

2024-2025 FOCUS Medical Student Fellowship (MSF) Opportunity

Funded, Full-time, Faculty-Mentored, Medical Student Research Related to Women's Health

Bertha Dagan Berman – FOCUS Medical Student Fellowship Award in Women's Health (*general women's health*)

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

Deadline: Wednesday, May 15, 2024

Who Can Apply: Any University of Pennsylvania medical students (**all genders**) who have completed their clinical clerkships are eligible and encouraged to apply! Applicants, however, must not have any additional funding simultaneous with the 6 months that they plan to dedicate to this Fellowship.

FOCUS on Health & Leadership for Women (FOCUS), a Perelman School of Medicine program based in Penn's Center for Clinical Epidemiology, Biostatistics & Informatics, invites applications from Penn medical students for the following:

Funded six-month* Penn faculty-mentored research experience:

- Bertha Dagan Berman sponsored FOCUS Fellowship, an opportunity to do *full time research in an area of general women's health*.

*The six months dedicated toward this research need not be continuous; however, students must map out a clear plan in advance indicating the time blocks that will be devoted to the project and which must total a full six months. Note: that students may do this six-month Fellowship as part of a full Year-Out.

The purpose of the FOCUS Fellowship is to enable medical students to learn "hands-on" research and collaborative skills, to gain knowledge of some aspect of women's health, and to work on a publication or article generated from the research. We currently have support for three Fellowship awards. Therefore, we encourage any interested students to apply now. Students may apply for consideration by using the application requirements that follow (see next page). For your reference, a list of all prior fellowship recipients and their projects is accessible on the FOCUS website: <https://www.focusprogram.org/past-award-winners>.

The **Bertha Dagan Berman-FOCUS Medical Student Fellowship Award in Women's Health** was established in 1997 through the generosity of Linda Lee Alter. This endowment makes it possible for *at least 3* medical students each year to spend six months in a focused, mentored experience studying some aspect of general women's health. Women's health is defined very broadly. Prior Berman Award recipients have chosen to study such topics as: women's psychosocial outcomes following pregnancies complicated by preeclampsia; family planning decision making in refugee women; the role of gender and voice-related quality of life in aging adults; ectopic pregnancy; teledermatology for women in urban primary care centers; determinants of bone mineral density; excisional biopsy versus core biopsy among breast cancer patients; risk of bone fractures in HIV/HCV coinfecting women receiving combination antiretroviral therapy; racial disparities in breast cancer reconstruction; pregnancy and family-building in patients with multiple sclerosis; analysis of gender differences in substance abuse, improving access to preventive care, finding new ways of providing information about health to women in underserved communities; analysis of breast tissue markers in breast cancer research; dermatologic aspects of systemic lupus erythematosus, a disease which is more prevalent in women; attitudes toward assisted reproductive technologies; physician/patient communication and expectations regarding ovarian cancer prognosis; use of pre-operative gabapentin and post-operative medications for pain management after breast reconstruction; triage of patients experiencing pregnancy loss symptoms; and outcomes of follow-up of possible malignancy in the reproductive organs on pelvic imaging. Students are not limited to these topics for projects; we welcome other types of research.

Specifics to Apply for the Fellowship

Eligibility: Any University of Pennsylvania medical students (all genders) who have completed their clinical clerkships are eligible and encouraged to apply. Applicants, however, must not have any additional funding simultaneous with the 6 months that they plan to dedicate to this Fellowship.

Funding: A monthly stipend of \$1,250 will be provided to student recipients, totaling \$7500 for the six-month fellowship term. These FOCUS funds may be applied to a 6-month period of a longer research experience whose remaining time is supported from other sources.

Mentorship: **Identification of potential projects and discussion with faculty mentors by interested students is required prior to application for this FOCUS fellowship opportunity.** Mentors must be full time Penn faculty with solidly established and active research programs (please contact us with any questions about this). You may scroll through the list of prior fellows to get a sense of other project and mentor possibilities (<https://www.focusprogram.org/past-award-winners>). Student applicants interested in projects or faculty mentors other than those listed on the website are welcome and encouraged to propose these alternatives. **Strong preference will be given to those applicants who have a clear plan and enthusiasm for a project and mentor when they apply.**

Credit & Requirements: This Fellowship opportunity has been designed to be a scholarly pursuit rather than a work-study experience. Medical students who complete the Fellowship will fulfill the Scholarly Pursuit requirement (3 credits). This experience will be graded on a pass/fail basis and will be recorded on the student transcript. Any student who is awarded as a FOCUS Fellow will work with their Penn faculty mentor to prepare a formal initial project proposal which must be reviewed and approved by the FOCUS Director of Research Programs. A progress report will be required midway in the fellowship period, and a final report will be due at the completion of the six-month experience. Students will be expected to convene at three Fellowship luncheon research meetings to discuss their projects with the FOCUS Directors and mentors and deliver a formal presentation of their respective research at the final meeting.

Timeline: Deadline for Applications is **Wednesday, May 15, 2024**. We will contact finalists starting May 16th to schedule interviews for the week of May 27th through May 31st. Winners will be announced by July 5th. The fellowship may begin as early as August 2024.

Application Requirements (Deadline: Wednesday, May 15, 2024)

Please send an electronic copy of your application packet (excluding transcript) and include all of the following information:

1. Your contact information (name, address, cell phone number, email address, and preferred method of contact)
2. Your CV
3. An official copy of your transcript (must come directly from either Academic Programs or the Registrar)
4. A description (no longer than 700 words) that includes any past research or community experience related to women's health and your reasons for applying for an intensive opportunity in women's health at this point in your medical education
5. Your specific clinical/research interests (please indicate the faculty mentor whom you are considering)
6. Names (including contact information- email and phone) of two references

Please send an electronic copy to sprimave@penntmedicine.upenn.edu by May 15th.

Questions may be directed to Susan Primavera: sprimave@penntmedicine.edu or 215-898-0947.

Additional FOCUS Fellowship details at: <https://www.focusprogram.org/medical-student-fellowship-program>



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