

THE AWIMS ADVISOR

News from the Alliance for Women in Medicine and Science

Dear Colleagues,

It's been a busy summer! I am grateful to our keynote speaker, Dr. Eliza Chin, and our planning committee, sponsors, and participants who contributed to a successful 8th annual Women in Medicine and Science Conference in May. I left the conference feeling energized and hopeful as an advocate for gender equity and health equity.

Many congratulations to all faculty who were promoted in 2025. Five women were promoted to the rank of full professor! We are seeing a consistent, upward trajectory of promotions for men and women which underscores the value of this work—change impacts everyone, not just the marginalized group. I am grateful to the village of committed stakeholders who changed our promotion and tenure process for the better.



A warm welcome to our new residents and fellows! You are surrounded by great minds and brilliant teachers. I am a lifelong learner and continue to glean pearls of wisdom from fellow learners and colleagues each day.

Thank you all for your ongoing support of AWIMS and your commitment to our mission and vision. Wishing you joy and fulfillment in every sphere.

Vidhya Prakash, MD, Director of SIU AWIMS

August 2025

The AWIMS Advisor Editorial Board



Dr. Vidhya Prakash
Editor-In-Chief

"Hope is the physician of each misery."
Irish proverb



Dr. Ayame Takahashi
Associate Editor

"If there is no struggle, there is no
progress."
Frederick Douglass



Ms. Bredina Haden
Associate Editor

"Gratitude can transform common
days into thanksgivings, turn routine
jobs into joy, and change ordinary
opportunities into blessings."
William Arthur Ward

TABLE OF CONTENTS



AWIMS Spotlight

Jessica Cantrall	4
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Around Campus

8 th Annual AWIMS Professional Development Conference	5
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AWIMS in the Community

Colors of Health Fashion Show	8
Learning to Thrive in the Wake of Community Tragedy	9

For Your Consideration

Articles and quotes	11
Join the AWIMS Advisor Editorial Team	12
Share Your Expertise. Expand Your Impact	12

AWIMS Boards and Committees

AWIMS Advisory Board	13
AWIMS Executive Committee	14

AWIMS Spotlight: Jessica Cantrall

Role at SIU Medicine:

Senior Research Project Coordinator,
Department of Population Science and Policy (PSP)

Born and raised: Springfield, Illinois
(a very proud north-ender)

Birthday month: September

Family: Husband and sister who are both also employed at SIU (shoutout to Connor and Jennifer), my niece (who is my bestie for the restie), and my mom and dad.



Favorite Book: The Bible

What do you like about the book? It is inspiring and useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

Hobbies: Taking walks, snuggling with my cats, playing video games, watching movies or TV shows

Personal Heroes: Jesus, Tracie Johnson (from PSP), several ladies from my church whom I aspire to be like when I grow up.

Most Embarrassing Moment (you are willing to share): It involves a very sweaty middle school me, my crush at the time, and getting paired together for a dance that was required for our class. You can pretty much imagine the rest.

What is your advice for achieving work-life balance? I try to be very intentional about my days off and will not really answer texts or calls about work on those days. I also try to make sure I respect other people's days off and will do almost everything possible to not bother them on that day. I call myself the wellness police in our department and am often found (lovingly) chiding my coworkers if they work during their time off.

What is the best piece of advice a mentor gave you? Slow down and don't be afraid to ask questions.

What is your unique contribution to SIU SOM? I am a member of the Wellness Advisory Board for cHOP and I really like to encourage personal well-being.

Anything else you would like to share? Currently, I am working with the ever-fabulous Hope Cherry and Adam Roloff on their Table-Top Roleplaying elective for 4th year medical students. I assist them with data analysis! Some of our goals are to help people see that play is a great way to learn and that "roleplay" is around us every single day!"

AWIMS AROUND CAMPUS

8th Annual Women in Medicine and Science Professional Development Conference

On May 9th, AWIMS hosted its 8th annual Women in Medicine and Science Professional Development Conference. This year's theme was, "Advocacy and You: Finding your Why and Your Voice to Enact Change." Dr. Eliza Chin, Executive Director of the American Medical Women's Association (AMWA), gave a thoughtful and inspiring keynote about her advocacy journey. The distinction she made between advocacy and activism and every person's impactful role in advocacy resonated deeply with conference attendees.



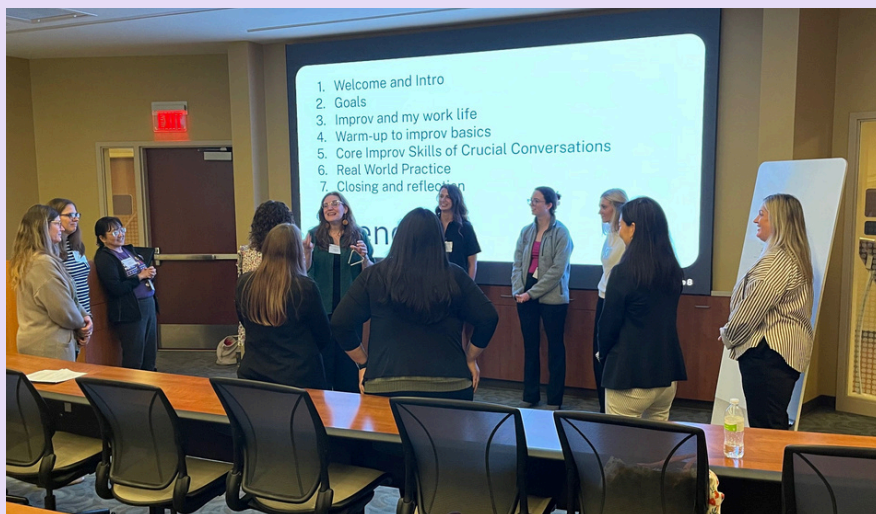
A panel discussion, led by CEO of SIU Medicine, Dr. Jerry Kruse, and featuring Springfield leaders, Ms. Veronica Espina (Springfield Immigrant Advocacy Network), Mr. Ethan Posey (City of Springfield), Mr. John Ridley (Sangamon County Department of Public Health), and Ms. Sunshine Clemons (Black Lives Matter SPI) gave participants much food for thought on determining their "why" in advocacy work.



Left to right: Dr. Jerry Kruse, Mr. John Ridley, Mr. Ethan Posey, Ms. Veronica Espina, Ms. Sunshine Clemons

8th Annual AWIMS Conference Cont.

We also displayed our internal talent by featuring several SIU School of Medicine faculty and staff during breakout sessions on self-advocacy, using improv to engage in crucial conversations, and creating a grassroots movement.



Breakout session: *Using Improv to Engage in Crucial Conversations*

Led by Ms. Carla Wilson and Ms. Justine Moser from Capital City Improv

Breakout session: *Creating a Grassroots Movement*

Led by Ms. Katherine Moore and Ms. Jeanné Hansen with SIU School of Medicine and Mr. Michael Phelon, Founder and Director of The Outlet



Breakout session: *Self Advocacy*

Led by SIU School of Medicine colleagues Ms. Rikeesha Phelon, Dr. Kari Wolf, Dr. Janet Albers, and Ms. Michelle Lynn

8th Annual AWIMS Conference Cont.

The 2025 AWIMS Awardees, Dr. Dana Crosby, Dr. Lauri Lopp, and Ms. Jeanné Hansen, were honored during a special ceremony.

Mr. Edgar J Curtis, recently retired CEO of the Memorial Health System, was honored with the AWIMS Founders Award.



Left to right: Mr. Edgar J. Curtis, Ms. Jeanné Hansen, and Dr. Dana Crosby
not pictured: Dr. Lauri Lopp

This impactful conference would not have been possible without the support of our sponsors:

Memorial Health System
SIU Medicine Department of Internal Medicine
SIU Medicine Department of Population Science & Policy
SIU Medicine Department of Surgery
SIU Medicine Neuroscience Institute, Departments of Psychiatry and Neurology
SIU Medicine Department of Family & Community Medicine
SIU Medicine Department of Emergency Medicine
SIU Medicine Department of Medical Education
SIU Medicine Department of Pediatrics
Simmons Cancer Institute at SIU Medicine
Center for Human and Organizational Potential

AWIMS IN THE COMMUNITY

Register for the AWIMS 3rd Annual Colors of Health Fashion Show!

CLICK HERE!



Registration for the AWIMS Colors of Health Fashion Show is open! Please come support our local models at the Hoogland Center for the Arts on Friday, September 5th at 6pm (reception from 5-6pm) as they wow us in a special fashion show, raising awareness about key women's health issues.

Hosted by Mahogany Knight, this special edition features a Mahogany Knight and Friends Drag Show, along with the presentation of the 2025 AWIMS Community Engagement Awards. We are delighted to honor the [Springfield Coalition of Rainbow Alliances](#) (CORAL) as an organization and are seeking nominations for an individual awardee. Please note that all proceeds will be donated to CORAL.

Details below. We appreciate your support.

Event details: [hive event](#), [web event](#)
[Community Engagement Award Nomination Form](#)
[Casting Call form](#)

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Learning to THRIVE in the Wake of Community Tragedy

By Dr. Ayame Takahashi and Dr. Krishna Taneja

Our community experienced an unimaginable tragedy when a car struck the YNOT Outdoor Summer and After School Camp building on April 28th in Chatham, Illinois. The accident claimed the lives of 18-year-old high school student and YNOT counselor, Rylee Britton, and four children, Ainsley Johnson, 8, Kathryn Corley, 7, Alma Buhnerkempe, 7, and Bradley Lund, 8. Several other children were injured and hospitalized for varying amounts of time at HSHS St. John's Hospital.

The Village of Chatham, a small but mighty community, quickly mobilized resources for impacted families while supporting one another. The impact of the tragedy was felt widely as most either personally knew the victims or were relatives, coworkers, friends of the families, or had their own children attending YNOT. In addition, there were multiple first-responders, including Emergency Medical Services specialists, the Chatham Police and Fire Departments, and healthcare workers who arrived on the scene. Frontline staff and physicians worked around the clock to care for children admitted to the hospital. The Village of Chatham held multiple community gatherings, including a candlelight vigil in the Chatham Square Community Park and a gathering at the Glenwood High School stadium, to name just a few. A [ChathamStrong linktree](#) featured multiple GoFundMe sites to raise funds for impacted families.

The healthcare community banded together to provide free counseling services at the Chatham Presbyterian Church, open to the entire public. Mental health professionals from Memorial Behavioral Health, Decatur Crossings, and SIU School of Medicine Departments of Psychiatry, Pediatrics, and Family and Community Medicine linked arms with spiritual leaders from HSHS St. John's Hospital and neighboring churches. Not only were these professionals there for the community in their time of need, but they were there for one another.

Recognizing the need for continued support in our community, SIU School of Medicine is at the forefront of creating necessary programs. The gaps in crisis intervention became impossible to ignore and raised an urgent need for a unified approach to trauma recovery, giving rise to a new initiative, THRIVE: Trauma Healing and Resilience in Volatile Environments.

Housed in the Department of Psychiatry at SIU Medicine, THRIVE is led by Dr. Krishna Taneja, an integrative psychiatrist whose experience spans mind-body medicine and building trauma response programs across local and global communities. Her work with the Massey Commission has shaped how THRIVE mobilizes resources and brings best practices to the heart of our region.

Learning to THRIVE...Cont.

THRIVE is the region's first trauma-informed crisis response network, integrating rapid intervention with long-term healing. Its goal is not only to respond swiftly in crisis, but to create a movement for lasting community-wide resilience delivered through comprehensive, multidisciplinary support before, during, and after moments of crisis.

The inaugural THRIVE session at Chatham Presbyterian Church in May brought together physicians, students, faith leaders, and neighbors—a clear sign that restoring resilience is not built by siloed efforts and one-off interventions; it requires a living network rooted in collaboration.

Inspired by the way healthy roots nourish a thriving tree, THRIVE's core values, collaboration, equity, empowerment, inclusivity, and healing, shape every branch of this network. Through partnerships across the region, THRIVE brings psychoeducation, group and individual counseling, workshops, acute care, and holistic healing directly to those who need support.

THRIVE's vision goes beyond any single intervention, building an adaptable ecosystem where multidisciplinary teams can reach every community member with timely, culturally responsive care, planting seeds of resilience long after headlines fade, and facilitating a path towards post-traumatic growth.

As THRIVE grows through partnerships with schools, hospitals, faith groups, first responders, and community agencies, every new collaborator strengthens the canopy of care our region relies on. We invite clinicians, staff, learners, and healthcare leaders to lend their skills and compassion to this evolving collective. Whether you support clinical care, facilitate groups, lead workshops, or deepen partnerships, your involvement expands the roots of resilience. To join us, contact **Dr. Krishna Taneja** at ktaneja81@siumed.edu.

Together, let's ensure that our community not only recovers, but truly thrives.

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Articles and Quotes

Women in Medicine Make Gains, but Obstacles Remain

The Well-Being of Women in Healthcare Professions: A Comprehensive Review

AMWA Allies for Equity in Medicine

State Impacts of the One Big Beautiful Bill

Measles Outbreak Declared Over in Southern Illinois



"The very fact that you are graduating, let alone that more women now graduate from college than men, is only possible because earlier generations of women—your mothers, your grandmothers, your aunts—shattered the myth that you couldn't or shouldn't be where you are."

Barack Obama, 44th U.S. President



"Women are responsible for two-thirds of the work done worldwide, yet earn only 10 percent of the total income and own 1 percent of the property. So, are we equals? Until the answer is yes, we must never stop asking."

Daniel Craig, British actor



"Implicit bias is the single most important determinant of health and health care disparities."

Dayna Bowen Matthew, Professor of Law and Public Health Sciences, The George Washington University



"There is no one size that fits all. There is no one size that fits all. We must work country by country, region by region, community by community, to ensure the diversity of needs are addressed to support each reality."

Amina J. Mohammed, Deputy Secretary-General, UN

The AWIMS Advisor is Looking to Add to the Editorial Team!

Are you passionate about supporting the advancement of women in science and medicine? Do you enjoy writing and have a knack for reviewing content? We're currently seeking an enthusiastic individual to join our editorial team as an Associate Editor.

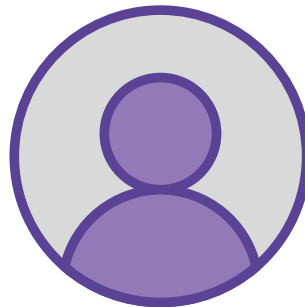
As an Associate Editor, you'll have the opportunity to:

- Contribute ideas and content that reflect our values, mission, and impact
- Help spotlight the accomplishments and stories of women in our community
- Collaborate with a diverse group of professionals
- Help shape high-quality publications that support the AWIMS community

Whether you're an experienced writer, reviewer, or simply interested in getting more involved, we welcome you to our team. This is a great opportunity to grow your editorial skills, add to your CV or resume, and expand your professional network. This opportunity is open to all SIU Medicine colleagues.

Let's continue building a strong, supportive platform together!

For more information or to express interest, please contact Dr. Vidhya Prakash at vprakash59@siumed.edu



Your Name Here!
Associate Editor

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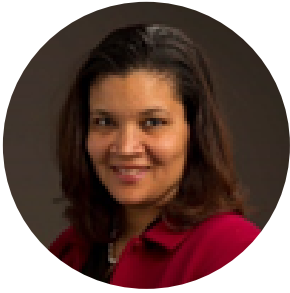
Share Your Expertise. Expand Your Impact.

The Office of Continuing Professional Development is building a speaker directory to help internal and external partners identify subject-matter experts for upcoming accredited educational activities. Whether you're a clinician, scientist, or administrator with niche expertise, we invite you to be part of this valuable resource.

JOIN



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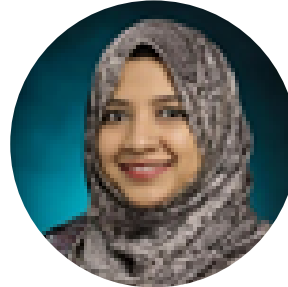


Diane Hillard-Sembell, MD

AWIMS Executive Committee

Education

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Research/RISE WIMS Program

Dr. Heeyoung Han and Dr. Georgia Luckey

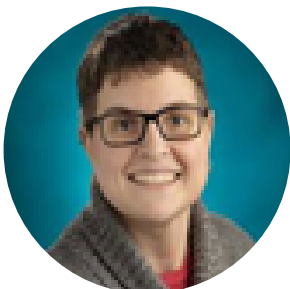


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Mindfulness and Wellness

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Mentorship and Career Advancement

Ms. Tracie Johnson and Dr. Ayame Takahashi