

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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RUTGERS NEW JERSEY MEDICAL SCHOOL TO HOST CONVOCATION CEREMONY

NEWARK, N.J.—On **Monday, May 16**, 163 students will receive their medical degrees from Rutgers New Jersey Medical School (NJMS) in the school's 56th convocation ceremony. **The ceremony will begin at 10 am at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center in Newark.**

The NJMS convocation ceremony is a time-honored event that recognizes and celebrates the achievements of the school's graduates. The ceremony will be presided over by Dean Robert L. Johnson, M.D., FAAP, The Sharon and Joseph L. Muscarelle Endowed Dean.

The keynote address will be delivered by Debbie Salas-Lopez, MD, MPH, FACP, Associate Chief Medical Officer, Lehigh Valley Health Network and Professor of Medicine, University of South Florida Morsani College of Medicine and College of Public Health. Dr. Salas-Lopez is former NJMS Division Chief of Academic Medicine, Geriatrics, and Community Programs and a 1996 graduate of NJMS. During her time in Newark, she also made positive contributions to the city as medical director for the FOCUS Community Health Center where she helped scores of Newark residents in need of healthcare.

NJMS students will also take part in the Rutgers University commencement ceremony on May 15 where US President, Barack Obama is the keynote speaker.

MEDICAL STUDENTS WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR INTERVIEWS

Laura Baldaji-Garcia, MD'16, resident of Union City, born in Cuba, graduated from Cornell with a Spanish Literature degree. Laura completed a post-baccalaureate program at Harvard and will graduate from NJMS as a Humanism Fellow and a member of the Gold Humanism Honor Society.

Chandler Christophe, MD'16, a resident of West Orange, graduate of St. Benedict's Prep in Newark and Rutgers School of Arts and Sciences'11, was mentored by Owano Pennycooke, an NJMS alumnus who is now a vascular surgeon. The mentoring was not just about medicine; according to Pennycooke, "It was about life" he helped Christophe with the balance between family obligations and the rigors of medical school. Christophe matched into his number one choice to practice Family medicine at Boston University. He is a member of the Gold Humanism Honor Society.

Moorice Caparo, MD'16 born in Callao, Peru, immigrated to the U.S. at the age of 14. His family settled in Paterson where he was raised in a single parent home. Caparo attended Panther Academy, an inner-city magnet school focusing on science and technology. He excelled academically and won admittance to Johns Hopkins University, where he was elected a Bloomberg scholar in 2011. He was accepted to NJMS as an early decision candidate for the class of 2016. Caparo has “matched” to a residency in physical medicine and rehabilitation at Harvard beginning in June.

Deborah Horenstein, MD'16 who once had a career in finance, graduates from NJMS as a humanism scholar. At a time when many people are at the prime of their career, Deborah is just beginning hers. After raising three children, she will become a doctor at this stage of life – mainly because of her youngest daughter, Ariella, who died at the age of 8 1/2 following a bone marrow transplant in 2007.

Erica Pimenta, MD'16, a Portuguese immigrant, is an MD/PhD candidate who has been described as “brilliant.” She graduated from Rutgers with a BA in 2009 and earned her PhD from Rutgers in 2014. She did undergraduate research at the Cancer Institute of New Jersey; and has continued research into breast cancer during her years at NJMS. Her family came to the U.S. to seek better medical care for her ailing grandmother, who died shortly after they arrived in this country. Erica will be honored with the Stanley S. Bergen, Jr., MD Medal of Excellence during the convocation ceremony.

About New Jersey Medical School

Celebrating over 61 years of service, NJMS was founded in 1954 and is the oldest school of medicine in the state. Today it is part of Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey and graduates approximately 170 physicians a year. In addition to providing the MD degree, NJMS offers MD/PhD, MD/MPH and MD/MBA degrees through collaborations with other institutions of higher education. Dedicated to excellence in education, research, clinical care and community outreach, the medical school comprises 21 academic departments and works with several healthcare partners, including its principal teaching hospital, University Hospital in Newark. Its faculty consists of numerous world-renowned scientists and many of the region’s “Top Doctors.” Home to the nation’s oldest student-run clinic, NJMS hosts 27 centers and institutes, including the Public Health Research Institute Center, the Global Tuberculosis Institute and the Neurological Institute of New Jersey. In 2015, NJMS was named the #1 NIH funded institution in the state of New Jersey.