

"The good physician treats the disease; the great physician treats the patient who has the disease" – Sir William Osler

Hi Everyone

This week's Departmental Acknowledgement goes to a fourth year pediatrics resident Elisa Ruano Cea who has received an MUHC Director General Award last weekend at a gala ceremony. She was nominated by Louise Auger, Evelyn Constantin and Claire Leblanc and I will reproduce what they wrote in their nomination letters. Elisa's award is for her truly incredible work in advocacy which is something the old and not so old can learn a few things about from the young and younger. I know that I have.

1. Elisa is an intelligent, hard-working, compassionate and selfless young physician who is always genuinely concerned about the welfare of all her patients. She is a strong advocate for those patients most in need, especially the poor and some of the most vulnerable members of our society, children and families newly arrived to Canada as refugees.

In April 2012, Jason Kenney, federal Minister of Immigration and Citizenship, decreed that as of June 30, 2012, over 120,000 refugees would no longer benefit from basic health care coverage provided by the Interim Federal Health Program. This draconian measure would allow only for emergency care and cover only services needed to ensure the safety and security of Canadians, such as the treatment of contagious tuberculosis or the treatment of psychotic patients dangerous to others. It deprived refugees of essential medications such as insulin for diabetics and anti-seizure medications, or treatment for depression and post-traumatic stress disorder. This came as a total shock to all health care providers across Canada and there was widespread objection to these measures, which harshly penalized this very vulnerable segment of society.

Dr. Ruano-Cea had the initiative to take on the task of leading the fight against these unfair measures at the Montreal Children's Hospital. She participated in the writing of a letter which was used by the administration at the MCH to send to the Minister and the other leaders of the federal political parties, voicing strong objection to the measures. She rallied all the other residents in participating in activities to support the refugees by educating them and keeping them updated on all the issues and developments. She suggested to the administration that we prepare a petition for MCH staff and patients to sign. She prepared posters of information to educate personnel and patients about the issues which were kept at the main entrance as well as flyers which were posted at key locations in the hospital. Over 900 people, patients and personnel, signed the petition in less than a week. They were mailed to Minister Kenney in an event which attracted the major Quebec media. She also voluntarily gave interviews to the media pointing out the serious repercussions the decree would have on the health of refugees. The result of her efforts led to a keen awareness of the issues that were previously not well understood at the MCH or its clientele.

Dr. Ruano-Cea is a kind and committed humanitarian totally devoted to the care of the disadvantaged and spares no effort or her own personal time to achieve her goals. She is a wonderful role model not only for her juniors and her peers but for all people who come in contact with her. I think she is most deserving of this prestigious Director General Award.

2. Elisa is an exceptionally caring, ambitious and outstanding pediatric resident who has shown exemplary commitment to pediatrics as well as child advocacy initiatives at our institution and beyond.

I first met Elisa as a medical student when I was on service on the in-patient wards. It was clear early on that she was intelligent, hard-working and driven. Even as a medical student, I remember her to be an excellent clinician and a true patient and family advocate. I was pleased when Elisa started as a pediatric resident at the Montreal Children's Hospital. During her residency, Elisa's goal as a pediatrician-in-training was to make a difference for children and families. She and one of her resident colleagues (Dr. Reem Al-Khalifah) developed an initiative with their resident colleagues called the Residents for Healthy Active Living In Youth (RHALY). This resident-led initiative is unique, innovative and inter-disciplinary. They wished to evaluate formally (as a research study) the impact of the RHALY initiative. I have been working very closely with Elisa and Reem over the last few years and have been very impressed with their outstanding achievements to date.

As Co-President of this initiative, Elisa has been successfully "RHALY"-ing to promote healthy active living at the Montreal Children's Hospital. Elisa is definitely a leader and her devoted and strong leadership skills have shown through all of her work with RHALY and her other advocacy work.

To evaluate the impact of the RHALY initiative, Elisa has developed research projects aiming to evaluate the impact of the RHALY initiative. Elisa's research work (supervisors: Dr. Mylene Dandavino, Dr. Evelyn Constantin) is focussed on evaluating the impact of the RHALY intervention on pediatric residents behavioural intentions around healthy active living counselling. Elisa has a clear vision for the future of the RHALY Initiative and is currently working on the RHALY-Outreach program, which will target children of all ages and focuses on branching out to the Montreal Community and Provincial health centres.

In summary, Elisa is a dedicated, passionate and hard-working resident. She is proactive and possesses excellent leadership skills, as is evident by the success of the RHALY initiative. She has led a cohesive and motivated group of residents for this RHALY Initiative with the utmost grace and respect for all. Elisa's perseverance and enthusiasm has led her to expand the RHALY Initiative by pursuing and leading the RHALY Outreach program.

Elisa has done an amazing job at balancing her rigorous clinical workload, with her research program and her advocacy work and she does it all with passion, with a smile and with all of her heart. Elisa's ambition and commitment to pediatrics and the improvement of education for trainees and the community is very admirable. Her ultimate goal is to improve the care of children in the hospital and the community. I am confident that Elisa will continue to be an exemplary advocate for children's health and well-being.

The good news is that Elisa will be joining our Division of General pediatrics as an attending staff upon completion of her formation complementaire.

Have a great weekend everyone

Michael