



I AM ABEL FOUNDATION

Raising Our Next Generation of Healthcare Heroes

NEW EDITION

Celebrating Our New Home in
Bronzeville!

Hispanic Heritage Month
Pioneers in Medicine

Shadow an I Am Abel Foundation
Mentee Day is November 21st!

Your Journey, Your Timeline: A
Pre-Med Reminder

Physicians Leading Conversations
on Gun Violence

New Healthcare Opportunities on
Chicago's South Side

Academic Advising: Preparing for
Spring Registration

Upcoming Events, Opportunities &
Much More!

Chicago Health Medical and Law Careers

3 DAY CITYWIDE
STUDENT CONFERENCE

JULY 15TH - JULY 17TH 2027

ALSO
Save
THE
Date

ABEL VOICES:
BRIDGING THE GAP

October 2026

I Am Abel Presents

OCTOBER 2026

ABEL VOICES: BRIDGING THE GAP

RAISING OUR NEXT GENERATION OF HEALTHCARE HEROES

EDITOR'S NOTE

As we welcome October, we are reminded that growth takes many forms. Sometimes it looks like reaching a long-awaited milestone, stepping into a new opportunity, or celebrating an achievement. Other times, it looks like embracing uncertainty, finding strength in community, and recognizing the progress we've made along the way. This month's edition of Abel Voices celebrates all of these moments and the people who make them meaningful.

This month, we are especially excited to celebrate a new chapter for the I Am Abel Foundation: the opening of our new home in Bronzeville! More than just a new space, this milestone represents the continued growth of a community built on mentorship, opportunity, and a shared commitment to empowering the next generation of healthcare professionals.

In honor of Hispanic Heritage Month, we also recognize the remarkable contributions of Hispanic and Latino physicians whose discoveries and advocacy have helped shape modern medicine. Closer to home, we highlight physicians addressing gun violence as a public health issue and exciting developments expanding healthcare education and employment opportunities on Chicago's South Side.

For our pre-med community, this edition offers an important reminder: your journey is uniquely yours. As interview invitations, acceptances, and other milestones are celebrated around us, we encourage you to embrace the season you're in, celebrate your own progress, and remember that there is no single path to medicine. Alongside this message, you'll find academic advising tips, upcoming opportunities, and resources to support you wherever you are in your journey.

Thank you for continuing to grow, learn, and celebrate alongside us. Here's to honoring how far we've come, embracing where we are, and looking forward to all that lies ahead!

WITH GRATITUDE,
MIRACLE BURT
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF, ABEL VOICES

I AM ABEL FOUNDATION & COMMUNITY

UPCOMING EVENTS



Oct 27-28
AAMC MEDICAL SCHOOL FAIR



Now-Christmas
I AM ABEL FOUNDATION TOY
DRIVE: DONATE TODAY!



Oct
VOLUNTEERING EVENT AT
PILSEN FOOD PANTRY



Nov 1
CCPA MENTORSHIP MIXER



SHADOW AN IAAF MENTEE DAY!

MORE EVENTS

I AM ABEL FOUNDATION & COMMUNITY UPCOMING EVENTS



Dec 19

**I AM ABEL FOUNDATION
CHRISTMAS PARTY**



Jan 15-17

SNMA NLI CONFERENCE



Feb 4 - 16

**ABEL IN AFRICA MISSION
EXCURSIONS**



March 24-28

SNMA AMEC CONFERENCE





I AM ABEL FOUNDATION

Raising Our Next Generation of
Healthcare Heroes

INVITES YOU TO OUR

A Soulful CHRISTMAS Gala

A WINTER WONDERLAND OF PURPOSE, MUSIC & IMPACT

SUPPORTING OUR
"RUNNING START" SUMMER STEM PROGRAM

Empowering underserved students and raising
our next generation of healthcare heroes.

FEATURING

3 DIVAS OF SOUL

A TRIBUTE EXPERIENCE



FANTASIA
BARRINO



TINA
TURNER



WHITNEY
HOUSTON
THE HEADLINER

TOY DRIVE

Bring a new toy to
donate to a child of
an incarcerated person
(ages 6 months to
14 years old)

*Great Food & Libations
A Night of Fun, Fellowship & Giving!*



SATURDAY
12 • 19 • 2026



4:30PM – 9:00PM



19TH CENTURY
WOMEN'S CLUB
178 Forest Ave
Oak Park, IL 60302

MORE INFORMATION COMING SOON!

iamabel.org | info@iamabel.org





Introducing **Abel in Africa!**

UPCOMING TRAVEL

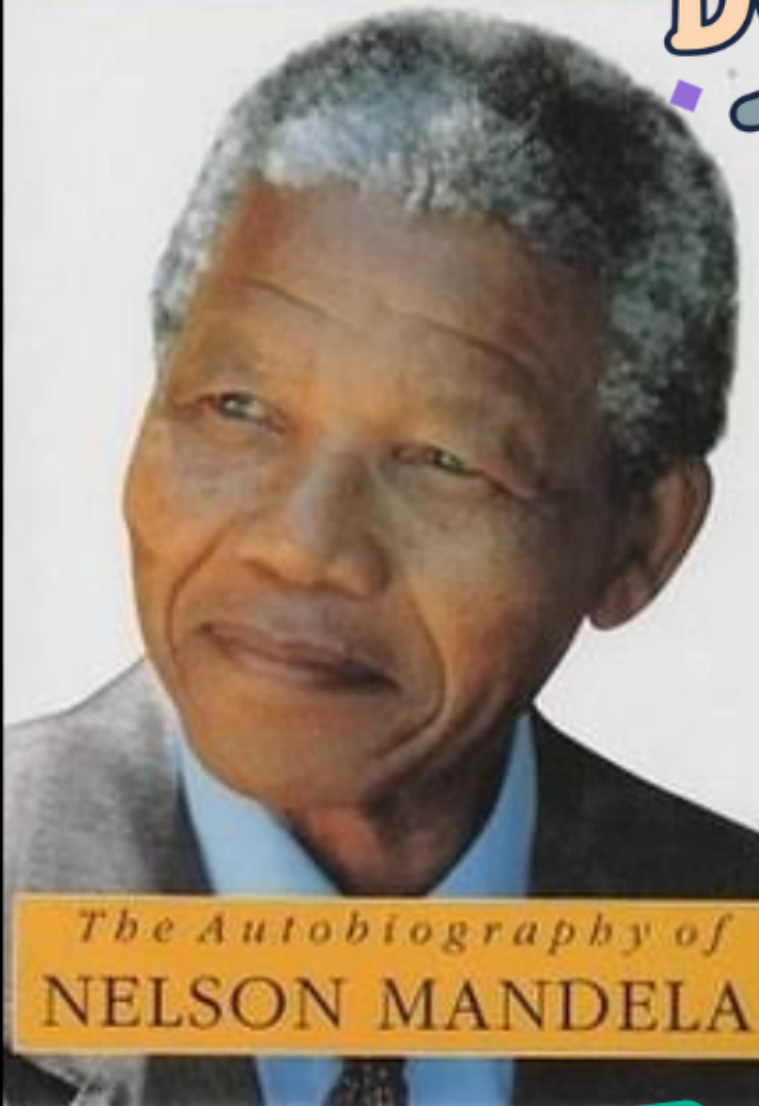
- **Johannesberg
Feb 4-10th 2027**
- **Cape Town Feb
10-17th 2027**

Our mission is to connect physicians, healthcare professionals and their families with the richness of Africa through transformative luxury experiences that inspire cultural understanding, professional growth, and global healthcare collaboration.

Through curated journeys, education, and meaningful partnerships, Abel in Africa bridges medicine, culture, and impact while supporting the continuing education and well-being of healthcare professionals worldwide. Every one of our experiences weaves a little bit of medicine into every adventure. But don't worry - stethoscopes are optional!

LONG WALK TO
FREEDOM

BOOK CLUB



LONG WALK TO FREEDOM

TUESDAY
OCTOBER
27TH
5PM



SESSION ONE OF THREE



Ezra Delpert

Grab a copy of Mandela's "**Long Walk to Freedom**" from your favorite bookstore and join us for the first in three book club sessions as we explore the powerful story of Nelson Mandela and his fight for freedom for the people of South Africa during the vicious times of apartheid - some signs of which linger to this day.

We will be joined by **Ezra Delpert**, World renowned sound and audio engineer born and raised in South Africa, supporting major acts like Michael Jackson, Whitney Houston, U2, Jonathan Butler and more. While he now lives outside of Chicago, he was born and raised in Cape Town South Africa where he experienced apartheid and displacement first hand. He will share his story of pain experienced within the coloured community and their brutal oppression and what gave them the strength to survive such challenging times.



**We Can
Help!**

**SHADOW DAY IS HERE!
SATURDAY,
NOVEMBER 21ST!!
AT NORTHWESTERN
REGISTER FOR DETAILS!**



I AM ABEL FOUNDATION



SO YOU WANT TO BE A DOCTOR?

YOU CAN NOT BE WHAT YOU CAN NOT SEE!
YOU HAVE TO SEE IT TO BE IT!

**APPLICATIONS
OPEN SOON!**

**APPLICATIONS OPEN
DEC 1 2026 - FEB 15 2027**

OUR MISSION

The mission of I Am Abel Foundation is to identify, engage and curate the large pool of untapped gifts, talent and intellect amongst our youth and young adults with the singular goal of raising our next generation of Health care Heroes.



- APPLY TODAY FOR I AM ABEL FOUNDATION'S Urban Bridges Medical Mentoring Pipeline Program
- Rising College, Graduate & Post Bacc Students from underresourced and vulnerable communities encouraged to apply



PROGRAM FEATURES

- Year-Round Multi-Year Pipeline Programming
- One on One Physician Mentoring
- Customized Academic Advising
- Saturday Morning Professor Clinical Legacy Series
- Pipelines in Cardiology, GI, Pediatrics, Orthopedic Medicine, physical exam and more
- Academic STEM and MCAT Center
- Study and Missions Abroad
- Access to paid Summer Internships in Research, Clinical and Academic Immersion & more



OUR PARTNERS

Northwestern Medicine

University of Illinois

Rush University

University of Chicago

Jesse Brown and Lovell VA

William Carey Osteopathic

Advocate Health

Loyola Stritch and more!



HISTORY & PURPOSE

- Black Americans make up 13% of the U.S. population yet under 5% of all practicing physicians
- Latinx Americans make up 19% of U.S. population and just 7% of physicians.
- One way to reduce healthcare inequities is to increase the number of black and Latinx physicians
- 18 of our mentees entered medical school in 2026!

CONTACT IAMABEL:

[Learn About I Am Abel](#)

<https://iamabel.org/urban-bridges-medical-mentoring-program>

✉ INFO@IAMABEL.ORG



@IAMABELFOUNDATION



[IAMABEL.ORG](https://iamabel.org)

AMEC 2027 | LAS VEGAS!!

With I AM ABEL FOUNDATION

Are You A Chicago Area Medical Student
I Am Abel Foundation (IAAF) Mentee or IAAF Alumnus?

Join us for Alumni Night on
Thursday in Our Suite
or for Dinner on Friday Night!!

Annual Medical Education Conference 2027 **Join Us In Las Vegas Nevada | March 24-28, 2027**

The Annual Medical Education Conference (AMEC), hosted by the Student National Medical Association (SNMA), focuses on empowering underrepresented minority medical and pre-medical students. Core conference topics include public health advocacy, implicit bias in medical education, health disparities, and professional development designed to build culturally competent physicians.



I AM ABEL
FOUNDATION

Save
THE DATE

10TH ANNUAL CHICAGO HEALTH, MEDICAL & LAW CAREERS CITYWIDE STUDENT CONFERENCE

The Power of Possibility

CREATING THE NEXT GENERATION OF HEALTHCARE & LEGAL LEADERS

See It. Believe It. Become It.


**JULY
15-17
2027**

 CHICAGO
ILLINOIS



1,500
ATTENDEES
OVER 3 DAYS



19
U.S. CITIES
REPRESENTED



500
CHICAGO PUBLIC
SCHOOLS STUDENTS
ANNUALLY



100+
CLINICAL, PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT &
EQUITY-CENTERED
WORKSHOPS



**DISTINGUISHED
SPEAKERS**
& PUBLIC LEADERS
INCLUDING U.S. SENATOR
DICK DURBIN, CONGRESSMAN
DANNY DAVIS AND MANY OTHERS

THURSDAY, JULY 15, 2027

The Dr. Sharon Gates
LUNCHEON
HER LEGACY. OUR CALLING.

*Honoring women who heal,
advocate, mentor and serve.*



SOUTHERN CHICAGO
CHICAGO, IL

**FRIDAY & SATURDAY
JULY 16-17, 2027**



100+
SESSIONS



EXHIBITORS



NETWORKING



MENTORING



HANDS-ON
WORKSHOPS



ROBERT H. LURIE MEDICAL RESEARCH CENTER
NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY
303 E SUPERIOR, CHICAGO, IL

CHOOSE YOUR TRACK

- ☒ Health and Medicine
- ☒ Law Symposium
- ☒ Scientific Poster Session
- ☒ Exhibitor Hall
- ☒ Keynote Speakers on
Health, Equity, Justice & Advocacy

INTENDED AUDIENCE

- ☒ Middle & High School Students
- ☒ College Students
- ☒ Medical & Law Students
- ☒ Physicians, Attorneys, Educators
- ☒ Community Leaders & Partners



AAMC VIRTUAL MEDICAL SCHOOL FAIR 2026



OCTOBER 27-28, 2026



Hear Directly from Medical School Admissions Experts



OCTOBER 27

LIVE INFORMATION SESSIONS

🕒 11:00 AM – 5:00 PM ET



OCTOBER 28

CHAT WITH MEDICAL SCHOOLS

🕒 11:00 AM – 6:00 PM ET

LEARN ABOUT:

- ✓ **LIVE MOCK INTERVIEWS**
See mock interviews in action and receive real-time feedback from admissions officers.
- ✓ **GROWTH (GAP) YEAR GUIDANCE**
Learn if a gap year is right for you and what types of opportunities to consider.
- ✓ **HOW MEDICAL SCHOOLS SELECT APPLICANTS**
Hear from admissions deans about how schools evaluate applications and build their incoming class.
- ✓ **STRATEGIES TO MANAGE TEST ANXIETY**
Learn evidence-based strategies to stay focused and perform your best.



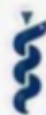
FREE REGISTRATION REQUIRED

▶ All sessions available on-demand for registrants.



QUESTIONS?

Contact us at
virtualfair@aamc.org



PRESENTED BY

AAMC

CONNECT WITH THE AAMC:



REGISTRATION IS FREE, BUT REQUIRED TO ATTEND THE SESSIONS.

Register Here!



- Find Out if You Should Plan a Growth Year
- Learn how to decide whether taking additional time before medical school makes sense for you.
- How Medical Schools Decide Who to Interview and Accept
- How Medical Schools Decide Who to Interview and Accept
- Conquer Test Anxiety





I AM ABEL FOUNDATION

TOY DRIVE

FOR CHILDREN OF INCARCERATED PARENTS

Children of incarcerated parents carry a special burden that impacts their lives for years to come. Show love and bring a toy to our Christmas Party or drop off the gift at the hub!

GIFT LABEL INSTRUCTIONS

- Recommended age range for gift
- Common Gender for toy/game or if unisex
- Type/Name of Toy

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Bring a BRAND NEW CHILD SAFE and AGE APPROPRIATE GIFT in an UNSEALED Christmas Gift bag (DO NOT WRAP THE GIFT)
- Recommended Gift Value \$15.00 or more
- Place a label on the fist that follows the label instructions (up top) and LEAVE RECIEPT IN THE BAG

MORE INFO TO COME

The Student Executive Board
Presents:

Volunteer Series

Fill out this form if you are interested
in volunteering your time with I Am
Abel Volunteer outings!



Our Next
Outing: Pilsen
Food Pantry





National
Leadership
Institute

J A N U A R Y
NLI

— ATLANTA —
GEORGIA

Rising with Purpose:

*Sustaining our Legacy, Elevating Leaders,
and Securing our Future*

January 15-17, 2027 | Morehouse School of Medicine

Register today

<https://snma.org/events/EventDetails.aspx?id=2088891>

Annual CCPA Mentorship Mixer



DATE: SUNDAY 11/1/2026

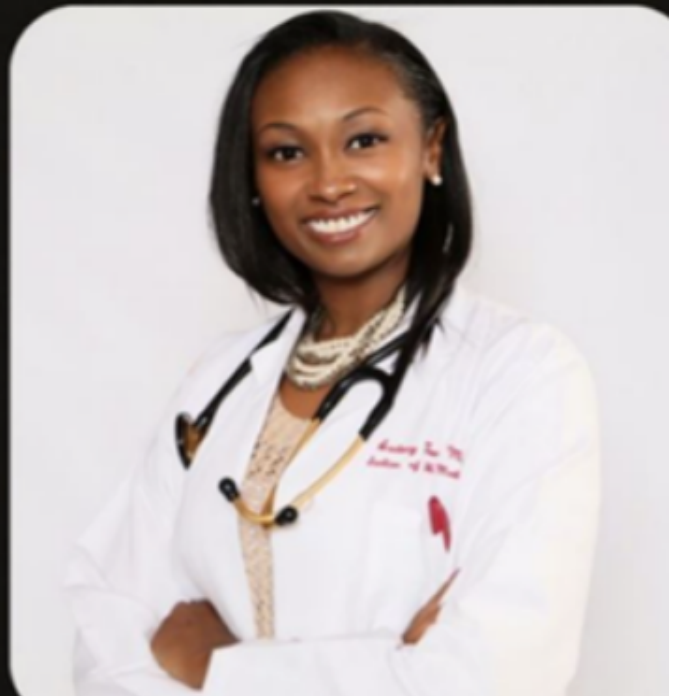
TIME: 3PM

LOCATION: IAMABEL HEADQUARTERS



Join us as we honor our Mentor of the Year and foster connections between trailblazers in a variety of medical fields and the future generations of medicine!

Mentor of the Year
Dr. Audrey Tanksley



+ DONATE + + BLOOD +

Save someone's life with a drop of your blood!



Sign up
with THIS
QR
code!!!



Sunday

13th
December

10AM-2:30PM

IAA Hub
56 E. 47th street, Chicago, IL
60653





Mentee Spotlight: Mia Johnson

2026 Mentee & Intro Curriculum Teaching Assistant

What first sparked your interest in healthcare or medicine?

Seeing my mom struggle with psoriasis made me wish I had the knowledge to help her which sparked my interest in dermatology. Studying abroad in Ghana and doing a 3 month internship at the community hospital solidified this passion for healthcare. I witnessed very tough situations and was exposed to things I would not otherwise get here in the U.S., but was constantly inspired by the ways providers handled things with grace and care.

What is one health issue or inequity you hope to make an impact on in the future?

One health issue I hope to make an impact on in the future is access to quality care. I can see myself opening a Dermatology outside the United States and working in spaces where doctors with my knowledge are scarce.

What has been your favorite part about being a TA for the intro curriculum so far?

My favorite part about being TA for the intro curriculum has been getting familiar with my peers' faces and names as well as gaining insight into the operations of I am Abel.

What is something you've learned about yourself since joining I Am Abel?

I have learned that I thrive in spaces where I can add value and feel cared for. Knowing that you have made an impact is a truly fulfilling feeling and I am Abel offers many opportunities to do this if you express interest.

What area of healthcare are you most curious about right now, and why?

Right now, I am most curious about the area of pediatrics because I believe investing in youth and supporting upcoming generations is where so much progress in society can happen. Kids seeing people that look like them and encouraging them is something I wish I had more of growing up so I hope to incorporate this into my career. This has led me to take a liking to pediatric dermatology and explore this area of medicine more.

Breaking Barriers, Advancing Medicine: Celebrating Hispanic & Latino Physicians

In honor of Hispanic Heritage Month, we celebrate the remarkable physicians whose discoveries, leadership, and advocacy have helped shape modern medicine. From groundbreaking scientific advancements to championing healthcare access for underserved communities, these trailblazers remind us that the impact of a physician extends far beyond the exam room. Their legacies continue to inspire future generations of healthcare professionals to challenge barriers, pursue innovation, and create a more equitable future in medicine.



**HISPANIC
HERITAGE MONTH**

Celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month



DR. RODRÍGUEZ TRÍAS



A pioneering pediatrician and advocate for health equity, Dr. Rodríguez Trías established Puerto Rico's first newborn care center, helping reduce neonatal mortality at her hospital by 50% within three years. She later became the first Latina president of the American Public Health Association, championing reproductive rights, informed consent, and healthcare access for underserved communities.

DR. SEVERO OCHOA

A physician-scientist whose discoveries helped revolutionize molecular biology, Dr. Ochoa received the 1959 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine for research on the enzymatic synthesis of RNA. His work contributed to scientists' ability to decipher the genetic code and advanced our understanding of how genetic information functions.



DR. ANTONIA NOVELLO

In 1990, Dr. Novello made history as the first woman and first Hispanic U.S. Surgeon General. A pediatric nephrologist, she helped shape organ transplantation policy and led national initiatives addressing childhood smoking, HIV/AIDS awareness, and healthcare disparities affecting women, children, and minority communities.



Celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month

DR. CARLOS JUAN FINLAY

Dr. Finlay transformed infectious disease research by proposing in 1881 that mosquitoes transmitted yellow fever. Although initially met with skepticism, his theory was later confirmed and helped revolutionize mosquito-control strategies, saving countless lives and shaping modern public health.



DR. SERENA AUÑÓN- CHANCELLOR

A physician, scientist, and NASA astronaut, Dr. Auñón-Chancellor became the first Hispanic physician to travel to space. In 2018, she spent 197 days aboard the International Space Station, conducting groundbreaking research on cancer, Parkinson's disease, and human health in space. Her career bridges medicine and space exploration, demonstrating how scientific innovation can improve healthcare both on Earth and beyond.



DR. SALVADOR MONCADA

A physician-scientist whose groundbreaking research transformed cardiovascular medicine, Dr. Moncada led the discovery of prostacyclin and helped establish the role of nitric oxide in regulating blood vessel function. His discoveries advanced our understanding of cardiovascular disease and contributed to the development of important treatments.





OCTOBER 2026

NEXT UP: DOCTOR

CALLING ALL PRE-MEDS

YOUR JOURNEY, YOUR TIMELINE: FINDING PURPOSE IN **YOUR** CURRENT SEASON

Column by: Miracle Burt

As medical school interview invitations and acceptances begin to roll in, it's easy to look around and feel like everyone else is moving forward while you're standing still. Maybe your peers are preparing for medical school while you're still studying for the MCAT. Maybe you're taking a gap year, retaking a course, or simply trying to figure out what comes next.

HERE'S YOUR REMINDER: YOUR JOURNEY TO MEDICINE DOESN'T HAVE TO LOOK LIKE ANYONE ELSE'S.

In the pre-med world, it's easy to measure progress through GPAs, MCAT scores, research publications, clinical hours, and acceptance letters. But these milestones don't tell the full story of someone's journey.

Comparison Is the Thief of Growth

What we often don't see are the sacrifices, setbacks, uncertainty, and personal challenges that accompany those achievements. Someone else's success doesn't diminish your own progress, and reaching a milestone later doesn't make it any less meaningful.

Make the Most of the Season You're In

Instead of focusing on where you think you should be, consider how you can grow right where you are:

- Celebrate your small wins. Passing a challenging exam, building a new relationship, or stepping outside your comfort zone are all forms of progress.
- Focus on what you can control. You can't control someone else's timeline, but you can invest in your academics, relationships, experiences, and well-being.
- Give yourself permission to rest. You don't have to fill every free moment with another activity to prove your commitment to medicine.
- Redefine what progress looks like. Sometimes progress means gaining confidence, discovering a new passion, learning from a setback, or recognizing when you need support.
- Find joy outside of being pre-med. Your hobbies, friendships, family, and personal interests are not distractions from your journey. They're part of what makes you who you are.

A Reminder for This Month

You can be genuinely happy for someone else's success while still feeling uncertain about your own future. Both feelings can exist at once.

The path to medicine is rarely linear, and there's no single timeline that guarantees success. Whether you're just beginning your undergraduate journey, preparing to apply, or taking time to strengthen your application, this season of your life has value, too.

Don't become so focused on reaching the next milestone that you forget to appreciate the person you're becoming along the way.

Remember: You are not behind. You are building a journey that is uniquely yours.

So, take a moment to reflect on one thing you've accomplished recently that you're proud of?

Premed Resource of the Month:



Are you interested in dermatology?

AAD's Pathways: Inclusivity in Dermatology Initiative presents:

The Dermatology Career Prep Program

Explore a future in science, technology, and medicine—and a career that connects with people.

Consider dermatology!

An exciting, challenging specialty where you can experience cutting-edge medicine and make a lasting difference in patients' lives.

For graduating high school seniors, undergraduates, postgraduates, and career-changers.

- Connect with dermatologists, residents & medical students
- Learn about dermatology, research & test prep
- Get medical-school application guidance
- Try hands-on dermatology procedures



JUNE 7–11, 2027 | SKOKIE BANQUET & CONFERENCE CENTER | PROGRAM FEE: \$200

Pathways: Inclusivity in Dermatology



IN COLLABORATION WITH
Johnson & Johnson **kenvue**

Learn more and apply:
aad.org/pathways-career-prep
Application deadline: **November 15, 2026**
Questions? Pathways@aad.org



ADVISING OUR NEXT GENERATION OF HEALTHCARE HEROES

Answered by our very own academic advisor Noah Petashi



UPCOMING REGISTRATION: ARE YOU TAKING THE RIGHT CLASSES?

Graduation requirements and medical school prerequisites aren't always the same. As registration approaches, it's important to think beyond which courses you need to graduate. Your schedule should also support your science GPA, MCAT preparation, and future medical school applications. Know the difference! Your college academic advisor helps ensure you're on track to graduate, but those requirements may not align with medical school admissions expectations.

For the greatest flexibility when applying to medical school, consider completing these traditional prerequisites:

- ✔ General Biology I & II + Labs
- ✔ General Chemistry I & II + Labs
- ✔ Organic Chemistry I & II + Labs
- ✔ Physics I & II + Labs
- ✔ Biochemistry
- ✔ Math/Statistics & English*

*Requirements vary by medical school. Some schools accept substitutions or competency-based coursework.

A special note about Organic Chemistry II: You may have heard that biochemistry can replace Organic Chemistry II or that only one Organic Chemistry lab is necessary. While this is true for some medical schools, it is not a universal policy. Skipping Organic Chemistry II or its associated laboratory coursework could limit your options when building your medical school list.

Our advisor's recommendation: Complete Organic Chemistry I and II with associated labs when possible, unless you've verified that your intended medical schools accept an alternative.

Graduation Requirements ≠ Medical School Prerequisites

Always verify prerequisites before deciding to skip a course.

ADVISING OUR NEXT GENERATION OF HEALTHCARE HEROES

Answered by our very own academic advisor Noah Petashi



PLAN SMARTER, NOT HARDER: BUILD A SCHEDULE THAT SETS YOU UP FOR SUCCESS

"Can I apply without it?" vs. "Should I take it?"

Some medical schools offer flexible prerequisite policies, but meeting the minimum requirements for a few schools isn't necessarily the best strategy. Skipping traditional prerequisites may narrow your school list, especially when considering a balanced range of MD and DO programs. Think ahead: You don't want to discover during your application cycle that a school you're interested in requires a course you chose not to take!

Should you take upper-level biology courses? Advanced sciences can strengthen your academic foundation and help demonstrate readiness for medical school:

☐ Genetics

☐ Molecular Biology

☐ Microbiology

☐ Anatomy

☐ Cell Biology

☐ Physiology

☐ Immunology

☐ Neuroscience

However, more science courses don't automatically mean a stronger application. If you're already taking multiple demanding prerequisite courses, adding several upper-level sciences may hurt your academic performance rather than help it. For students working to improve their science GPA, the priority should be earning strong grades, not simply accumulating additional credits.

Before you register...

- Review both graduation and medical school prerequisites.
- Verify course requirements at schools you're considering.
- Balance challenging science courses with your other commitments.
- Prioritize strong academic performance over unnecessary course overload.

○ Questions about your spring schedule?

Our academic advisor is here to help! Active I Am Abel mentees are encouraged to reach out by email to schedule a meeting and discuss their course selections.

I AM ABEL FOUNDATION

Past Event Highlights



A New Home, A New Chapter!



Celebrating the I Am Abel Foundation's New Space in Bronzeville



Last month, the I Am Abel Foundation celebrated an exciting milestone with the open house of our new home in the heart of Bronzeville! Surrounded by members of our community, we marked the beginning of a new chapter rooted in the same mission that has guided us from the start: empowering the next generation of healthcare professionals through mentorship, education, and opportunity.



Located in the historic Rosenwald building, our new space represents more than just a physical expansion. It is a place where connections can flourish, students can find support, and dreams of pursuing careers in medicine can continue to take shape.

As we reflect on this special celebration, we are reminded that I Am Abel has always been about more than mentorship. It is about building a community where young people feel seen, supported, and empowered to pursue their aspirations. To everyone who has supported this journey, thank you for helping us turn this vision into reality. We can't wait to see all that unfolds within these walls!





Here's to new beginnings, continued growth, and the many lives that will be touched along the way.



I AM ABEL FOUNDATION'S Open House on September 26th was a Whole Vibe!



Grand Opening of I Am Abel Foundation's Corporate Office and the Dr John C

Dr LaMenta Sweetie Conway - I Am Abel Foundation



Watch on  YouTube

I AM ABEL FOUNDATION

26.2 MILES OF COURAGE — AND ONE VERY PROUD I AM ABEL FAMILY!

CELEBRATING CHRISTIAN A. CONWAY, ESQ., AND HER FIRST CHICAGO MARATHON



Christian Conway
I AM ABEL LAW

Chicago knows how to throw a party—and apparently, we also know how to turn a 26.2-mile run into one! The Chicago Marathon brings together runners from around the world, cheering crowds, homemade signs, and enough hometown pride to carry you through almost anything. But this year, our I Am Abel family had an extra-special reason to cheer: I Am Abel Law Founder Christian A. Conway, Esq., was running her very first marathon!

And the story behind her trip to the finish line makes that medal shine even brighter. Christian ran in support of people living with myasthenia gravis (MG), an autoimmune neuromuscular disorder that can cause significant muscle weakness. For her, the cause is deeply personal. Nearly five years ago, this disease changed her life—and nearly took it.

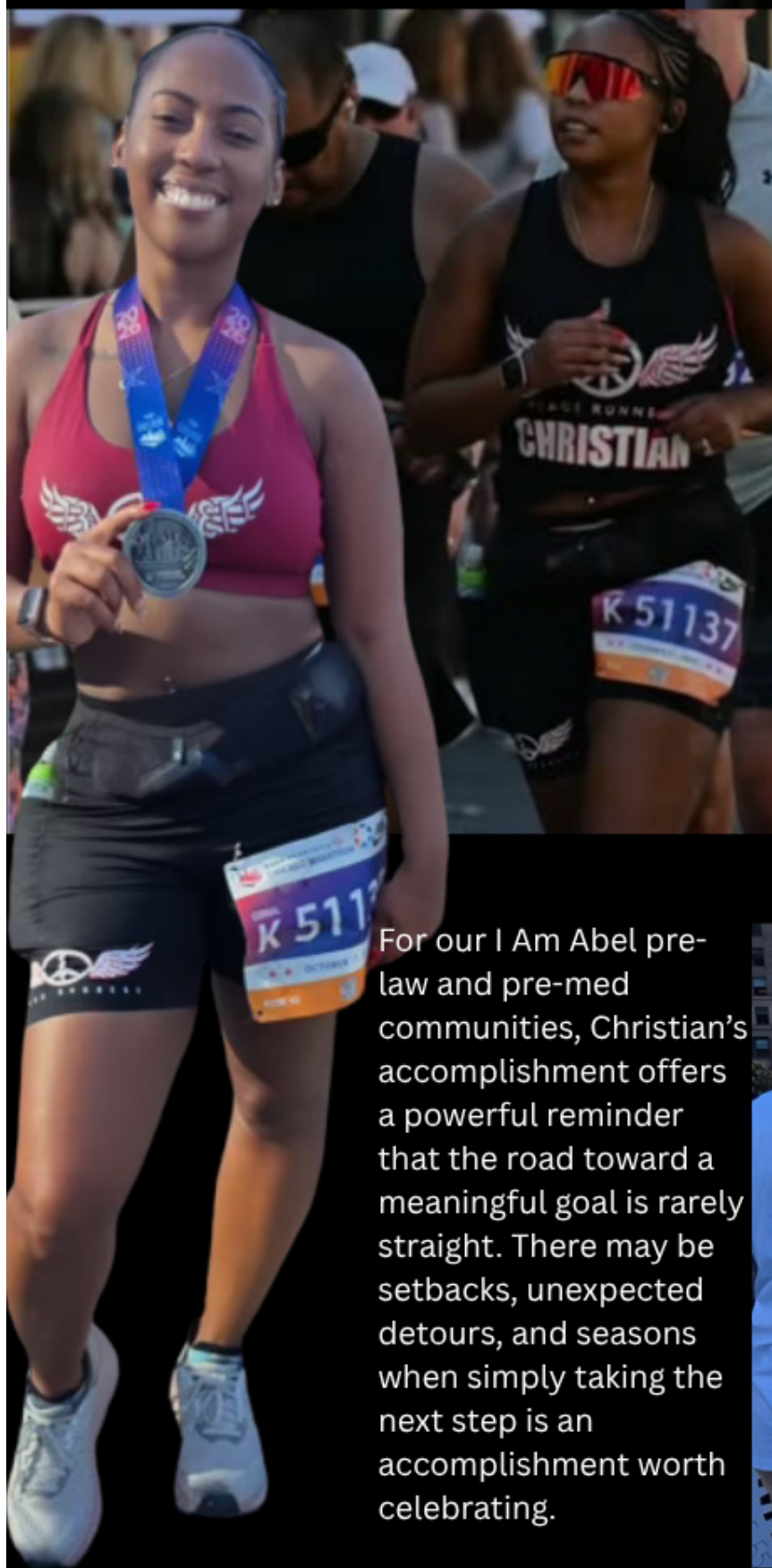
Christian survived COVID, only to begin experiencing unusual symptoms afterward. She was eventually diagnosed with MuSK antibody positive myasthenia gravis — a rare form of MG triggered by

COVID. What followed was a lengthy hospitalization, plasmapheresis, years of steroids, and other intensive chemotherapeutics. But Christian was determined to reclaim the activities—and the life—she loved.

The 35-year-old attorney, who is also the co-founder of daughter of I Am Abel Foundation Founder Dr. Sweetie Conway, began working her way back through walking, weightlifting, and eventually running. Step by step and mile by mile, she built toward a goal that would challenge even someone without her medical history.

26.2 MILES OF COURAGE — AND ONE VERY PROUD I AM ABEL FAMILY!

CELEBRATING CHRISTIAN A. CONWAY, ESQ., AND HER FIRST CHICAGO MARATHON



Yet Christian took on every one of those miles, joining tens of thousands of runners making their way through Chicago's vibrant neighborhoods. Along the route were cheers from strangers, encouragement from fellow runners, and the energy of a city that shows up in a big way. At the finish line waited something no one else could earn for her: her first marathon medal.

FINISH

Christian Conway, and husband, Mark Anthony Dunham Jr., Esq, enjoying a beautiful victory lap post race

For our I Am Abel pre-law and pre-med communities, Christian's accomplishment offers a powerful reminder that the road toward a meaningful goal is rarely straight. There may be setbacks, unexpected detours, and seasons when simply taking the next step is an accomplishment worth celebrating.



26.2 MILES OF COURAGE — AND ONE VERY PROUD I AM ABEL FAMILY!

CELEBRATING CHRISTIAN A. CONWAY, ESQ., AND HER FIRST CHICAGO MARATHON



But on Marathon Day, all of those months of preparation met the streets of Chicago. The stats suggest that less than 1% of persons globally will ever complete a full marathon.

Christian, you already had the title of Attorney, Founder and Advocate. Now you can add one more – Marathoner!

The I Am Abel Family could not be prouder. Congratulations on your first 26.2 Mile marathon and on every step it took to get there!

One determined woman. One extraordinary journey. One well-earned medal!

Christian pictured with her mom, Dr. Sweetie Conway, Founder of I Am Abel Foundation - Medical



Christian is also the co-founder of “the women’s cut” sports media outlet where interviews your favorite women athletes at

<https://media.thewomenscut.com/>
You can also find her on TikTok with her hilarious commentaries @itscwaysworldsca

Saturday Morning Professor October 2026



We were honored to welcome Mr. Brian Williams before our Saturday Morning Professor in October 2026. Here, he was able to share with our students an amazing opportunity for aspiring physicians.



The Dermatology Career Prep Program is a weeklong exposure program to expose students to the specialty of dermatology. In this program, students have the opportunity to connect with practicing dermatologists and medical students, learn more about the specialty and the pathway to get there, get medical school application guidance, and even try hands-on procedures.



Being a part of I Am Abel provides such a unique opportunity to engage with amazing programs like this one.

We were also so excited to celebrate Hispanic Heritage month with a special breakfast and lunch featuring different hispanic origins.

Beyond the Operating Room: Physicians Addressing Gun Violence in Illinois

Gun violence is more than a public safety concern; it's also a public health issue with lasting consequences for individuals, families, and communities.

Here in Chicago, Dr. Anthony Douglas, a surgical resident at the University of Chicago, has helped bring this intersection of medicine and policy into focus through the Responsibility in Firearm Legislation (RIFL) Act.

Developed in response to the physical, emotional, and financial toll of firearm injuries, the proposed Illinois legislation would require firearm manufacturers to contribute licensing fees based on their firearms' involvement in shootings and deaths. The resulting funds would support services for survivors and families, as well as community violence prevention efforts.

The initiative reflects a broader conversation about the role of physicians beyond the hospital. Through community organizing, public education, and legislative discussions, healthcare professionals and local advocates are examining how the consequences of violence can be addressed both inside and outside clinical settings.



**Dr. Anthony Douglas
was one of our very own
I Am Abel Conference
2026 speakers!**



From Awareness to Community Dialogue



This October, the conversation continues through community events, including a Doctors Walk for Peace earlier this month and an upcoming town hall exploring the intersection of public safety and public health.

These gatherings offer opportunities to hear from healthcare professionals, community members, and advocates about the impact of gun violence and the different approaches being considered to address it.

For future physicians, this work offers an important reminder: Understanding the health of a community means looking beyond the conditions we treat to the circumstances that shape them.



REIMAGINING PUBLIC SAFETY TOWN HALL



NEW DATE!
OCTOBER 28TH
6PM-8PM

CHICAGO

THE AUBURN GRESHAM
HEALTHY LIFESTYLE HUB,
839 W 79TH ST, CHICAGO

**DISCUSSING NEW AND
PROVEN SOLUTIONS TO END
GUN VIOLENCE IN ILLINOIS**

SIGN UP HERE ▶



**RIFL
ACT
COALITION**



HOSTED BY:



SAFE ILLINOIS
Safe Access For Everyone

**PUBLIC
EQUITY**
RIGHT IS KEY



**She
Votes
Illinois**

AND



**PURSUING THE
PROMISE**

Views from UChicago: Book Talk Series

OPEN TO ALL IN THE UCHICAGO COMMUNITY



**Join Dr. Selwyn O. Rogers,
MD, MPH,**

Founding director of the
University of Chicago Medicine
Trauma Center, for a
conversation about his book

*"Healing the Gun Violence
Epidemic: Ending Violence,*

*Rebuilding Communities, and a Trauma Surgeon's
Vision for Restoring Hope."* Drawing on decades as a
trauma surgeon, Dr. Rogers examines gun violence as a
preventable public health crisis and offers a vision for
rebuilding safer communities. Featuring discussant,
Franklin Cosey-Gay, PhD, MPH, Project Director of the
Chicago Center for Youth Violence Prevention.

**HEALING
THE GUN
VIOLENCE
EPIDEMIC**

ENDING VIOLENCE.
REBUILDING COMMUNITIES.
AND A TRAUMA
SURGEON'S VISION FOR
RESTORING HOPE

SELWYN O. ROGERS, JR., MD, MPH

"Rogers's love, courage, and compassion are tangible
throughout this powerful and important book."
—KAREN BARKER, President, American Society for Human Rights
and founder of Chicago's first Black-owned mental health center

**OCTOBER 26, 2026
12PM-1PM**

THE JOSEPH REGENSTEIN LIBRARY,
ROOM 122

Free Book + Lunch Provided
Space is limited.

**LEARN MORE & REGISTER
TO ATTEND:**



CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF
RACE, POLITICS & CULTURE



THE UNIVERSITY OF
CHICAGO

OFFICE OF THE PROVOST
Diversity & Inclusion



EXPANDING HEALTHCARE OPPORTUNITIES ON CHICAGO'S SOUTH SIDE

UChicago Medicine and City Colleges of Chicago announce new plans for Washington Park.



© Perkins Eastman. Rendering altered using AI

A major investment in Chicago's South Side is creating new possibilities for healthcare education, employment, and patient care. This October, the University of Chicago, UChicago Medicine, and City Colleges of Chicago unveiled updated plans for an education, health, and science campus in Washington Park.

The proposed development will include a state-of-the-art clinical laboratory and a new Malcolm X College South Campus, bringing healthcare training and employment opportunities closer to South Side residents.

The clinical laboratory is expected to support approximately 550 jobs, including 200 new positions, while expanding diagnostic testing capabilities. Meanwhile, Malcolm X College plans to establish Chicago's first medical laboratory technician program, offering students hands-on training and clinical rotations. The new campus is expected to serve more than 800 students annually once fully operational.

Healthcare access isn't just about where patients receive care. It's also about creating opportunities for community members to become part of the healthcare workforce.

By connecting education, clinical training, and employment, this initiative aims to strengthen Chicago's healthcare workforce while expanding pathways into medicine and allied health professions for South Side residents.

For aspiring healthcare professionals, this development is a reminder that investing in communities also means investing in the people who will care for them.

READ MORE HERE:



Community Engagement:

She's Got Goals



Mission & Vision: She's Got Goals (SGG), founded and led by IAAF mentees, invests in the potential of middle and high school girls from Chicago by harnessing mentorship, experiential learning, and athletic identities to fuel lifelong health, leadership, and careers in medicine. Our mentees learn to leverage the discipline, resilience, and confidence developed through sports to improve their own health and health of their community.



OUR PROGRAMMING

SHE'S GOT GOALS



FOUNDATIONAL TRACK (1ST TIME PARTICIPANTS)

Leadership Skills & Community Wellness, Reproductive Health, Musculoskeletal System, Cardiology, Pulmonary System, Immunology, Mental Health, and Nutrition



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TRACK (RETURNING PARTICIPANTS)

Connecting with Your Community, Social Determinants of Health, Community Volunteering, Health Literacy, Health Communication, Data Visualization, Sport Engagement



BECOME A SHE'S GOT GOALS MENTOR

As our mentee community continues to grow, SGG is looking to expand our network of pre-medical and medical student mentors to support programming and build meaningful relationships with mentees. We seek young women pursuing careers in medicine, particularly those with athletic backgrounds, who can serve as mentors and role models for our participants.

Volunteer Interest Form



Contact Us: shegotgoals@sneakers2scrubs.org



Sarah Gaudron (SGG Founder & 2025 Mentee):

What initially started as filling a gap in programming has grown into something much bigger. Watching our participants take ownership of their learning and disseminate it to their communities has been incredibly rewarding. My favorite part was seeing that growth come together at our final project showcase. From exploring vaginal health to examining what it's like to navigate eczema as a teenager, they chose topics that mattered to them and transformed their learning into something meaningful under the guidance of SGG mentors.

Jacksyn Sallay (2022 Mentee):

As a mentor, I helped guide mentees through programming that integrated career exploration, goal setting, and hands-on activities, including creating vision boards and participating in discussions focused on confidence and personal growth. My favorite session was the Musculoskeletal module, where participants learned the fundamentals of the musculoskeletal system before participating in a Jeopardy-style game that I led to reinforce their understanding of the material.

BECOME A SHE'S GOT GOALS MENTOR

Volunteer Interest Form



Contact Us: shegotgoals@sneakers2scrubs.org

Kyetrel Glass (2025 Mentee):

As a She Got Goals mentor, I've had the opportunity to chaperone the girls through various workshops, panels with medical professionals, and field trips that expose them to different areas of science and medicine. My favorite experience was our MLK Day field trip to Rush University, where I guided the girls through hands-on activities like CPR and intubation and enjoyed seeing their excitement and curiosity as they explored new interests and broadened their horizons.

Madison Tate (2025 Mentee):

I absolutely loved being able to connect with the She's Got Goals mentees during the organization's inaugural programming year. It was incredibly fulfilling to pour into the girls and watch their creativity, confidence, and passion for pursuing careers in medicine grow throughout the year. I remember speaking with one of the parents at our closing session and sharing how rewarding it has been to be a part of such an incredible organization while navigating my own pre-med journey. Being able to encourage the next generation of young women interested in medicine has been such a meaningful experience. I am so excited for the future of She's Got Goals and all of the incredible programming yet to come!

OCTOBER COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

INTRODUCING DR. ERICA TAYLOR!

Who is Dr. Erica Taylor?

I am a child of God, wife, dog Mom, board-certified OB-GYN, physician leader, women's health advocate, entrepreneur, fitness enthusiast, mentor, and lifelong learner. At my core, I believe medicine is not simply about treating disease; it is about empowering people to live healthier, fuller lives. My career has taken me from clinical medicine and medical education to public health, healthcare leadership, and now entrepreneurship. Each chapter has reinforced my commitment to advancing women's health, addressing health disparities, and creating opportunities for the next generation of physicians. I also believe we are never too old, too accomplished, or too established to reinvent ourselves.



What inspired you to become a physician entrepreneur, and what did you want to create that was missing from traditional healthcare?

After years of practicing medicine, I recognized that many women were navigating a healthcare system that often focused on treating symptoms rather than understanding the whole person. Women frequently told me they felt rushed, unheard, or uncertain about changes happening in their bodies, particularly during midlife. I wanted to create something different. Dr. Erica Taylor Health & Wellness was born from my belief that women deserve personalized, evidence-based care that emphasizes prevention, education, and long-term wellness. I envisioned a space where women could have meaningful conversations about menopause, hormonal health, weight management, fertility, and healthy aging without feeling rushed or dismissed. For me, entrepreneurship is not simply about owning a business; it is about having the freedom to practice medicine in a way that aligns with my values.

What lesson do you wish someone had shared with you when you were a young student dreaming about medicine?

I wish someone had told me that your medical degree is a foundation, not a limitation. Early in our careers, we are often encouraged to follow a traditional path: complete your training, join a practice, establish yourself, and remain on that trajectory. What I have learned is that a career in medicine does not have to be linear. You can be a clinician, educator, advocate, leader, entrepreneur, and so much more. Your interests will evolve, and that is perfectly okay. I would also tell my younger self to seek mentorship, build meaningful relationships, understand the business of medicine, and never allow someone else's definition of success to become my own. Most importantly, do not wait until you feel completely ready to pursue something that matters to you. Do it SCARED!

INTRODUCING DR. ERICA TAYLOR!

What concerns weigh heavily on your heart regarding women's healthcare, particularly for Black women?

One of my greatest concerns is that women continue to experience significant gaps in access, quality of care, and the ability to have their concerns taken seriously. We see these disparities across the lifespan, from maternal health and reproductive care to menopause, cardiovascular disease, and healthy aging. For Black women, these challenges are often amplified by structural inequities, implicit bias, chronic stress, and the cumulative effects of racism on health. Black women face disproportionately high rates of maternal morbidity and mortality, yet these disparities are not limited to pregnancy. Too often, their symptoms are minimized, their pain is undertreated, and their concerns go unaddressed. Menopause is another area that deserves greater attention. Women should not have to suffer in silence or navigate this transition without accurate information and appropriate treatment options. My goal is to help shift healthcare from a reactive model to one that prioritizes prevention, education, advocacy, and empowerment. Women deserve more than simply surviving. They deserve the opportunity to thrive.

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I intentionally designed my practice to feel different from a traditional medical office. I wanted women to walk through the doors and immediately feel welcomed, comfortable, and valued. The space includes private examination rooms and a dedicated consultation area that allows us to have meaningful conversations beyond the examination table. Our approach integrates traditional gynecologic care with preventive medicine, lifestyle interventions, menopause management, weight management, and wellness coaching. I also envision the practice as a community wellness destination where education, connection, and conversations about women's health extend beyond individual appointments. Ultimately, I want every woman who visits to feel heard, respected, and empowered to take an active role in her health.

Do not put yourself in a box. Medicine offers extraordinary opportunities to make an impact, and not all of them involve direct patient care. Throughout my career, I have worked in clinical medicine, medical education, public health, and healthcare leadership. Each experience has shaped the physician and leader I am today. I encourage young people to remain curious, pursue opportunities outside their comfort zones, and build relationships with individuals whose careers reflect the possibilities they envision for themselves. Develop skills beyond clinical medicine, including communication, leadership, financial literacy, and strategic thinking. Please remember that your career does not have to look like anyone else's. You can be an excellent physician while also pursuing the other passions that make you who you are.



INTRODUCING DR. ERICA TAYLOR!

Would you choose OB/GYN again? Would you do anything differently?

Absolutely. I would choose OB/GYN again. It is an extraordinary specialty that allows us to care for women through some of the most significant and vulnerable moments of their lives. Few specialties offer the same combination of surgery, primary and preventive care, longitudinal relationships, and opportunities to advocate for women across generations. However, I would approach certain aspects of my career differently. I would have established stronger boundaries earlier, prioritized my own wellness, and developed a greater understanding of the business and leadership aspects of medicine. As physicians, we are often conditioned to believe that sacrifice is simply part of the profession. While medicine requires tremendous dedication, I have learned that caring for others should not come at the expense of caring for ourselves. I would also have embraced entrepreneurship sooner. I still love being an OB/GYN. What has changed is my understanding of the many ways I can use that training to make a difference.



What are you building toward now? What impact do you hope to have five years from today?

I am building more than a medical practice; I am building a global model of women's healthcare that places prevention, education, empowerment, and longevity at the center. Over the next five years, I envision Dr. Erica Taylor Health & Wellness becoming a trusted destination for women seeking comprehensive, personalized care, particularly during midlife and beyond. I also hope to expand our reach through community partnerships, educational programming, and innovative wellness initiatives that improve access to care. My vision includes creating opportunities for mentorship, collaboration, and the development of future healthcare leaders. Ultimately, I want my impact to extend beyond the number of patients I see. I want women to feel more informed, more confident, and more empowered to advocate for their health. And I want the next generation of physicians to see that it is possible to build a meaningful career in medicine while remaining true to their purpose.



How can patients schedule with you, and where are you located?

Dr. Erica Taylor Health & Wellness, PLLC, is located in the Beverly neighborhood at the corner of 95th & Winchester. We offer personalized women's healthcare and wellness services, including menopause management, hormonal health, preconception counseling, weight management, and preventive wellness. To learn more about our services or schedule a consultation, visit www.drericataylor.com. We look forward to welcoming you and becoming your partner in health.

Celebrating Dr. Sweetie Conway

2026

JOHN BRADLEY STEM AWARD FOR INSPIRATIONAL LEADERSHIP HONOREE

*LaMenta "Sweetie" Conway,
MD, MPH*



The I Am Abel Foundation proudly celebrates our founder, Dr. LaMenta "Sweetie" Conway, on receiving the 2026 John Bradley STEM Award for Inspirational Leadership from the CPASS Foundation! Presented in connection with the October 3rd STEMM Pathways to Health Equity Symposium, this prestigious recognition honors leaders whose dedication to mentorship, education, and advocacy has expanded opportunities for students historically underrepresented in medicine and STEMM fields.

A Full-Circle Moment

For Dr. Conway, this honor holds a deeply personal meaning. Growing up in Chicago's Englewood community, she participated in the Chicago Area Health and Medical Careers Program (CAHMCP), where John Bradley helped guide and inspire generations of aspiring healthcare professionals. Today, Dr. Conway carries that legacy forward through the I Am Abel Foundation, creating pathways for students to pursue careers in medicine through mentorship, academic support, clinical exposure, and community engagement. What began with someone believing in her potential has grown into a mission dedicated to helping countless young people recognize their own.

From all of us at I Am Abel, congratulations, Dr. Conway! Thank you for reminding us that the greatest measure of success is not simply how far we go, but how many others we help bring along the way.

Be Encouraged!

You're Stronger than you think...and tougher than you look!

Founder's Corner

LaMenta S. Conway, MD, MPH

Founder | Board President and CEO

A preacher once said "you are either heading into a storm, fighting through a storm or coming out of a storm." But rest assured, a storm will be a part of your journey. One thing I have seen for the students we mentor, many from very underserved communities, is that they carry such heavy yokes of poverty, family challenges and even mental health struggles common to medically underserved communities. It's as if the enemy knows that they have such important calls upon their lives to heal and restore the communities from which they come. It therefore comes as no surprise that they encounter every hurdle and barrier imaginable on their journey to medicine.

Becoming Comfortable with "Hard"

Since "hard" is inevitable and storms are sure to come, may each future healer take comfort in knowing that storms will also leave. As the song writer says, "trouble don't last always." Life is filled with these inevitable challenges, but may we always remember that "we are more than conquerors through Him that loves us." May God also grant each of our babies that are destined to become "physician healers," peace, comfort and wisdom during challenging times and the added gift of knowing that they have a friend and a supporter in their I Am Abel Family. Sending hugs and love 



Add Your Voice To Ours!

Share your voice with Abel Voices!

Abel Voices: Bridging the Gap is built by our community, for our community—and we'd love to hear from you. Have you recently presented research, attended a conference, received an award, started a new position, volunteered in your community, or experienced a meaningful moment on your healthcare journey?

Whether you have an achievement to celebrate, a story to share, a reflection to offer, or an opportunity others should know about, we invite you to contribute to a future issue.

Scan the QR code below to submit community highlights, student and alumni updates, research accomplishments, health equity reflections, event photos, creative works, and more. Together, we can amplify voices, celebrate successes, and continue building a stronger healthcare community.

Your story could inspire the next generation. Submit today



Meet Our Team

Miracle Burt (2025 Mentee)

Co Editor-in-Chief Newsletter

Ishmael Mendoza (2019 Mentee)

Co Editor-in-Chief Website Blog

Nanabanyin Dadson (2025 Mentee)

Statistics, Outreach and Staff Writer

Our goal for Abel Voices: Bridging the Gap is to create a space where our community can connect, learn, and grow together. Through student and alumni spotlights, educational resources, healthcare news, and conversations surrounding health equity and advocacy, we hope to inform, inspire, and celebrate the journeys of aspiring and current healthcare professionals. Most importantly, we want this newsletter to amplify the voices within our community, foster meaningful connections, and remind every reader that they are part of a network committed to mentorship, service, and creating a more equitable future in healthcare.



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Connect with us!!!

