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In this newsletter:

- The *KHAN*versation
- DoMore24
- Hoopes Medical/Dental Lecture
- DE Mini Medical School Begins!
- Healthcare Student Loan Program
- Become a Member and Stay Connected!

The *KHAN*versation

Merriam-Webster's 'word of the year' is [authentic](#). Decided at the end of the year, it reflects what word people search for most.

And so it follows: In our daily lives as well as our professional ones in medicine and public health, what better quality to strive for?

Yet the meaning of authenticity itself can be elusive- or it can be crystal clear. To truly understand it, one must understand oneself. *Where do we stand? What do we stand for? Whom do we stand up for?* These are the foundational question of values, which define relationships with individuals, communities, and the world.

These relationships writ large are the work of public health: the work we do for communities because we understand the foundational drivers of health: genetics, behavior, environment, and policy. We appreciate how these drivers impact health issues from obesity (e.g.: fast food 'choices', cultural norms, food economics) to smoking (e.g.: neurobiological dependence, media influence, policy choices around availability) to virtually every other public health issue.

These relationships writ small are the daily interactions we have. Whether with patients, where we care for their individual needs as family doctors, pediatricians, ophthalmologists and the like; or with each other as interconnected individuals in a community. Turns out (unsurprisingly) that being kind and considerate to each other reduces the level of anxiety and raises the sense of wellbeing. At a community level, that is a profound (and free!) anxiolytic.

An important note related to authenticity: I focus here on [kind, not nice or convenient](#). And that is by intention. Authenticity must by necessity include truth, however inconvenient; if niceness compromises the truth, then it's actually not nice at all. A difficult truth can be stated kindly (sometimes) but in either case it is the more authentic choice.

Why does any of this matter? Because standing up for the truth (derived through the scientific method of testing inquiry, rigor, evidence, and so forth) is part of authenticity; that value then guides our choices in all aspects of life including as medical and public health professionals. It is freeing as we can be guided by objectivity, not bias. Do we always have to be what we grew up believing? Can we stand up for people who don't look, speak or act like us? *Can we do the right thing when it is really difficult?* What does this look like?

When we get it right, we create multi-dimensional, inclusive, resilient relationships and communities. When we get it wrong: wars happen and they continue for far longer than they should. People, whether in neighborhoods or between countries, fight because of seemingly irreconcilable issues and seeing their enemy as just that - the 'other'. Violence and hatred is no one's value; no one's authenticity. Yet seemingly reasonable people are driven to it and the public health cost of such violence is staggering.

My friend, colleague, and former APHA President [Dr. Barry Levy](#) is one of the foremost thinkers on



preventing war; his [recent book](#) on the topic is worth reading, not just for enumeration of the horrors of war and genocides, but of hope and what we can and must do to prevent war. I highly recommend it. He speaks with an authentic voice, informed by decades of medical and public health work around the world.

A big part of authenticity is also recognizing our need for balance. Play, humor and enjoyment even when parts of the world are burning are not disloyal to others' suffering. We can simultaneously do what we reasonably can to make the world (and our corner of it) a better place, and also participate in simple acts of joy.

Mine usually involve cars, as regular sufferers, I mean, *readers* of this column are aware. There are ways there, too, to demonstrate authenticity. Mine includes choosing to be more connected to the experience through driving mostly cars with a manual transmission, or stick shift. It's quieter in a chaotic world to turn off the music, to stop being on auto-pilot, and actually, actively, drive: brake, throttle, clutch; heel and toe for a downshift, feel the road, watch the cyclists, and use the swivel of my neck as my rear-facing camera or blind-spot warning.

At least one study concludes that stick shifts lead to [less inattentive driving](#). And no, as a scientist I don't believe this one study is conclusive or definitive. But my sample size of one (myself) concurs [biostatisticians' letters of protest will be addressed in the next column].

At the beginning of this new year, then, may we be guided by the same hopeful spirit that leads humanity to persist, to improve, and to arc towards justice. May we protect all children and all communities, not just our 'own'; may we speak with authentic, truthful and kind voices in service of love, and may we always (of course) *drive on*.

Omar Khan, MD, MHS, FAAFP
Editor in Chief, Delaware Journal of Public Health
Chair, Advisory Council, Delaware Public Health Association
delamed.org | djph.org



DoMore24 with The Academy/DPHA



The Delaware Academy of Medicine/ Delaware Public Health Association will be utilizing Do More 24 Delaware on March 7-8, 2024 to raise money for all our programming with the financial goal of \$5,000.

As a supporter of The Academy/DPHA, we ask that you help us meet our goal when the fundraising period begins.

Here is how you can support us:

- 1) Navigate to <https://www.domore24delaware.org/fundraisers/delaware-academy-of-medicine>
- 2) Click "**remind me to donate**" and fill out the required information.
- 3) That's it! You will receive an email reminder **ahead of Thursday, March 7, 2024!**

You can share our fundraising page URL over email, through texts, or on social media and encourage your friends and social networks to support us by making a 100% tax deductible donation. Every donor receives an automated email receipt for their donation.

Hoopes Medical/ Dental Lecture

REGISTRATION:
delamed.org



2024 HOOPES MEDICAL/DENTAL LECTURE

**FEBRUARY 22, 2024
6:00 PM - 8:30 PM**

**John H. Ammon Education Building
Main & Back Auditorium**

4755 Ogletown Stanton Rd, Newark, DE, 19718

Guest speaker
ERIC KMEC, PHD
Executive Director
&
Chief Scientific Officer
Gene Editing Institute

**DRINKS & LIGHT
REFERESHMENTS
WILL BE SERVED**

The Delaware Academy of Medicine/Delaware Public Health Association, ChristianaCare, and the Delaware State Dental Society are pleased to welcome you to the 2024 Frank M. and Robert R. Hoopes Medical/Dental Lecture!

CRISPR and Gene Editing: Dental and Medical Impacts

This year, our keynote speaker will be [Eric Kmiec, PhD](#), Executive Director and Chief Scientific Officer of the Gene Editing Institute.

Eric B. Kmiec, Ph.D., is the founder and executive director of the Gene Editing Institute at ChristianaCare. He is also co-founder and chief scientific officer of CorriXR Therapeutics. Widely recognized for his pioneering work in the fields of molecular medicine and gene editing, Dr. Kmiec has developed CRISPR based genetic therapies for Sickle Cell Disease and Non-Small Cell Lung Cancer. Dr. Kmiec holds faculty appointments at the University of Delaware and The Wistar Institute and has been an NIH and National Science Foundation supported principal investigator

for 35 years. His laboratory has made major discoveries in the CRISPR/gene editing field, and he serves on numerous editorial boards, authoring 169 peer-reviewed publications and books. He has served as primary mentor for 18 doctoral students and numerous postdoctoral scholars. He is Editor-in-Chief of the journal, Gene and Genome Editing.

February 22, 2024

6:00 PM-8:30 PM

John H. Ammon Education Building

Main & Back Auditorium

4755 Ogletown Stanton Rd, Newark, DE, 19718

*There is no cost to attend this educational activity, which is underwritten by the **F.M. and R.R. Hoopes Lecture Fund**.*

When Rob's father and dental partner Frank Hoopes died in 1976, Rob's mother Edna, his family, and donors of gifts for "Dr. Frank," established this lecture fund to provide honoraria for expert speakers to provide continuing dental education in Delaware. While the lectures have been open to the public, actively practicing dentists and physicians are the target audience. Frank Hoopes was ahead of his time in recognizing this need; he was especially interested in medical-dental collaboration.

During his retirement, Rob was engaged in updating the lecture program. The funds are now managed by the Delaware Community Foundation who send an annual donation to the Delaware Academy of Medicine who work with the Delaware State Dental Society to design and present the Annual Hoopes Lecture.

Registration will begin at 6:00 pm, followed by a reception with beer, wine, soft drinks, and hors d'oeuvres until 7:00 pm. The Keynote Presentation will be given from 7:15 - 8:15 pm, with time for questions and answers afterwards.

[Click here to register](#)



This event is accredited for **1.25 AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™** by the Medical Society of Delaware.

DE Mini Medical School- Early Spring 2024

February 6th to March 12th
Tuesdays at 6:30 p.m.

Delaware Mini Medical School

Early Spring 2024 - SOUTH

06

FEB

History of Rehabilitation Medicine

Haresh Sampathkumar, M.D.

Broken Bones and Then Some: The Life of a Pediatric Orthopedic Surgeon

Justin Connor, M.D.

13

FEB

20

FEB

Tackling Head Injuries and Concussions: The Diverse Life of a Neuropsychologist

Felicia Connor, Psy.D. ABPP-RP

Unleashing the potential of your dental degree

Nicholas Conte, Jr., DMD

27

FEB

05

MAR

Genetic Counseling? What the heck is that?

Krista Krol-Buch, MS, LGC

Managed Care Behavioral Health Interventions

Jordan Weisman, Psy.D.

12

MAR

delawareminimed.org

Designed for individuals who want to gain a deeper understanding of the world of medicine, Delaware Mini-Medical School is a free, six-week series. **This series is designed for middle, junior, high school, and undergraduate students, though all are welcome to attend. (Parents, attend with your children!)** Attendees learn about important trends in diagnosing and treating illness and general health topics. Faculty will provide in-depth lectures and allow time for questions to enhance the experience. There are no tests or grades. No previous medical training is required.

Qualifying participants who attend all six sessions of a series will receive a **Signed Certificate of Achievement and become members of the Delaware Mini Medical School Academy.** Attendance is taken via zoom login for this purpose. For students who are unable, or do not want to attend all six sessions, a self-signed certificate will be made available at the conclusion of the series.

[Click here to register](#)

Healthcare Student Loan Program

Attention Delaware Residents Pursuing Careers in the Healthcare Field!

STUDENT FINANCIAL AID AVAILABLE

Healthcare Workforce Initiative



INTEREST FREE LOANS

for Delaware Residents, attending Delaware Institutions of higher learning, who are willing to commit to working in Delaware after graduation for a set period of time.

Loans available for nursing, physician assistant, behavioral health, dental and medical tech, and many more.

Full Details at website.

Application open until funds are depleted



APPLY TODAY!



Funded by the Delaware American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) for shortages in the healthcare field due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Loan amount averages between \$2,500 to \$15,000 annually. Don't let money be a barrier to a rewarding career in healthcare!

TO APPLY, VISIT:

delamed.org/student-financial-aid/

CONTACT:

Giselle Bermudez, MS,
Student Financial Aid Coordinator
gbermudez@delamed.org
(302) 733-1122

Se Habla
Español!

This program is supported by State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds thru the Department of Treasury and State of Delaware [SLFRP0139].



DELAWARE
ACADEMY of
MEDICINE

DPHA
DELAWARE PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION

Since 1930 - making a difference in Delaware

Unlock your potential with the Delaware Academy of Medicine's Student Financial Aid Program!

Don't let securing a no-interest loan* stand in the way of your goals! Are you passionate about nursing, physician assistant, behavioral health, dental, medical assisting, or other healthcare professions? We have great news for you! The Delaware Academy of Medicine's SFA program is here to support your dreams and make your education more affordable than ever before.

Interest-free student loans*

(with a time-limited commitment to work in DE post-graduation based on degree or certification type the loan is financing)

Loan Amount ranges \$2,500 to \$15,000
Funds available until depleted

Apply Now!

Become a Member and Stay Connected!

Want to become a member?

Join today!



[OR CLICK HERE](#)

Additional Resources

Delaware Division of Public Health - [The DPH Bulletin](#)

Trust for America's Health: Wellness and Prevention Digest - [Subscribe](#)

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