



PRESS RELEASE

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AMERICAN SOCIETY OF NEPHROLOGY ANNOUNCES 2023 LOAN MITIGATION PILOT PROGRAM RECIPIENTS

SIX AWARDEES REPRESENTING DIVERSE COMMUNITIES UNDERSCORE COMMITMENT TO BUILDING EXCELLENCE IN NEPHROLOGY

Highlights

- The American Society of Nephrology (ASN) introduces six new recipients of its Loan Mitigation Pilot Program, which provides \$50,000 in financial support for trainees entering the field of nephrology.
- ASN has committed \$2,700,000 to this innovative five-year pilot program, extending its commitment to dismantling systemic racism in nephrology and promoting equal opportunities for future nephrologists.
- More than 37 million Americans suffer from chronic kidney conditions and acute diseases, with Black, Hispanic, and Asian communities affected more than the non-Hispanic White community.
- Kidney diseases are the ninth leading cause of death in the United States, yet 90% of people with kidney diseases are unaware that they are affected.

Washington, D.C. (April 6, 2023)— The American Society of Nephrology (ASN) today announced its 2023 Loan Mitigation Pilot Program (LMPP) recipients.

Each recipient will receive \$50,000 to reduce their loan burden over three years. Together, these awardees represent the diversity of needs within the growing nephrology community, with specifics on pediatrics, physiology, technology, and social determinants of health.

Established in 2021 with a commitment of \$2.7 million in awards, the ASN LMPP extends the society's commitment to dismantling systemic racism and promoting equal opportunities for all nephrologists to better serve the entire kidney community. Year 2 awards center on individuals historically underrepresented in medicine, who, for this program, are defined as those who self-identify as African American/Black,

Hispanic/Latinx, American Indian/Alaskan Native, and or Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander.

This year's recipients include:

Bianca Saenz, MD

Dr. Saenz is a pediatric resident with the Baylor College of Medicine Program in Houston at Texas Children's Hospital. She is from Mission, Texas, located at the Texas-Mexico border region known as the Rio Grande Valley. Dr. Saenz completed her undergraduate education at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley and is an alumnus of the University of Texas Medical Branch-Galveston, where she completed her medical school training.

As a resident, Dr. Saenz has found that nephrology suits her curious nature. Her current professional interests include pediatric lupus nephritis, neonatal nephrology, quality improvement in pediatric renal transplantation, and recruitment of diverse applicants.

Dr. Saenz looks forward to becoming a pediatric nephrologist to advocate for a special population of children. As her hometown is set in a predominantly Spanish-speaking medically underserved area, she hopes to represent her community well and further contribute to better access to pediatric nephrologists.

Christel Wekon-Kemeni, MD

Dr. Wekon-Kemeni (*known to his patients as Dr. Dub*) is a Chief Resident in the Department of Pediatrics at the University of North Carolina and is from the Hampton Roads metropolitan area of Virginia. He earned his undergraduate degree from the University of Miami, his medical degree from the Wake Forest University School of Medicine, his residency training in Pediatrics at the University of North Carolina, and his board certification in General Pediatrics in the Fall of 2022.

He is the creator of the [Black Man, M.D. Blog](#), a blog originally created to document his experiences throughout his medical training that has since evolved into an entity designed to inspire others by sharing helpful information about becoming a medical doctor, highlighting minority health care students and professionals, providing scholarships to minority high school students, and more.

Dr. Wekon-Kemeni will begin his fellowship training in Pediatric Nephrology at Emory University/Children's Healthcare of Atlanta, where he will further pursue his interests in

medical education, advocating for underserved populations, and increasing access to equitable health care.

Jordy Salcedo-Giraldo, MD

Dr. Jordy Salcedo-Giraldo is a third-year Pediatric Resident at St. Christopher's Hospital for Children. He completed his undergraduate training in Biochemistry at Lehigh University, followed by medical education at Drexel University College of Medicine in Philadelphia. After residency, he will be continuing his training in Pediatric Nephrology at Children's National in Washington D.C.

Kettia Nephtalie Guillite, MD

Dr. Kettia Nephtalie Guillite is currently a third-year internal Medicine resident at Nassau University Medical Center. She was born and raised in Haiti and moved to Florida in 2010, where she attended Palm Beach State College and Florida Atlantic University and completed undergraduate studies in liberal arts with a concentration in biochemistry. She obtained her medical degree from St Georges' University. Since the early years of medical studies, she has had a particular interest in kidney physiology and decided to pursue a fellowship in nephrology.

Rafael Portela- Colon, MD

Dr. Rafael Portela- Colon is a PGY-3 Internal Medicine Resident at Cape Fear Valley Medical Center and an incoming nephrology fellow at Penn State Milton S. Hershey Medical Center. Born in Puerto Rico, he completed his bachelor's degree in molecular biology at the University of Puerto Rico at Rio Piedras and subsequently completed his doctoral degree at the University of Puerto Rico School of Medicine. He will continue his academic journey at the Penn State Milton S. Hershey Medical Center. His areas of interest include diuretic resistance and home dialysis. He also feels passionate about health care disparities and plans to be an advocate of accessible health to minority groups, especially his Latino community.

Yaritzky Astudillo, MD

Dr. Yaritzky Astudillo is an incoming pediatric nephrology fellow at Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago. A native New Yorker, she completed her undergraduate studies in Biology at SUNY Stony Brook, followed by medical school at the New York Medical College and residency at Maria Fareri Children's Hospital. Dr. Astudillo is a passionate advocate for children's health, understanding social determinants of health, and advancing health equity. She is excited to begin her fellowship training and looks forward to exploring many nephrology interests.

For more information, please visit www.asn-online.org/education/training/lmp/

About ASN

Since 1966, ASN has been leading the fight to prevent, treat, and cure kidney diseases throughout the world by educating health professionals and scientists, advancing research and innovation, communicating new knowledge and advocating for the highest quality care for patients. ASN has nearly 21,000 members representing 140 countries. For more information, visit www.asn-online.org and follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [Instagram](#).

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