

Medical Students' Wolfson DOCS Program Wins CASE Circle of Excellence Award

Praised as a program with “purpose and real-world outcomes,” the Mitchell Wolfson Sr. Department of Community Service (Wolfson DOCS) was recently awarded a 2020 CASE Circle of Excellence Silver Award for public relations and community relations. A student-run health care program at the University of Miami Leonard M. Miller School of Medicine, Wolfson DOCS provides vital health care screenings for thousands of medically underserved South Florida residents each year.

“We are incredibly grateful to CASE for this honor,” said Henri R. Ford, M.D., M.H.A., dean and chief academic officer of the Miller School of Medicine. “This helps to highlight the extraordinary efforts of our medical students, who are making a transformational impact in the lives of medically underserved residents through the Wolfson DOCS program.”



From left, Sarah Sukkar, M.D. '20, Raysa Christodoulou DOCS manager, Kim Torres, director of student services at Branches, the site of the South Dade Health Fair, Amar R. Deshpande, M.D. '02, and Kyle Sutherland, M.D. '20.

In presenting the honor, the CASE (Council for Advancement and Support of Education) judges noted Wolfson DOCS' exceptional methodology, outcomes, and social impact. Indeed, the program has a far-reaching and lasting positive health impact in South Florida. Medical students worked together with UM medical faculty and other health care professionals to provide more than 2,000 patients with preventive health screening tests in the 2018-2019 academic year.

"We are delighted by the CASE recognition," said Amar R. Deshpande, M.D. '02, faculty advisor for Wolfson DOCS and professor of medicine at the Miller School of Medicine. "Wolfson DOCS is unparalleled in the scope of medical school

community service endeavors.”

Wolfson DOCS services are made possible by an extraordinary \$100,000 donation each year from the Mitchell Wolfson Sr. Foundation, along with smaller donations from various benefactors. The student-run health fairs began in 1971, when University of Miami medical students started a health fair in Big Pine Key. The health fairs continued and in 2000, UM DOCS was founded. Thanks to their tireless support, the program was named the Mitchell Wolfson Sr. Department of Community Service program in 2006.

Wolfson DOCS holds 10 annual fairs in various communities throughout Miami-Dade, Monroe, and Broward counties, with an additional four free clinics operating for these medically underserved populations. Students screen for the most prevalent diseases in our community, including hypertension, diabetes, dyslipidemia, vision loss, obesity, and depression, as well as colon, breast, cervical, and skin cancers.

Miller School students learn valuable hands-on skills, become liaisons to local communities, and build long-lasting relationships with community partners. More than 95 percent of all Miller School students serve as volunteers and many serve in leadership roles.

“This designation highlights the commitment of Wolfson DOCS to our community and to the enhancement of medical education at our institution through hands-on learning and advocacy for our patients,” said Sarah Sukkar, M.D. '20, who was the co-executive director of Wolfson DOCS during the 2019-2020 year and recently started her residency in pediatrics at the University of Miami/Jackson Health System.

“We feel fortunate to have the hard work of the medical students, physicians, and other health care professionals at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine recognized among so many worthy international applicants,” added Kyle Sutherland, M.D. '20, the 2019-2020 co-executive director of Wolfson DOCS and now an internal medicine resident at UM/Jackson.

CASE awards acknowledge superior accomplishments that have lasting impact and demonstrate the highest level of professionalism while delivering exceptional results in the fields of advancement services, alumni relations, communications, fundraising and marketing at colleges, universities, independent schools, and affiliated nonprofits.

“These awards demonstrate our members’ success in advancing their institutions through their remarkable and varied work across all advancement disciplines,” said Sue Cunningham, CASE president and CEO.

For more information on Wolfson DOCS, visit <https://umdocs.mededu.miami.edu>.