

2015 NJME/CFSA Medical Scholar

Veeraraghavan J. Iyer, M.D.

Dr. V.J. Iyer, a second-year medical resident at the New Jersey Medical School received the 2015 New Jersey Myalgic Encephalomyelitis/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome Association's Medical Scholarship at Grand Rounds on May 20, 2016. Of all the essays received from both Medical Students and Medical Residents, Dr. Iyer's essay was judged to be the best response to the specific ME/CFS-related question all applicants needed to address as part of their applications. As a medical resident, Dr. Iyer received a \$5,000 cash award to help defray his medical school tuition expense. Medical students who win the award receive a \$5,000 tuition remission applied directly to their current academic year's tuition.

The NJME/CFSA Medical Scholarship program encourages both medical students and medical residents to learn about ME/CFS - a condition affecting somewhere between 800,000 and 2.4 million Americans but rarely mentioned in medical school curricula or textbooks. Each year, a new essay question is provided so that medical students and residents may participate in an individualized, ME/CFS learning experience as they complete the scholarship application process. Previous applicants, who did not receive the award, are eligible to reapply provided that they are either still in medical school or participating in a medical residency program in New Jersey. The applicant's essay must be in journal submission format: contain statements that are documented with citations from the current, peer-reviewed, medical literature. By completing the scholarship application process, applicants expand their medical education by learning about this illness which, based upon the



Dr. V.J. Iyer (left) receives NJME/CFSA Medical Scholar Award from Dr. K.J. Friedman (right), Medical Scholar Committee Chair.

large number of patients having the illness, they are likely to encounter during their medical careers. Since some of these future healthcare providers will practice in New Jersey, the organization's aim is to provide a ME/CFS-literate cadre of physicians capable of treating NJ's ME/CFS patients.

The NJME/CFSA Medical Scholarship program is the only program in existence offering an ME/CFS educational scholarship to medical students and medical residents in the United States and, to our knowledge, in the world. The organization offers assistance to other organizations or institutions desiring to start similar programs. Individuals wishing to increase the incentive for medical students and residents to apply to the NJME/CFSA Medical Scholarship program are welcome to contribute to the Medical Scholarship Fund or its endowment fund and thereby increase the size of current or future awards. For further information please contact the Medical Scholarship chair via the NJME/CFSA website (www.njmecfsa.org) or by sending an email to the Medical Scholarship Committee Chair: kenneth.j.friedman@gmail.com