

THE INSIDE SCOPE

IMPORTANT DATES



May

5/12: New Rotation Starts

5/18: Recruitment Committee
Applications Open

5/24: Recruitment Committee
Applications Close

June

6/1 Preferences Sign-up Open

6/6 ATC Applications Open

6/8 Preferences Sign-up Closes

6/9 Staff Applications Open

6/14 ATC Applications Close

6/22 Staff Applications Close

August

8/10: Rotation Ends



A Message From Program Management

Dear Care Extenders,

We'd like to extend a warm welcome to all of our Care Extenders. Thank you for choosing to dedicate your time and energy to helping others in our community. Your generosity and compassion will make a positive impact on the lives of many, and we are grateful for your support. As a Care Extender, you are part of a team of volunteers who provide a variety of services and support to those in need. Whether you are assisting patients, families, or staff, your contributions are invaluable and greatly appreciated. We recognize that volunteering can be a demanding role, but it is also a rewarding one. Your commitment to making a difference in the lives of others is an inspiration to us all, and we look forward to working alongside you to create positive change in our community.

Thank you again for your dedication to our organization, and we are thrilled to have you as part of our team.

Sincerely,

Silva Thomas & Annie Guemidjian



Care Extenders of the Rotation!



TAYLOR DONATO
RRH GREETERS B



BRYAN RAMIREZ-CHAVEZ
SMH GREETERS A



MICAH TAW
RRH PP



ALEXANDER GERTLER
RRH 6W



JENNIFER RAMOS DIAZ
RRH 6W

Advice from CEs of the Rotation



Hi new Care Extenders! My advice is to spend your time wisely. Make real connections with everyone, especially the amazing team of nurses, care partners, and information desk workers. Don't be afraid to ask questions and seek opportunities. You are here for you. Be brave!

- Taylor Donato

Keep in mind that someone might be going through a tough time. A simple act of kindness can make a difference. When you knock on the door and introduce yourself, put on your best smile; you never know if that person is feeling down. Be your genuine self and don't be afraid to step out of your comfort zone because that is how growth happens. Take advantage of every opportunity to grow!

- Bryan Ramirez-Chavez

I would encourage incoming volunteers to be intentional about their learning experience by asking questions and actively looking for ways to serve without being asked. I am excited for the next set of CE's volunteering in PostPartum. You are going to have an incredible experience!

- Micah Taw

Treat every shift as an opportunity to learn something new. Be curious and proactively build relationships with the staff by staying engaged, asking thoughtful questions when appropriate, and offering help. Your attitude and initiative shape your experience more than anything else.

- Alexander Gertler

Take the time to get to know the staff members you'll be working alongside. Learn their names, observe how they communicate and operate as a team, and interact with them respectfully and professionally each day. These small efforts can go a long way in building trust and establishing yourself as a dependable part of the unit.

- Jennifer Ramos Diaz

The CE Perspective

Q: When did you join the Care Extender Program?

A: I've been a part of the program for three years! I started the summer of 2022.

Q: What have been your favorite departments?

A: I've only volunteered at RRH, even though I'm a Department Coordinator for SMH, but my top three departments are Pediatrics, Radiology and the Cardiac Cath Lab.

Q: How has Care Extenders helped you reach your future goals?

A: This program reaffirmed that I want to be in the healthcare field through its many memorable experiences. I really liked being able to rotate through departments and was able to volunteer in a lot of different ones. Getting to ask the hospital staff about their job, responsibilities, and career advice, helped me see how there is a variety of healthcare careers you can pursue. Before I joined the program, I was intimidated by healthcare as a whole and wasn't exactly sure if it was something I wanted to pursue. While rotating however, I saw how thoroughly you're trained and that you're never making a decision alone; there's a lot of teamwork that goes into working in healthcare, which I really liked. Now, my current goal is to become a doctor.

Q: What advice do you have for those who are considering applying for the program?

A: If you are considering applying for the program, but aren't sure if you want to pursue a career in healthcare/what exactly you want to do in healthcare, apply anyway! The program isn't just for pre-meds, it's for those who are interested in going in the healthcare field. There's lots of opportunities to ask different professionals about their careers and the path they took to get where they're at right now. It's also a great way of getting exposed to different departments within a hospital and see the different work environment and culture in each area. The CE program was personally a great experience for me, so I encourage everyone to apply!



Q: How long have you been a Staff Member?

A: I've been a staff member for a year now, I'm a Department Coordinator for both the Surgery Center & GI Lab at Santa Monica!

Q: What experiences have you had as a Staff Member that you wouldn't have gotten as a general care extender?

A: Being on staff gives you a community of like-minded peers who are super kind and supportive of each other! As a general CE, you don't get many chances to know fellow volunteers due to the nature of shifting. I've gotten to meet other staff members, and exchange program experiences, career and school advice, and just life in general.

Q: What has been a particular shift/event that has been memorable to you?

A: One shift that was memorable was when I was volunteering in the RRH Pediatrics department. There was a younger kid/toddler that constantly wanted attention, but the nurses and care partners were unable to stay with him the entire time, since they're pretty busy and had other patients to check on. I think he had a single mother that was doing her best to take care of him, but she couldn't stay with him very long or visit him often due to her work. I think I spent most of my shifts helping out with answering the phone/call light for the first half, then keeping the toddler company for the second half. We played a bunch of games and watched cocomelon together. After a few weeks, he was finally ready to be discharged and my shift coincided with his last day at the department, when his mom was also there with him. When I went to go check on him and say bye, he ran up to me and gave a hug, which absolutely melted my heart. It was so cute and I hadn't realized that he had grown attached to me like that. His mom also said that she's never seen him act like that with any of the hospital staff and thanked me, which was super nice as well.

Cindy Ly is a UCLA graduate and serves as the DC for both the Surgery Center & GI Lab at SMH

Department Highlights

RRH- Hospitality (Greeters)



All first rotation Care Extenders are required to volunteer in the Greeters department, also known as Hospitality. During this time, CE's serve as the face of the hospital, a vital role that allows them to engage with guests and visitors while also learning more about the hospital's layout.

Care Extenders can choose between Greeters A, B, or C, each aiding in the vital role of enhancing the patient and visitor experience. In Greeters A, volunteers assist in the Emergency Department Waiting Area and External Triage, which can be very valuable for those interested in some of the behind-the-scenes work in managing ED settings. Meanwhile, Greeters B has a more technological approach to assisting- checking visitors in, looking up room numbers, and printing visitor badges- at the front of the hospital. Finally, Greeters C serve as the "wayfinders", by walking patients to specific departments, floors, or rooms and helping them locate the nursing desk there.

Regardless of which Greeters a volunteer is placed in, they are usually one of the first points of contact when visitors enter a hospital; thus, they are responsible for maintaining a welcoming demeanor, helping with directions, and above all, making others feel comfortable.

When asked about her experience in working in RRH's Hospitality, Anetra Burkes stated, "I started out as a volunteer here while I was working. It just felt so welcoming, that I decided to quit my job so I could do this full time. It feels so good to meet different kinds of people and learn something new every day."

Monica Montoya also expressed a similar perspective, stating how their role must uphold the values of UCLA. "We're really big on CICARE, which stands for connect, introduce, communicate, answer, respond, and exit. We really want to highlight that in our interactions, connections, and relationships with the patients and visitors. Even though they're brief, we do our best to make it a welcoming experience."

For volunteers, it presents them with an additional opportunity to further understand the hospital, aside from their department. Rosalia Park, a first-rotation CE in Greeters said, "I really enjoy it, because it's very different from what I do in the postpartum department. Here, I like getting to interact with the visitors who come to see the patients, and being able to sign them in and check them in. It helps me get used to the fast pace of working in the medical field."

In terms of advice for incoming greeters, Montoya suggested, "Just remain eager. Open minded. We have different areas that we might ask for your support, not always necessarily behind the computer. Everything that we ask of you, is to help contribute to the experience of a visitors and patients, so just be mindful that you're here to make a positive impact."

All Care Extenders on their 1st rotation are required to volunteer in Greeters A,B, or C. It consists of two-hour shifts with variable days and times.

SPACE MEDICINE

WHAT IS SPACE MEDICINE?

SPACE MEDICINE IS A SUBSPECIALTY OF EMERGENCY MEDICINE WHICH EVOLVED FROM THE AEROSPACE MEDICINE SPECIALTY. SPACE MEDICINE IS DEDICATED TO THE PREVENTION AND TREATMENT OF MEDICAL CONDITIONS THAT WOULD LIMIT SUCCESS IN SPACE OPERATIONS.

HISTORY OF THE FIELD

IN 1960S-1970S, EXTENSIVE RESEARCH WAS CONDUCTED DURING MERCURY, GEMINI, AND APOLLO MISSIONS- FINDING KEY CONCERNS IN ASTRONAUTS SUCH AS CARDIOVASCULAR CHANGES, BONE AND MUSCLE LOSS, AND RADIATION EXPOSURE. ONCE THE INTERNATIONAL SPACE STATION (ISS) WAS ESTABLISHED, IT PROVIDED A LONG-TERM RESEARCH PLATFORM TO STUDY MICROGRAVITY EFFECTS ON THE HUMAN BODY. NOW, SPACE MEDICINE CONTINUES TO EVOLVE AS AGENCIES LIKE NASA, ESA, AND PRIVATE COMPANIES LIKE SPACEX PUSH THE BOUNDARIES OF HUMAN SPACEFLIGHT.

POTENTIAL CAREERS

- AEROSPACE MEDICINE PHYSICIAN (FLIGHT SURGEON)
- SPACE BIOMEDICAL RESEARCHER
- SPACE PSYCHOLOGIST
- BIOMEDICAL ENGINEER (SPACE MEDICINE TECHNOLOGY)
- SPACE PHARMACOLOGIST

Physician Q&A



Dr. Aintablian is an emergency physician, flight surgeon, and co-founder and director of the UCLA Space Medicine Program.

How long have you been an emergency physician?

I graduated residency in 2022, and did my fellowship immediately after, so I've been practicing for three years now.

What kind of education and training did you go through to get to where you are today?

Education wise, I had an early start because I was able to graduate high school early at 15, which really helped. I went to college, and then I got a master's in molecular genetics and biochemistry, just because I love that field, I felt like it was fascinating to learn about. Then I went to med school, did residency at UCLA, and research for NASA. During residency, I had the opportunity to build the space medicine program through my interactions with people in the field and understanding that we needed a field of physicians that could go up into space and provide medical care for these very high-risk expedition style missions.

What is the most rewarding aspect of your job?

The most rewarding aspect for me is that I get to be a part of something way bigger than myself, both in the ER and with space medicine. As an emergency physician, I get to help people every single day. I get to do a morally-sound, incredible job where I change people's lives, or bring them back and help them maintain their lives. And that's just part of my job. It's such a fulfilling career. For space matters, I get to contribute to the advancement of the human species by helping us get humans to Mars, or just getting us up into space. It's the next evolution of our species, and I get to contribute to that in a very, very meaningful way.

What does a typical day in your job look like?

For me, things are a little different because I do space medicine work as well. I work as a flight surgeon for the private space industry. So it depends on the week or the month whether I work a clinical shift or do space related work. If we have crewed missions (rockets with humans on them) coming up, I'll dedicate my time to this - either helping with launch or landing, or being in mission control. If there are no crewed launches with humans on it that week, then I'll be doing more clinical work in the hospital. I also oversee the space medicine fellowship, so my day is always busy. I probably work around 70 hours a week. I call it work, but I don't think I'm working a minute of my life. I'm enjoying every single second of everything that I do.

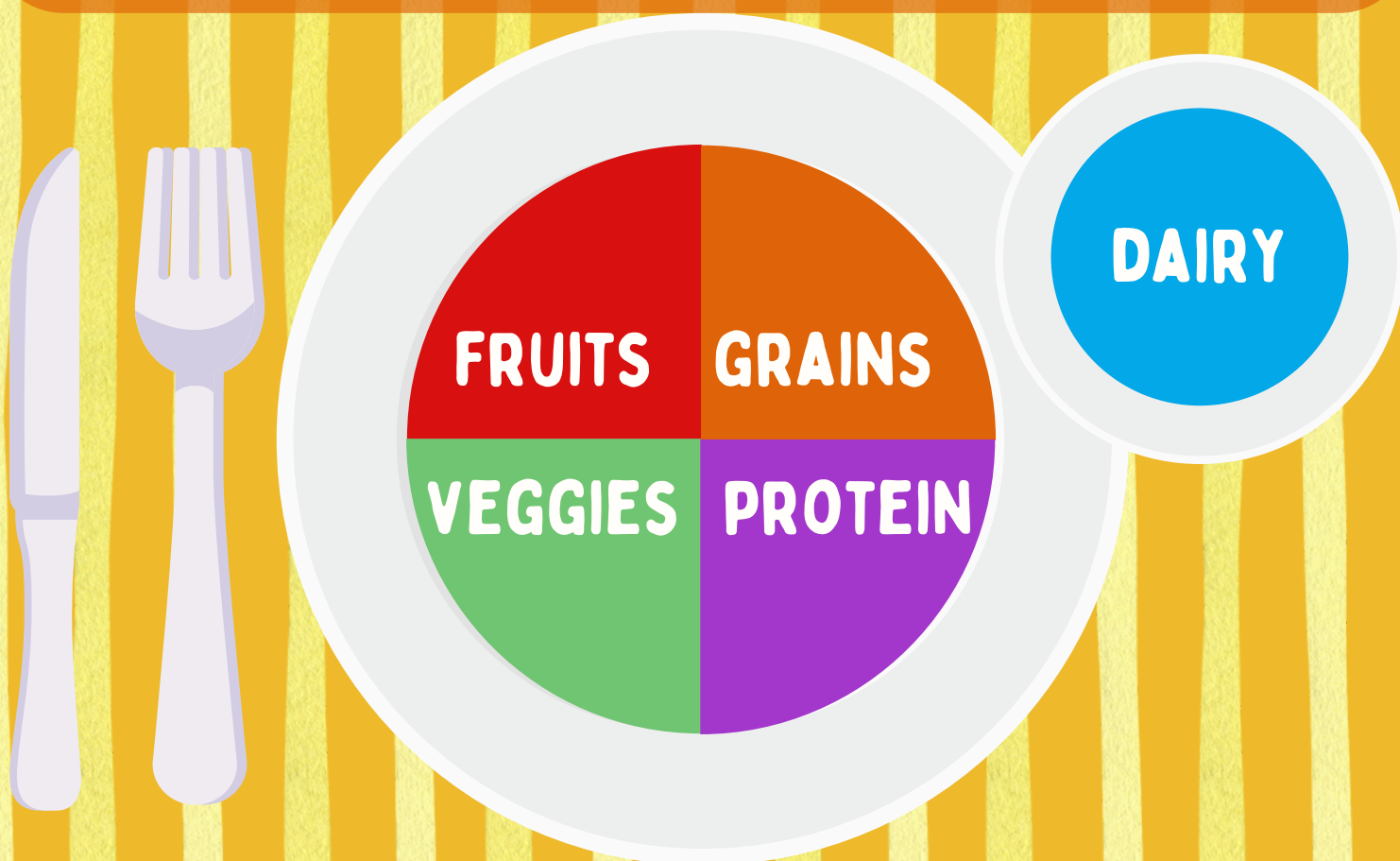
What was it about Emergency medicine that made you choose to pursue it?

Emergency medicine is the most raw specialty of medicine. It's the most fun, time critical, and arguably also the most intellectually challenging. You often have to deal with patients with critical illnesses and limited amounts of time, which stresses your knowledge base. You can see anything; you could deliver a baby, open someone's chest in a critical trauma, try to reverse cardiac arrest on someone's family member, or help treat an elderly person with a hip fracture. You can see anyone from 0 to 100+ years old and treat any possible pathology they may have. And there's all sorts of pathologies from all organ systems. It really allows you to build a giant database of information, that's what fascinated me the most. I didn't want to specialize to a degree where I only knew everything about one organ- I wanted to be learning as much as I could about all organs and all processes.

How has space medicine evolved over the last five years, and how do you think it will progress?

Space Flight right now is like early aviation. A few decades ago, we had the Wright brothers produce the first airplane, and now, air travel is just a normal part of daily life. Space travel is soon going to become the same way. And I see that happening really, really quickly, where we're launching more rockets every single day. There's more space advancements, and soon enough, in the next few years, we're going to end up where you can take a honeymoon, literally on the moon.

HEALTHY EATING PATTERNS AND IMPORTANCE OF NUTRITION



VEGGIES

- Eat a variety of vegetables
- Aim for 1/2 cooked and 1/2 raw
- 100% vegetable juices are also a great option
- Aim for half your plate to consist of fruits and veggies

FRUITS

- Whole fresh fruits are preferred, other options are: canned, frozen, or dried
- Limit juice to unsweetened and once daily
- Aim for half your plate to consist of fruits and veggies

GRAINS

- Eat a variety of whole wheat grains, try to limit refined grains (i.e. white bread)
- Grains provide ample sources of fiber, vitamins, and minerals

PROTEIN

- Aim for a protein portion 1/4 to the plate
- Try to select low-fat or lean meats and poultry
- Vary your protein with fish, seeds, nuts, beans, and peas

DAIRY

- Dairy is rich in calcium and strengthens bones
- Opt for low-fat milk, yogurt, and other dairy products
- Fortified foods and beverages are great for lactose-intolerance

Outside the Unit- Med School Application Workshop

Many Care Extenders are passionate about healthcare, bringing a strong sense of compassion and curiosity with them in their roles. While there are a multitude of careers in medicine students can explore, many volunteers have unanswered questions regarding the journey toward medical school.

Thus, the Care Extender Program hosted a virtual Med School Application Workshop on April 24th at 6:00 P.M., covering everything there is to know about the the application process—including topics such as: the MCAT, types of applications, components of the application, timeline (primaries, secondaries, interviews), gap years, dual degrees, choosing a school list, and general tips and resources for a successful cycle. The event was organized by the Special Events and Alumni Coordinator, Rebecca Brown.

Seeing as the 2025-2026 medical school application cycle is almost underway, it is highly important for applicants to consider the various components that make up the intimidating process. Also, depending on what they have completed, they might consider, is it best to apply now or in the future?

While the application experience can vary significantly from person to person, the workshop provided suggestions that each applicant can utilize. For example, one of the largest aspects are the essays; from the personal statement to the secondaries. Pre-writing is one of the best ways to help manage time and get a head start on one of the most time consuming parts of the application. In addition, this allows for more opportunities to get feedback and strengthen one's writing that much more.

Cost is another impending component of the application, as it can get to be very expensive. The AMCAS processing fee for the primary application is \$175, and each additional school designations are \$45. Therefore, the workshop also mentioned the importance of applying to application fee assistance programs. To those who qualify, it can help make the expenses much more manageable to ensure a level of fairness across applicants with different income levels.

Finally, the workshop concluded with the speakers reminding applicants to persevere, despite the application's difficulty. Taking each step one at a time is a good strategy to prevent from feeling overwhelmed or becoming discouraged. At the heart of each applicant, is a future doctor waiting for their chance to help the world. It is important to remain hopeful and make that dream a reality.



UCLA Health
Care Extenders presents

MED SCHOOL APPLICATION WORKSHOP

Topics we will cover include:

- the MCAT
- components of the application
- application fee assistance
- application timeline
- dual degrees
- choosing where to apply
- tips for a successful cycle

plus a Q&A at the end!

Cultural Competency in the healthcare field

Native America

Spiritualistic and holistic medical views with practices such as sweat lodges or medicine men

Asia

Use of traditional techniques like acupuncture, herbal medicine, and cupping

Middle East

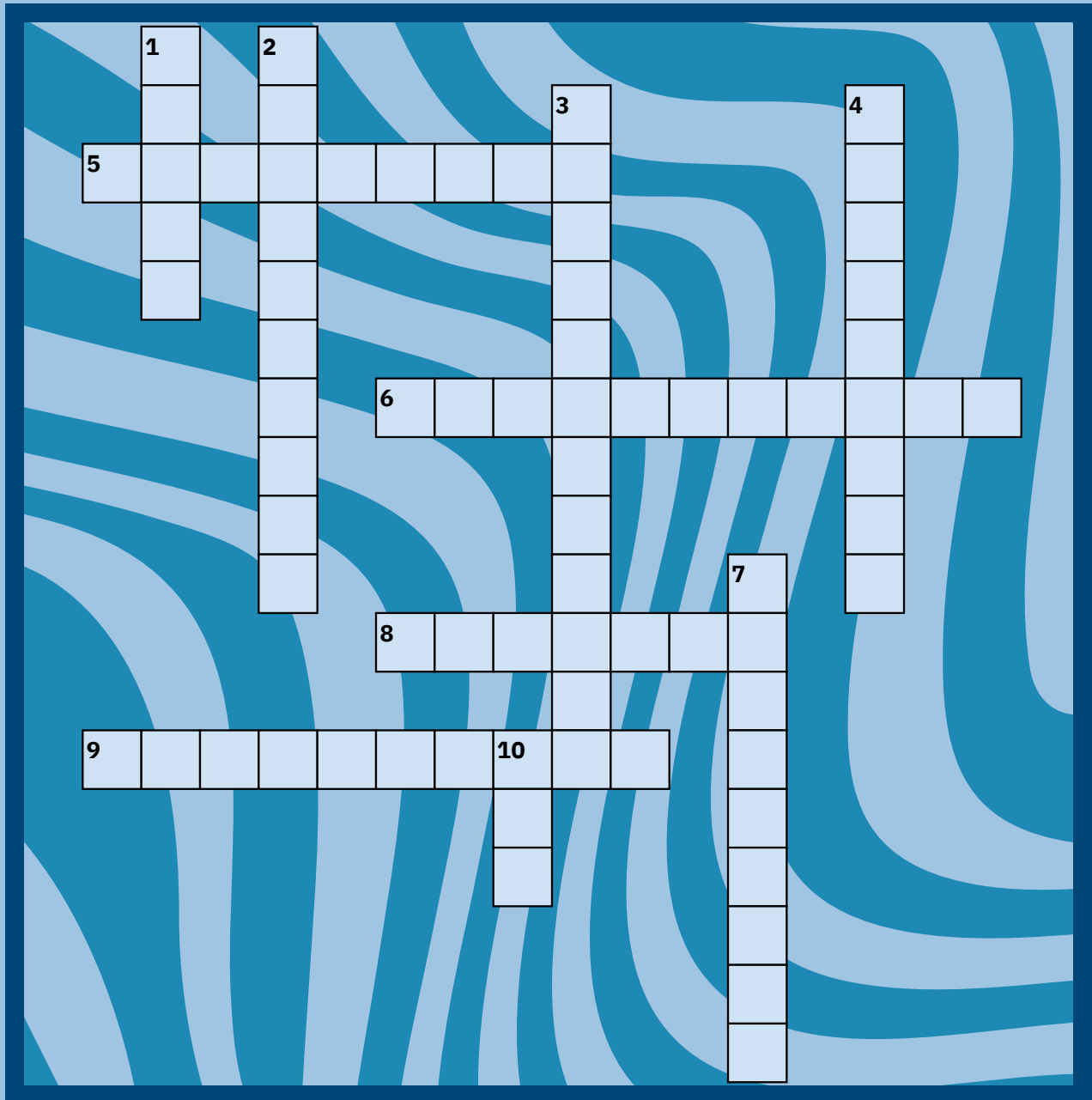
Preference towards physicians of same gender as patients and potential refusal of food/medication during fasting periods

What is Cultural Competency?

The ability to understand, communicate with, and effectively interact with people across different cultures. It is critical for improving patients' trust and reducing healthcare disparities. Key aspects include respect for different beliefs, language access, avoiding implicit bias, and inclusive communication.

How CE's Can Employ Cultural Competency:

- Practice inclusive language
- Familiarize yourself with cultural norms
- Demonstrate empathy without judgement
- Be respectful and open-minded



ACROSS

5. Study of the nervous system, including the brain, spinal cord, and nerves
6. Device used to listen to the heart and lungs
8. Tool used to inject medication or withdraw fluid from the body
9. A patient that receives care without being admitted into the hospital

DOWN

1. Medical term for swelling
2. Branch of medicine that focuses on the heart and its blood vessels
3. Medical term for elevated blood pressure
4. Identification of a disease, condition, or injury from its symptoms
7. Medical term for a white blood cell
10. Abbreviation for an electrocardiogram

FIRST 5 CE'S TO COMPLETE THE CROSSWORD PUZZLE CAN STOP BY VOLUNTEERING OFFICE FOR GOODIE BAG!!!