February 25, 2025 Sangamon County Medical Society hosted an immigration lawyer Attorney Fazila Vaid to talk to us about how to navigate visas for trainees and physicians, who are currently requiring visas.



International medical graduates constitute about 33% of the workforce nationally. Springfield is no different.

This group of our medical community experiences unique challenges and the purpose of this event was to highlight one of the main issues that is inherent to being able to study, work or stay in the United States- visa and status.

So who is an International Medical Graduate (IMG)? By definition this is someone who acquires their foundational training in medicine outside of the United States. There are many US born citizens and

students who elect to obtain a medical degree outside of the United States. They are also IMGs. Most IMGs however are individuals from various countries and continents around the world who value and choose to pursue higher education in the United States. There are many student visas or work visas that people can obtain to come for this purpose. For residency training people mainly get offered a J visa or an H-1 visa. These are different in terms of rules that apply for the IMGs and their spouses or families who will also have a certain status ( J-2 , spouse of J-1, and H4 spouse of H1) while in the United States. These come with their own challenges, limiting opportunities for employment to only places that offer these visas. Spouses may or may not be able to work based on the type of visas and statuses.

The road to start out with in itself is rocky. Residency is competitive although there is projected to be a shortage of 200,000 physicians in Internal Medicine by the year of 2037. One being trained in a different system has to prepare for entrance exams ( USMLE) that all aspiring residency candidates need to pass. Many countries outside,





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May 2025

### Legal Essentials for International Graduates Event

have very different systems of training. Two personal accounts come to mind. As a fourth year medical student, I could rattle out all 11 signs of aortic regurgitation, but that is not what the USMLE tested me on. I had to think analytically to answer multi-level questions and get them correct. I also remember when I started residency, I would be ashamed to use a piece of paper as a memory aid to remind me the details about patients. Training in India, I was expected to know those by heart- imagine my nephrology attending's expression when I said on rounds that the patient's creatinine was around 2. He asked, around 2?



1.9 or 2.4? That's when I realized, it is so important to have the exact details and present correctly. The reliance on computers, ordering so many labs, all new things we learn as transition. The students now are trained in many state of the art hospitals outside of the United States and some programs are ACGME- I, i.e ACGME- accredited programs internationally. Even if someone has completed a residency outside, there are still requirements to repeat 1-3 years based on which state the IMG matches. There are many exciting new pathways for IMGs to transition as they move to the USA for further training and working in health care. Alternate residency pathways and the federation of medical specialty boards are working with Intealth (formerly known as ECFMG) to create broad guidance for all states as these changes come into effect. Many IMGs have to fulfill a two year home rule on J visas considered an exchange visa which means they have to go back to the country if their last residence for 2 years to take back the skills they learned in the USA.



As people move and adapt to a different country, there are challenges. I do acknowledge the world is a global village but culturally there are so many differences. IMGs are a third of the work force but the staff in the medical work force does not have many IMGs. Acculturation becomes important for IMGs as they adapt. I had to learn to say elevator and not lift. Learn to say graduate and not "pass out". Culturally, there are many things which are different. Foreign names are often mispronounced. Dr. WHO?? This would be what I heard many times that I stopped saying I'm Dr. Sundareshan,

# Sangamon County Medical Society

## April 2025

### Legal Essentials for International Graduates Event

Internal Medicine returning a page. I was just known as Internal Medicine and later Infectious Disease. There were so many instances I felt awkward, but the feeling of gratitude always overwhelmed me for this country and its wonderful people accepting me. Recently, when discussing about acculturation for IMGs and cultural awareness for everyone in institutions and organizations, there came up questions of micro and macro aggressions. I think i can safely assume that the IMG community does not speak out about a lot of this. This may add up contributing to burn out and decreased satisfaction at work or fulfillment.

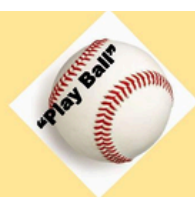
Many organizations and medical societies recognize this group for their unique issues and challenges. There have been many conversations on how to optimize the cultural and intellectual diversity that comes with having people with diverse backgrounds and training in our work force. We are all able to learn and grow.

Some issues identified are mentorship, continuous professional development at every stage of our careers faced with different challenges, navigating visas and employment, cultural sensitivity/ awareness and training, building a community.

I'm an International Medical Graduate and I have called Springfield my home for the last 25 years. SIU school of Medicine is my professional home and is responsible for my intellectual, professional and personal growth. As we continue to work of challenges faced by this group, I want to express my deepest gratitude to the educators, leaders and community at large that welcomed me and other international medical graduates in Springfield.

To watch a recording of the Legal Essentials event, please email [scmsdocs@gmail.com](mailto:scmsdocs@gmail.com)

### Upcoming Events.....



Don't miss the Sangamon County Medical Society Ballpark Outing! Come on out to Robin Roberts Stadium 1415 N Grand Ave and bring the family! There will be plenty of friends food & FUN! Email: [ozma@scmsdocs.org](mailto:ozma@scmsdocs.org) to reserve your seats!



Batter Up!

**Please join us!**  
**Tuesday, June 24, 2025**



Sangamon County Medical Society  
June 24th Social Event at  
Robin Roberts Stadium for the  
Springfield Lucky Horseshoes  
1415 N Grand Ave  
Springfield

Please join us, bring the family and share in the FUN!

- Limited seating, RSVP needed
- Stadium Club....Rain or Shine
- Food buffet & soft drinks included
- SCMS members, SIU Residents, their spouse & their children 18 and under FREE! Students and Springfield Physicians FREE!

"Cashless" bar for adult beverages:

\*Clear Bag Policy (or small clutch)

(Non-SCMS Member Physicians & spouse welcome at no charge; other guests of non-members pay ticket price)

**Take Me Out to the Ball Game**



**Tuesday, June 24, 2025**

**The Springfield Lucky Horseshoes take on the Danville Dans at 6:30 pm**

**Gates Open:  
5:30 PM**

**Food Buffet:  
5:30 - 7:30**

**RSVP Soon!**



# Sangamon County Medical Society

## May 2025

### Events you may have missed.....

In December 2024, SCMS hosted an informative panel discussion on Medical Informatics at Panther Creek Country Club. The event was well attended by Physicians, residents, representatives of both hospital administrations and medical students.

Panelists Shreepada Tripathy, MD, Lance Millburg and Deidre Glisson presented the rising role of AI in medicine.



In January 2025, SCMS invited Scott Reimers, Vice President, State Legislative Affairs Illinois State Medical Society to update SCMS membership on ISMS's activities over the last year and what is on the agenda for the upcoming year.

The event was held at Arlington's in Downtown Springfield.



# Sangamon County Medical Society

May 2025

## What our Students have been up to...

Our student member, Gautami Gallpali took an impactful initiative to raise awareness about the importance of sunscreen. She partnered with SCMS and SIU to create and promote her poster. Below is her letter to the Illinois Times.

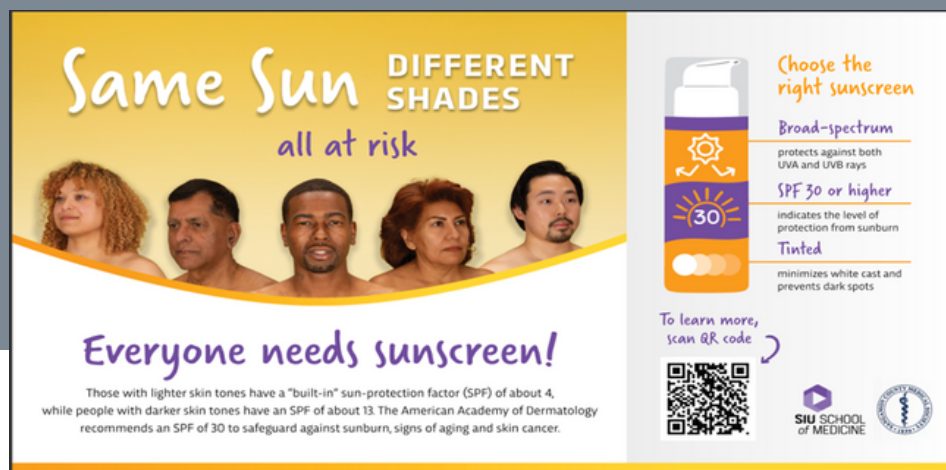
Dear Editor,

As summer winds down, I want to address some common myths about sunscreen and its importance for different skin tones. Growing up in a brown household, I often heard that we don't need sunscreen and that we don't get skin cancer. While the increased melanin in darker skin tones offers more protection, it is not enough. Lighter skin tones have a "built-in" SPF of around 4 and darker skin tones have a "built-in" SPF of around 13. However, the American Academy of Dermatology recommends an SPF of 30 to effectively protect against sun damage. People with any skin tone can develop sunburns, sunspots, wrinkles, dark spots, and skin cancer when exposed to the sun.

Through a project during medical school, I had the opportunity to talk with local communities of color to understand their perspectives on healthy skin, hair, nails, and dermatology. Despite the growing popularity of skincare, it was disheartening to still see misconceptions about sun protection for darker skin tones. When I probed further, individuals shared that they rarely see information about sun protection within their circles, nor do they feel that media advertisements are marketing to them.

As a student doctor, I believe it is crucial for the medical community to clarify the message about sun protection. I proposed the idea of Sunscreen Educational Posters to Southern Illinois University School of Medicine and the Sangamon County Medical Society, and both organizations generously supported this initiative. We recruited community members as models so individuals could see familiar faces sharing this important message. The end goal is to distribute posters to community spaces and share facts about sun protection in a clear, concise way.

Thank you for reading my letter. Here is the poster! Enjoy the rest of your summer and remember to stay safe in the sun!



# Sangamon County Medical Society

## May 2025

### What our Students have been up to...



I'm incredibly grateful to have been chosen as a recipient of the Sangamon County Medical Society Student Grant. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank you for your generosity in funding this grant. Thanks to your donation, I was able to attend the Women in Medicine (WIM) Summit in Chicago, Illinois from September 12th through September 14th, 2024. As a result of attending this conference, I feel more prepared, empowered, and supported in navigating the healthcare field as a woman.

I attended the Women in Medicine Summit as a selected student ambassador. My role was to help facilitate the flow of events during the conference. This included assisting attendees with navigating the conference and getting involved with advocacy projects. In addition, I was able to attend keynote speaker sessions, breakout sessions, and panel discussions regarding pertinent topics about gender disparities in healthcare. Some of the sessions I found most impactful discussed redefining agency in medicine as a woman, preventing burnout and promoting wellbeing, partaking in innovative allyship, and using social media to combat medical misinformation. As part of the designated student preconference, I also received valuable information regarding how to design curricular electives, be coachable, and create an executive presence while networking. Throughout the summit, I had the privilege of meeting several empowering women that became friends, mentors, and role models for me. I was able to develop new and meaningful relationships that I plan to carry with me throughout the rest of medical school and into my future career as a physician.

As a result of attending the WIM Summit, I am more knowledgeable about the opportunities that exist for civic engagement at both the national and institutional level, regarding raising awareness about gender disparity in healthcare. Most notably, I learned about the #HeForShe movement as well as ways to professionally negotiate a salary. I also was educated on options for reproductive life planning, such as egg freezing, IVF, and embryo preservation, and how opportunities exist for these options to be included in job contracts. This topic is so important since most women spend their peak childbearing years in training, yet it is hardly ever discussed within medical education. At the WIM Summit, I discovered the value in women uplifting other women in the medical field. Specifically, I learned strategies to help effectively mentor future women in medicine, which is something I'm passionate about doing in my future practice. By learning about the current research on gender disparities in healthcare at the summit, I feel more equipped to validate future experiences female mentees and peers may experience. I also have an even stronger desire to push for systemic change.

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# Sangamon County Medical Society

## May 2025

### What our Students have been up to...

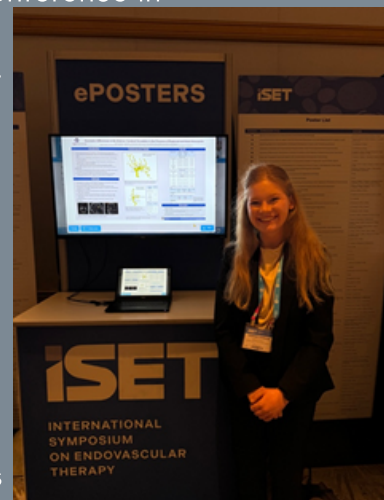
Overall, the WIM Summit provided a very unique and uplifting environment. It allowed me to network with many passionate and accomplished women. It provided me guidance on how to become a stronger advocate, mentor, and colleague for other women in medicine. As Jessica Abo shared, "Someone else following in your footsteps hopes to be you someday, but they can't see you if you aren't out there." Her words continue to resonate with me and ultimately inspire me to embrace the challenge of pushing my own boundaries. Thank you again to the Sangamon County Medical Society for providing the funding that has allowed me to attend the Women in Medicine Summit. I am incredibly grateful to have attended a conference that fosters such a strong sense of belonging, empowerment, and dedication to women in medicine.

Alexis K. Thomas,  
MS4 SIUSOM

I sincerely thank you for your support and financial contribution to my professional and research endeavors. In February, I had the opportunity to attend and discuss my research at the International Symposium on Endovascular Therapy (ISET) Conference in Hollywood, FL. My project, entitled, "Geometric Differences in the Anterior Circulation in the Presence of Ruptured and Intact Aneurysms" was accepted as both an abstract and poster to this conference. This project was completed in collaboration with Dr. Hayan Dayoub, Springfield Clinic Neurosurgery, and several other medical students at SIUSOM.

As a medical student interested in pursuing Diagnostic and Interventional Radiology, this was an especially meaningful experience for me. I was able to meet, converse, and develop meaningful connections with residents, fellows, and attendings within my fields of interest from across the US. In addition to discussing my own work, I had the chance to attend presentations given by leaders within the field highlighting recent advances, view live broadcasts of procedures, and further realize the importance of an interdisciplinary approach for the betterment of patients. I left the conference feeling more excited for the path and work ahead of me. Thank you your support!

- Hannah Johnson,  
MS 3 SIUSOM



# Sangamon County Medical Society

## May 2025

### What our Students have been up to...

In February, I had the incredible opportunity to attend the International Symposium on Endovascular Therapy (ISET) in Hollywood, Florida. As one of the premier global conferences for vascular specialists—including interventional radiologists, the specialty I plan to pursue—this meeting provided an outstanding educational experience. As a third-year medical student, I particularly appreciated the conference's strong emphasis on education. I gained invaluable insight into the diagnosis and management of various conditions, including pulmonary embolisms, peripheral artery disease, renovascular hypertension, and strokes. One of the highlights was the inclusion of live physical exams and cases, which provided real time learning and problem solving from the perspective of experienced clinicians.

Beyond attending lectures, I had the privilege of presenting my research on intracranial aneurysms. Under the mentorship of Dr. Hayan Dayoub, a neurosurgeon here in Springfield, I collaborated with fellow medical students to utilize 3D angiograms for modeling patient cerebral vasculature. Our focus was on how vessel geometry correlates with aneurysm formation in specific locations, such as at the bifurcation of the middle cerebral artery. Presenting this work was both a rewarding and educational experience, and it has further motivated me to continue investigating this topic with the goal of publishing our findings in the near future.



ISET also provides a platform to explore the future of endovascular therapy. In addition to presenting my own research, I had the opportunity to see innovative work from other students, residents, and industry-sponsored studies. I learned about groundbreaking advancements in interventional radiology, including closed endovascular bypasses, deep venous arterialization, and renal denervation. It was inspiring to hear from some of the leading minds in the field as they discussed emerging technologies and their potential to address tomorrow's clinical challenges.

While the wealth of knowledge and research at ISET initially drew me to the conference, my favorite aspect was the people I met. I connected with like-minded medical students who share my passion for interventional radiology, as well as residents and attending physicians—including one SIU alum—who offered valuable advice and mentorship. And of course, I'd be lying if I said I didn't enjoy a few days in the Florida sun!

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# Sangamon County Medical Society

## May 2025

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### What our Students have been up to...

I am incredibly grateful for SCMS's support, which made this experience possible. Attending ISET was not only an enriching academic opportunity but also a milestone in my journey toward interventional radiology. I left the conference feeling more inspired than ever, with new knowledge, connections, and a renewed excitement for the future of the field.

Imadh Khan  
M3 SIUSOM

At the Association of Medicine and Psychiatry 2024 Annual Meeting, I presented a poster entitled "Acute Psychosis and Catatonia Following Abrupt Withdrawal of Buprenorphine/Naloxone: A Case Report". The poster was awarded "First Place Award for the Case Poster Presentation" so thank you for your support. This was my first in-person conference presentation and I wanted to highlight some of the things I learned from my experience and how it will help me in my future career.

Presenting the poster helped grow my public speaking skills, learning to anticipate and prepare for questions, and how to succinctly but thoroughly present a case report while keeping people engaged.

Preparing the poster challenged me to dive deep into the patient's history, remind myself on the mechanisms of drugs that the patient was prescribed, read literature/other case reports on similar cases, and investigate proposed biological/pharmacological mechanisms that would explain our patient's presentation. I feel lucky that I encountered this patient during my psychiatry clerkship and that I learned valuable information that will stick with me forever after seeing this patient presentation in real life.

Listening to the plenary speakers, speaking to program directors, residents, and even other medical students taught me a lot about Med/Psych. A few sessions that stood out to me was on the role and future of AI, psychodermatology, and decreasing bias and information on how to best treat eating disorders. Given that Med/Psych residency is so small/selective, it wasn't a specialty I was familiar with before my psychiatry clerkship but it was exciting to learn more about the intersection of medicine and psychiatry, the challenges they face, and the goals of individuals who are part of this field. Thank you again for your support of my attendance at the Association of Medicine and Psychiatry 2024 Annual Meeting.

Sarah Lee  
MS 3, SIUSOM

# Sangamon County Medical Society

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## SCMS Board Of Directors

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