

HOSA-Future Health Professionals

eMAGAZINE

Spring 2025

Powered by
Connection

hosa

future health professionals

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Letter From The President

Nick Ballard, 2024–2025, International President

Dear HOSA Members and Future Health Professionals,

As the vibrant colors of spring begin to emerge, so does the energy and enthusiasm within our HOSA community!

This season, we're celebrating the power of connection – a force that propels us forward in our pursuit of excellence in healthcare.



The past few months have been a whirlwind of activity, marked by the incredible success of your State Leadership Conferences. From coast to coast, you've showcased your dedication, talent, and passion for healthcare. The International Executive Council has held the honor of joining a few

states for their conferences so far; it has been

truly inspiring to witness the innovative projects, spirited competitions, and unwavering camaraderie displayed at every conference. Congratulations to all who participated! Your hard work and commitment underpin the mission of empowering a next generation of future health professionals at HOSA. I can proudly say that the future of healthcare is bright!

This spring edition of our eMagazine, "Powered by Connection," is packed with exciting content designed to inform, inspire, and excite you; after all, HOSA's cornerstone event, the annual International Leadership Conference, is just around the corner! We're thrilled to shine a light on the vital work of our premier service project partner, NMDP, showcasing the power of human connection in saving lives through stem cell donation.

Summer is fast-approaching, and if you're like me, you'd be looking to escape to a tropical destination! Pack your bags and follow us on a journey to the Philippines as your International President-Elect, Ria Mohan, spotlights the incredible achievements and unique perspectives of the Philippines HOSA founding members and their inaugural year. Our next stop is Nashville, Tennessee, where the upcoming International Leadership Conference (ILC) is calling all future health professionals! June 18th through 21st is your chance to connect with thousands of fellow HOSA members from around the world, learn from leading healthcare professionals, and compete at the

highest level. In this issue, we're providing you with essential information on ILC opportunities, ensuring you're well-prepared for this pinnacle event. Get ready to experience the excitement and forge lifelong connections as we finish off the year *Powered by People!*

The end of the HOSA year also brings exciting opportunities. Your International Executive Council is excited to announce the release of the International Executive Council (IEC) Application! If you're passionate about leadership and want to make a significant impact on HOSA, we could not recommend the opportunity more! To access the packet, please reach out to your state advisor/director. We encourage you to apply and become a driving force in shaping the future of our organization.

Finally, in today's rapidly evolving healthcare landscape, it's crucial to stay informed about emerging technologies. This edition delves into the fascinating world of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and healthcare, exploring how AI is transforming patient care, diagnostics, and research. We believe understanding these advancements is essential for future healthcare professionals.

This spring, let's embrace the power of connection—with each other, with our communities, and with the future of healthcare. Together, we can make a difference, and together, we will support the next era of healthcare.

Get ready to ignite your passion, strengthen your connections, and prepare for an unforgettable ILC, powered by more people than ever before!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nick Ballard". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Nick Ballard
International President,
HOSA-Future Health Professionals

Philippines HOSA: Bringing Filipino Pride to the International HOSA Community

Ria Mohan, 2024–2025, International President-Elect



For years, Filipino-American HOSA members have engaged in conversations about the possibility of bringing HOSA to the Philippines. In 2024, that dream turned into a reality. HOSA members from across the states teamed up to co-found the newest international HOSA association—Philippines HOSA (PH HOSA).

A Mission Rooted in Filipino Pride

The founding team consisted of seven HOSA members: Megan Lloren and Timothy Terrado of New Jersey HOSA, Jazenhia Pineda of Texas HOSA, Katrina Batac of Arizona HOSA, Jason Cabison and Dominic De La Torre of California HOSA, and AllanDave Cabanayan of South Carolina HOSA. Across state lines, each member worked tirelessly to fill out paperwork, seek guidance, and lay the groundwork to develop the newest HOSA division.

Terrado was motivated to get involved in the tedious process of establishing a new international chapter to bring a sense of Filipino pride to the larger HOSA family.

“Filipino nurses are known for their tender care. As the presence of Filipinos in healthcare continues to grow stronger, our intention was to bring this spirit of pride and compassion to HOSA,” Terrado said.

Navigating cultural nuances was a key hurdle in establishing PH HOSA. Communicating the true impact of HOSA to advisors in the Philippines required flexibility and adaptability, as the process varied from school to school. The co-founders quickly learned that success lay in an open-minded approach and the willingness to tailor strategies to align with the local context. Despite these challenges, Philippines HOSA was established at the end of 2024 and has accomplished major milestones that have profoundly inspired members.

Fostering Community Through the Kapamilya Initiative

One of PH HOSA's standout projects is the **Kapamilya Initiative**, a collaboration with Hawaii HOSA. Recognizing the deep Filipino roots in Hawaii, the initiative helps bridge the cultural divide through a pen-pal system between mainland Filipinos and American-Filipino HOSA members. Students from both regions learned about each other's cultures and gain valuable insights from diverse perspectives.

Hawaii HOSA's Alumni Association (HAPAH) collaborated with chapter advisors to work closely with chapter advisors to develop a structured program and create a meaningful experience. Participants were carefully paired using personality-based questions to match students with similar interests and foster mentorship and friendship.



Building Leaders Through the Manila Leadership Academy

Another defining achievement for PH HOSA was the **Manila Leadership Academy (MLA)**, a one-day leadership development event inspired by the HOSA's annual Washington Leadership Academy. At MLA, student leaders took center stage, actively presenting and sharing insights about HOSA.

For many PH HOSA members, hosting MLA was a highlight in their leadership journey thus far. Matthew Demeza, PH HOSA Student Leader, recalled, "Hosting an event for the first time was nerve-wracking, but executing it successfully was incredibly rewarding."

For Lloren, witnessing it grow from an idea to a project and now to a full-blown entity hosting its very first event was surreal.

"Bringing HOSA to my home country and watching students fall in love with the organization as much as I have is a crazy concept. We have students who are so eager to participate and I never would have thought that time is here, the time is now. It's a dream come true," Lloren said.

Expanding Healthcare Education: The Kalusugan Initiative

PH HOSA has also made strides in healthcare education through the **Kalusugan Initiative** (Kalusugan meaning "health" in Filipino), an adapted version of HOSA's Community Awareness competitive event. During MLA, students brainstormed pressing health issues in the Philippines, which were then transformed into actionable community projects. This hands-on approach empowered students to leave a tangible impact in their communities while developing crucial leadership skills.

Transforming Students Into Leaders

PH HOSA's influence extends beyond events and initiatives—it has played a pivotal role in shaping students into confident leaders. Reflecting on their journey, the team of co-founders and members shared personal insights on what has been most rewarding along the journey.



"I think the most rewarding part of this journey for me is inspiring others and seeing others visibly inspired by our efforts. We worked so hard to get to this point and it makes me happy seeing other people get on board, cheering on our students of PH HOSA!" Batac said.

Lessons in Leadership and Advice for Leaders

For aspiring international HOSA leaders, the co-founders offer the advice to stay flexible, expect the unexpected, understand it's a lot of work and keep pushing forward.

Last but not least, Pineda advised, "Starting an international charter is a huge task—you can't do it alone. Find a team!"

The Future of PH HOSA and International Expansion

Looking ahead, PH HOSA aims to expand across the Philippines, with a focus on increasing chapters in Metro Manila and beyond. A long-term vision is for PH HOSA to establish a strong leadership structure where local student leaders take charge while the founding team transitions into advisory roles.

Terrado also hopes to see more Postsecondary/Collegiate (PS/C) chapters in the Philippines. "Students at this stage have the passion and drive to take HOSA to the next level. I want to see them representing the Philippines on an international scale," he elaborates.

Moving forward, PH HOSA members look to attend ILC and proudly carry the Philippine flag in the opening ceremony, completing the dream that first inspired this journey. PH HOSA's story is one of determination, resilience, and commitment. From an idea sparked in casual conversations to a thriving international charter, PH HOSA stands as a testament to the power of student leadership and the global impact of HOSA. This initiative has helped students develop confidence and a deeper appreciation for their shared heritage—a journey that will inspire more growth as HOSA continues to touch lives globally.



Celebrating Leadership & Growth: SLC 2025 RECAP

Hasvi Patel, 2024–2025, International Western Region Vice President



One of the most anticipated events on the HOSA calendar for members is the State Leadership Conference (SLC)—a series of days filled with competition, collaboration, and connection. For many members, SLC is more than just a competition; it's where dreams begin to crystallize, where passion for healthcare is reaffirmed, and where leaders are born. Across the world, HOSA students came together at their respective SLCs to celebrate their journeys, challenge themselves, and grow as future health professionals. While each chartered association held its unique version of the conference, a shared spirit of ambition and pride united them all.

At every SLC, competitive events take center stage. From Medical Terminology to Biomedical Debate, students bring months of preparation and dedication to life. Some stand before judges with trembling hands, while others tackle hands-on clinical skills with intense focus, but all walk away stronger. Beyond the medals, these moments become personal milestones.

“My favorite part of SLC is seeing how HOSA members thrive in the community and in competition.”

— Faith You, Montana HOSA State President



The magic of SLC isn't limited to the competitions. Students also participate in leadership-building workshops, explore college and career fairs, and invest time in joining the NMDP registry. This year, we have a total of 2,144 NMDP registry sign-ups, thanks to all the new members who joined to help save lives. These experiences allow members to go beyond their chapters and connect with a larger community of aspiring healthcare leaders.





“I loved meeting members from all across Washington and getting to see students’ healthcare passion shine in workshops and events!” — Shriya Patel, Washington HOSA



WASHINGTON

Some SLCs featured hands-on simulations and guest speakers from local hospitals, while others focused on team challenges and service projects during their workshops. Regardless of the variety in activities, students walked away with fresh inspiration—and oftentimes, new friendships.

For many chapters, especially newer or smaller ones, SLC served as a turning point. Being surrounded by like-minded peers showed members what was possible, not just for themselves but for their chapters. “Seeing how other schools lead their events gave us so many ideas,” Shoni Jain, a chapter officer from Oregon, shared. “It made us excited to go back home and try something new.”



SOUTH CAROLINA

The experience also served as a reminder that HOSA’s strength lies in its community. From bus rides and hotel bonding to cheering each other on during awards, the memories made outside of events were just as meaningful as those made on stage.

The International Executive Council Western Region Vice President, Hasvi Patel, had the opportunity to attend this year’s Nebraska HOSA, Arizona HOSA, and Alaska HOSA State Leadership Conferences. At each conference, she noticed new growth, fresh leadership, and a shared commitment to making every SLC more remarkable than the last.



“I had an amazing time connecting with members, and it was truly beautiful to meet so many future healthcare professionals. Witnessing the strength of HOSA’s community in full motion was inspiring.”

— Hasvi Patel, International Executive Council, Western Region Vice President



MISSOURI

As each SLC came to a close, students across the globe gathered to celebrate their achievements. Some walked across the stage for the first time. Others cheered from the audience, proud of their teammates and friends. And while the closing ceremony may have looked different from state to state, the feeling was the same: pride, excitement, and the joy of being part of something bigger than themselves.

With the International Leadership Conference (ILC) coming up in Nashville, Tennessee, from June 18th to the 21st, members are returning to their schools energized and inspired. They’re taking with them the lessons, memories, and momentum from their SLCs. These conferences didn’t just prepare them for competition—they prepared them to lead, to dream boldly, and to step confidently into the future of healthcare.

Launch your applications now for the International Leadership Council!

Ria Mohan, 2024–2025, International President-Elect,
and Aditya Suresh, 2024–2025, Central Region Vice President

Your 2024–2025 International Executive Council is honored to serve an organization truly powered by people—leaders who shape the future of healthcare and empower others. If you've dreamed of stepping up to lead, to inspire, and be a part of something greater than yourself, now is your chance! The International Executive Council (IEC) application is officially open, and we can't wait to welcome a new group of leaders ready to make a memorable impact on our HOSA community.

Why Apply?

Serving on the International Executive Council is more than a title—it's a transformative journey of leadership, growth, and connection. You'll work alongside like-minded, driven individuals who share your vision for a stronger HOSA family. Now is the time to take the leap and step into a role that allows you to lead the next generation of HOSA members.

How to Access the Application

The application packet is ONLY accessible to State Advisors. To receive a copy, you must follow your Chartered Association's process for IEC nomination. If you're unsure about how to proceed, don't hesitate—reach out to your State Advisor for guidance.

Important Deadlines

- **Digital Upload Deadline:** All required documents must be submitted digitally by 11:59 PM CST on May 10th. Plan accordingly! Late submissions will not be accepted.
- **ILC Attendance:** Candidates must be prepared to attend ILC during all dates listed in the application packet. Lodging fills up quickly, so book your accommodations early! Visit hosa.org/travel to explore HOSA-approved lodging options.

The leadership journey is filled with challenges, triumphs, and unforgettable experiences. Our current International Executive Council has seen firsthand the power of dedicated leadership, and we are eager to welcome new leaders into this incredible opportunity.

Are you ready to step up and shape the future of HOSA? We believe in you, and we can't wait to see your application!

*Best of Luck from your
International Executive Council!*



Spring Forward with Asthma Awareness

Hasvi Patel, 2024–2025, International Western Region Vice President,
and Bhavesh Manne, 2024–2025, International Eastern Region Vice President

Spring into Respiratory Health: Asthma Awareness and Prevention

As we transition into the vibrant season of spring, many of us are excited to embrace warmer temperatures, blossoming flowers, and more time outdoors. However, for millions of individuals living with asthma and other respiratory conditions, the arrival of spring can bring both beauty and challenges. With rising pollen levels, fluctuating air quality, and seasonal allergens in full swing, it's crucial to be proactive about maintaining respiratory health during this time of year.

For those with asthma, spring can trigger flare-ups. Airborne pollen from trees, grass, and flowers can cause allergic reactions that lead to symptoms such as wheezing, coughing, shortness of breath, and chest tightness. Additionally, increased outdoor pollutants like dust and ozone can irritate the airways, further exacerbating asthma symptoms. Understanding

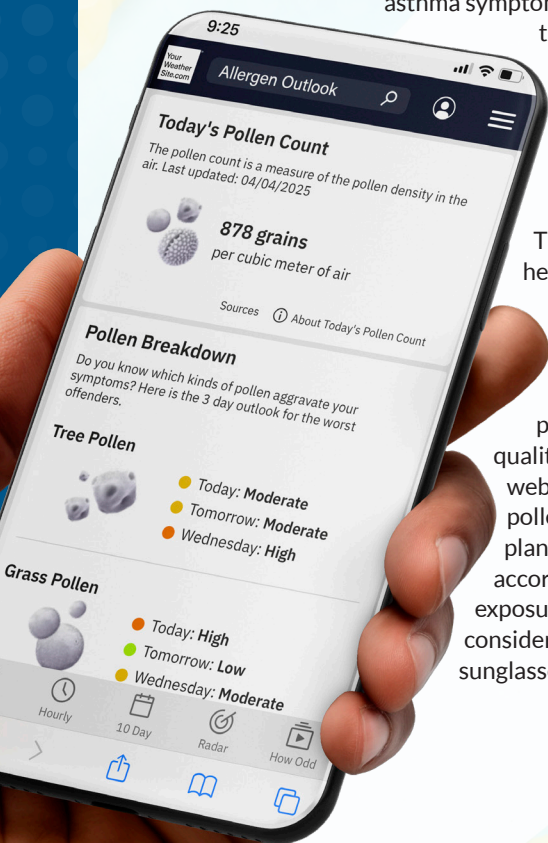
these seasonal triggers and managing your asthma effectively is essential for enjoying spring with minimal discomfort.

The key to staying healthy during spring lies in preparation and awareness. First, it's important to stay informed about local pollen levels and air quality. Weather apps and websites provide real-time pollen data, helping you plan outdoor activities accordingly. To reduce exposure to allergens, consider wearing sunglasses to shield

your eyes, keeping windows closed during peak pollen hours, and limiting outdoor time on days with high pollen counts.

In addition to environmental precautions, having a solid asthma action plan is critical. Working closely with healthcare providers, individuals with asthma should develop a personalized plan that includes prescribed medications, such as inhalers, bronchodilators, or corticosteroids, that reduce airway inflammation and help prevent flare-ups. Keeping medications up-to-date and knowing when and how to use them is vital to managing asthma effectively.

It's also important to recognize the signs of an asthma attack and have a quick-relief inhaler or other prescribed medication on hand. For individuals who experience asthma symptoms frequently, regular check-ups with a healthcare provider can help ensure that treatments are working and adjustments are made as necessary.



General Respiratory Health Tips for Spring

While asthma management is top of mind during spring, it's also important to focus on general lung health.

Regular exercise is essential for building strong respiratory muscles, but it's important to listen to your body—on high-pollen days or when air quality is poor, opt for indoor workouts like yoga or swimming. Incorporating breathing exercises into your routine can also help strengthen lung capacity and improve overall respiratory function.



Additionally, maintaining a healthy diet rich in antioxidants, vitamins, and minerals can support your body's ability to combat inflammation and oxidative stress, both of which play a role in respiratory conditions.

Raising Awareness for Respiratory Health

Spring is also a great time to raise awareness about chronic respiratory diseases, such as asthma, COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease), and pulmonary fibrosis. These conditions impact millions of individuals worldwide, and early diagnosis and intervention are key to improving long-term health outcomes. Respiratory conditions are often overlooked until symptoms worsen, which is why education and proactive management are crucial.

As future healthcare professionals, understanding the impact of seasonal changes on respiratory health and knowing how to support those with chronic conditions is an



essential part of preparing for careers in healthcare. Environmental factors like air pollution and climate change continue to influence respiratory health, and the need for skilled professionals to manage these challenges is more important than ever.

HOSA's Role in Respiratory Health Education

Through various HOSA – Future Health Professionals competitive events, students can deepen their understanding of respiratory conditions and develop crucial problem-solving skills for healthcare. Furthermore, events like Respiratory Therapy, Health Science Events, and Public Health allow students to explore the science behind asthma and other respiratory diseases.

In particular, HOSA offers students a unique platform to learn how emerging technologies—such as telemedicine, AI-powered health tools, and wearable devices—can transform asthma management and treatment. These skills are especially valuable as we move into an era of personalized medicine and data-driven healthcare solutions.

Spring Into Action!

As we enjoy the beauty and rejuvenation that spring brings, let's also take the time to prioritize respiratory health and awareness. Whether you're managing asthma yourself or supporting someone with a respiratory condition, staying informed, being prepared, and taking proactive steps can make a world of difference. Through education, action, and collaboration, HOSA members are poised to be at the forefront of respiratory health innovation and care.

Let's embrace this spring season by focusing on our health and ensuring that everyone has the knowledge and resources to breathe easy.



AI & Healthcare: The Future is Now, and You Can Be Part of It!

Nick Ballard, 2024–2025, International President

There is no question that the world is changing at an unprecedented pace—and much of this change can be attributed to the rapid advancement of artificial intelligence (AI). From generative AI tools like OpenAI's ChatGPT and Google's Gemini to novel medical innovations improving clinical decision-making, AI is quickly becoming an integral part of our lives and the field of healthcare.

As future healthcare professionals look toward preparing to lead the next generation of medicine, understanding and engaging with AI is no longer a luxury but a necessity. At its core, AI refers to the simulation of human intelligence processes by machines, especially computer systems, to augment human performance rather than replace it. It encompasses a broad range of technologies. Specifically, AI utilizes machine learning to analyze complex data sets, enhancing decision-making through algorithms that enable computers to learn from data without explicit programming. AI aims to make machines capable of performing tasks that typically require human intelligence, such as problem-solving, decision-making, and pattern recognition.

In fact, we are living through an AI revolution. Exponential advancements in algorithmic design have fueled an unprecedented surge in AI applications. This boom is particularly significant in healthcare, where the potential to improve patient outcomes, streamline processes, and enhance medical research implies accelerating life-saving technologies faster than ever before.

AI integration into healthcare is transforming the field in numerous ways. For instance, AI algorithms are being used to analyze medical images, such as X-rays, CT scans, and MRIs, to detect diseases like cancer and Alzheimer's disease with greater accuracy and speed. It also accelerates the process of identifying potential drug candidates, predicting their efficacy, and optimizing clinical trials. Patient data can be analyzed to tailor treatments and therapies to individual needs, leading to more effective and targeted care through personalized medicine. Additionally, AI-powered robots assist surgeons with complex procedures, enhancing precision and minimizing invasiveness.

Remote patient monitoring is also being revolutionized with the growth of AI integration. AI-driven wearable devices and telehealth platforms enable continuous monitoring of patients' health. This facilitates the early detection of health issues and improves chronic disease management. To enhance administrative efficiency, AI automates tasks such as scheduling appointments, processing insurance claims, and managing medical records, freeing up healthcare professionals to focus on what matters most—patient care.

These are just a few examples of the transformative potential of AI in healthcare. As technology continues to advance, we can expect even more innovative applications to emerge.

Given the significant role AI is playing in the evolution of healthcare, it is vital that aspiring healthcare professionals become well-versed in this technology. For future leaders, understanding and engaging with AI is crucial. HOSA competitive events often incorporate elements of technology and innovation, effectively exposing members to the latest advancements in healthcare, including AI-driven tools and techniques. Many HOSA events require students to analyze complex scenarios, make informed decisions, and develop innovative solutions, cultivating problem-solving and critical thinking skills essential for working with AI in healthcare.

Interested in how AI will transform healthcare data systems? Learn more about health informatics by competing in HOSA's Health Informatics competition. If you're keen on ethical implications, consider Medical Law & Ethics or Biomedical Debate, whose prompt changes annually. HOSA provides a platform to gain knowledge in many fields, creating a strong foundation to understand AI applications within healthcare.

The future of healthcare is now, and HOSA members are poised to be at the forefront of this exciting transformation!



A Connection That Saves: HOSA, NMDP, and Allison Havard's Story

Jillian Anderson, 2024–2025, Postsecondary/Collegiate Vice President



The power of human connection can change lives in unexpected ways. For Allison Havard, an Arizona HOSA alumna and current student at Texas State University, her decision to join the NMDP registry saved a complete stranger and demonstrates how anyone has the ability to make a difference.

Havard's journey with the registry began in December 2023 when fellow student and HOSA alumna Jocelyn Auxier approached her about establishing an NMDP On Campus Chapter. Inspired by the organization's mission, especially its work to diversify the registry, Havard immediately helped lay the foundation of the chapter.

"I really appreciate the work that NMDP does," Havard shared. "I've been lucky enough to be healthy my whole life, and if I can use that to help someone else, why wouldn't I?"

Little did she know that just a few months later, she would receive an email that she was the best possible match for a patient in need of a blood stem cell transplant.

"I wasn't expecting it whatsoever," she admitted. "I thought it would take years—if at all. It was a random day in July, and I was heading to the airport when I got the email. I read it and thought, 'No way, no way.' I immediately called Jocelyn, and she confirmed what I was reading—I was the match!"

The next few months were a blur full of preparation, medical evaluations, and scheduling her donation alongside her NMDP coordinator. As a college student without a car, Havard was initially concerned about logistics, but NMDP made the entire process seamless.

"They told me, 'We'll get you where you need to go—you just need to be willing to show up.' The support they provide removes so many barriers that might otherwise make donating seem impossible," Havard said.

In September 2024, Havard spent four or five hours donating her peripheral blood stem cells (PBSC) in a simple clinic procedure.

She explained, "It wasn't painful—just a little uncomfortable," and added that the process was rather simple.

Reflecting on the experience, she emphasizes how her perspective on health and her own privilege has shifted. "It's a privilege to be scared of something like getting your blood drawn or receiving a shot. There are so many people who don't have that choice—they've had to get used to it because their lives depend on it."

Even after her PBSC donation, Havard continues to be a fierce advocate for NMDP. She volunteers with her NMDP On Campus chapter at Texas State University as well as educates college students about just how much of an impact they can have on a stranger's life.

"The bottom line is, the more people on the registry, the more people who find their life-saving match. And even if you can't be on the registry, you can still volunteer. NMDP values every single person who gets involved, no matter how much time they can commit."

Even though Havard donated to a stranger, they are now forever connected through the gift of life. NMDP works to ensure that each patient has a match by connecting patients in need with those on the registry; demonstrating just how powered by people the world of health is.

As a HOSA member, you hold the power to create these connections by getting involved. Whether you sign up for the pre-registry if you are under 18, commit to the registry yourself after your 18th birthday, or help out by volunteering, you hold the power to make a difference in the world of healthcare.

Your HOSA chapter could be the next to find a patient's cure. To find out how you can host NMDP events, visit the new Service Project Guide at <https://hosa.org/publications/>



From Student to Specialist: The Journey of an Ophthalmologist

Cameron Carter, 2024–2025, Secondary Board Representative



For the final edition of **From Student to Specialist**, Dr. David Kelly, an ophthalmologist, dedicated HOSA alum, and current HOSA Inc. Board Chair, shared insights into his journey from a HOSA Bowl competitor to International President and now a physician specializing in ophthalmology and surgical eye care. His story highlights the profound impact HOSA has on members worldwide.

Kelly's HOSA journey began in 2009 when he joined through his biomedical high school program in Oklahoma. Since HOSA was integrated into the curriculum, he became a member automatically, but like many new students, he was initially unaware of the vast opportunities the organization offered. He simply needed to choose a competitive event, so he and a few friends formed a HOSA Bowl team and competed at Oklahoma's State Leadership Conference.

"We were terrible," Kelly admitted with a laugh. The team did not qualify for nationals (now internationals), but instead of giving up, they committed to training harder for the following year. That fall, one of his teachers encouraged him to run for state office. Taking a chance, he successfully campaigned and served as Oklahoma HOSA State President. That leadership experience gave him the confidence to run for the National Executive Council, where he was elected National (now International) President.

Coincidentally, that same year, his HOSA Bowl team finally qualified for nationals. However, their competition was short-lived as they were eliminated in the first round. "Luckily, my campaign for president went better than my HOSA Bowl competition," Kelly joked.

Despite the challenges, both experiences played a significant role in shaping his leadership skills, whether through teamwork in competition or organizing events for his chapter. Even after completing his tenure as a student leader, Kelly remained engaged with HOSA. He has volunteered at state conferences, worked on general sessions at the International Leadership Conference, and even led educational symposia such as **How to Get Into Medical School**.

When he first learned of an opening on the HOSA Inc. Board of Directors, Kelly questioned whether he was at the right stage in his career to take on such a responsibility. However, he soon realized that HOSA's board represents a broad spectrum of individuals, from students to industry professionals. Serving in this role has given him a deeper appreciation for HOSA's continued growth.

"HOSA is in the best position it has ever been to serve its members," Kelly shared. "As the healthcare industry evolves, we have to adapt, and we're already forming partnerships that give students incredible access to careers around the world."

Kelly always had an interest in science, but in high school, he discovered that medicine combined science with something even more important: human connection. That realization led him to medical school, where he eventually found his passion for ophthalmology, a surgical specialty focused on eye care.

"I figured it out kind of late in medical school, which made applying for residency more challenging," Kelly admitted. "But I'm so glad I found it. Not only do we perform surgery, but we also follow our patients for decades."

Now, he is preparing for a fellowship in oculofacial plastic surgery, a highly specialized field that treats eyelid and eye socket diseases, including trauma, tumors, and reconstructive surgery. His work will involve collaboration with ophthalmologists, ENT surgeons, neurosurgeons, and even dental surgeons.

Reflecting on the challenges of his education, Kelly acknowledged the pressure many aspiring healthcare professionals place on themselves.

"The hardest thing is believing that any setback means failure. But I'll let you in on a secret: almost everyone has setbacks. In medicine, there are so many 'high-stakes' steps along the way, but those experiences aren't wasted. They make you a better provider," he said.

After college, he took a gap year working at a medical imaging center handling insurance authorizations. At the time, it was not part of his original plan, but in hindsight, he recognizes its value. "I know so much more than my peers about the complexities of medical insurance, and that knowledge makes me better at my job."

Offering advice to current HOSA members, Kelly emphasized the importance of keeping an open mind.

"HOSA gives you so many tools to explore careers, and I wish I had taken even more advantage of that. Keep an open mind—you might find a path that fits your skills and goals even better than what you originally planned."

As HOSA approaches its 50th anniversary, Kelly is excited about the organization's future. From enhancing general sessions at ILC to expanding career opportunities for members, he is proud to be part of a community that continues to evolve to meet students' needs.



"HOSA gives you so many tools to explore careers, and I wish I had taken even more advantage of that. Keep an open mind—you might find a path that fits your skills and goals even better than what you originally planned."

—Dr. David Kelly

A Global Perspective:

How a Pre-Health Shadowing Program in Spain Reinforced My Commitment to Medicine

Taeja Garrick, sponsored by Atlantis

My Journey from Business to Medicine

My long-held aspiration to study abroad was initially tied to a business management major and a fascination with international relations. However, it took an unexpected turn during the challenging years of the COVID-19 pandemic. While my undergraduate journey at the University of Florida began with dreams of fluent Spanish and international business ventures, a pivotal shift toward the pre-med track emerged from personal experiences during the pandemic. This transition, though driven by a newfound passion for medicine, seemingly extinguished my hopes of experiencing life and learning in another country, given the demanding nature of pre-med studies.

The early stages of my pre-med journey during COVID held significant hurdles, especially in securing shadowing and clinical experiences. Despite these limitations, I pursued every available opportunity, each one further solidifying my interest in medicine.

It was at the end of my sophomore year that my academic advisor presented an unexpected opportunity: an Atlantis shadowing program in Spain offered through UF as a summer course. The chance to immerse myself in a hospital setting within a country I had always wanted to visit was thrilling.

An Unexpected Opportunity: The Atlantis Pre-Health Shadowing Program in Spain

This opportunity to shadow doctors in Spain was a fantastic privilege that I am thankful I got to experience. Reading about different healthcare systems was one thing, but seeing Spain's system, talking with doctors, and making real connections with them taught me so much.

One thing I'll always remember is watching a complicated orthopedic surgery. Even though it was intense, the surgeon took time to explain everything to me. This highlighted the importance and value placed on teaching, even amidst a busy medical practice. Another powerful moment was seeing a family doctor treat elderly patients with so much warmth and understanding. It emphasized that being a doctor involves more than just medical skills.

Experiencing Spain's healthcare system, with its universal access and focus on preventative care, provided me with significant learning opportunities. The strong sense of community within Spanish healthcare settings was particularly

memorable. Doctors, nurses, and staff appeared to work together with a shared mission, creating a supportive atmosphere for everyone. This collaborative approach clearly demonstrated the value of teamwork in providing effective patient care.

Watching Spanish medical professionals interact with patients revealed subtle yet important cultural differences. They seemed to place a significant emphasis on personal connection and building trust, often having more casual conversations and showing genuine interest in the patient's life beyond their immediate health issues. This patient-centered approach, where cultural understanding was key to communication and trust, expanded my view of medicine. It emphasized that effective healthcare involves not just scientific knowledge but also empathy and cultural awareness.

A Shaped Philosophy: Integrating International Experiences into My Medical Journey

This international shadowing experience has significantly shaped my career goals and medical philosophy. It has deepened my understanding of the social factors impacting health and the importance of considering diverse cultural viewpoints in medical practice.

Looking back at my time in Spain, I believe it has fundamentally contributed to my development as a future physician. Beyond providing invaluable clinical exposure and a broader understanding of healthcare systems, it fostered personal growth, adaptability, and cross-cultural understanding. This experience has aided me in my journey to where I am now as I wrap up my first year of medical school. Applying the patient-centered model is something that is continuously emphasized and I feel privileged to have experienced it in Spain.

Overall, going on my Atlantis program reinforced my passion for medicine and equipped me with a more comprehensive and empathetic way of approaching patient care—qualities I believe are vital for any aspiring healthcare professional.



Taeja Garrick (L) and Michelle Villate (R) on their Atlantis shadowing program in Spain.



It's Almost Graduation! Now What?

The HOSA Advantage for Seniors and PS/C Graduates

Maddy Yarema, 2024–2025, Postsecondary/Collegiate Board Representative



Congratulations, Class of 2025! As graduation approaches, the big question remains: what's next? Whether you're heading to college, entering the workforce, or continuing your education, HOSA offers valuable opportunities that may help shape your future.

Continuing Your HOSA Journey After Graduation

Scholarship Opportunities: Did you know that your HOSA involvement doesn't have to end with high school? As a PS/C member, you can continue applying for HOSA scholarships to fund your next steps, whether that's attending college or pursuing vocational training.

HOSA on Grad School Applications: Graduate programs value HOSA experience, especially when it continues into college. While medical schools generally don't accept activities before college, staying active in HOSA during your undergraduate years can set you apart from other applicants.

Starting a Chapter on Campus: Why not start your own chapter on campus? The [PS/C handbook](#) makes it easy, and the IEC is available for tips. Founding a chapter demonstrates leadership, helps you connect with professors, and lets you make a meaningful impact on campus.

Staying Connected After Graduation

PS/C Alumni Network: Graduation doesn't mean goodbye. As a PS/C graduate, you have access to a thriving alumni network for career advice, mentorship, job opportunities, and more. You can also stay engaged through partnerships like the Princeton Review and opportunities to judge competitions.

Giving Back: Want to stay connected to the next generation of HOSA members? Consider becoming a [judge at competitions](#) or offering mentorship to current students. It's a rewarding way to give back to the community that shaped your journey.

Lifelong Growth: HOSA is more than just a high school experience; it's a lifelong community. We'll share stories of former members who've grown in their careers, proving that HOSA's impact lasts far beyond graduation. Stay engaged through leadership opportunities, such as joining your chartered association's Board of Directors.

Whether your path continues in HOSA or leads you in a new direction, we'll always have a place for you. Reflect on your favorite memories, the lessons you've learned, and the friendships you've made. We are incredibly proud of everything you've achieved—*congratulations, graduates!*

Empower Your Next Chapter: HOSA's Alumni Division

Nick Ballard, 2024–2025, International President



As the seasons change, so does our journey in healthcare. For those who have walked the halls of a HOSA–Future Health Professionals conference, the connection doesn't end with graduation—it transforms. Welcome to HOSA's Alumni Division, a dynamic community empowering former members to stay connected, grow in their careers, and inspire the next generation of healthcare leaders.



The Benefits of Being a HOSA Alumni Member

Being a part of the HOSA Alumni Division offers more than just a title—it's an ongoing opportunity to tap into a wealth of resources and connections. Here's why you should consider joining:

- I. Develop Professional Connections:** Connect with like-minded healthcare professionals by attending local HOSA events, participating in online networking groups, and joining alumni meetups. These connections help foster collaboration, mentorship, and support as you advance in your career.
- II. Access Career Resources:** As an alumni member, you gain exclusive access to HOSA's Career Center and partner job banks, where you can search through thousands of job openings across the country. Whether you're looking for a new role or exploring career options, these resources can help you find your next opportunity.
- III. Explore Internship Opportunities:** View a wide range of health-related internships offered by universities, corporations, and government agencies. Whether you're looking to gain more experience or shift your focus within healthcare, these opportunities will help you build your resume and continue to grow professionally.
- IV. Become a Mentor:** Give back to the HOSA community by becoming a mentor. By staying connected with your local chapter or state association, you can offer guidance and advice to the next generation of healthcare professionals. This is a great way to stay engaged and support the growth of HOSA members.

How to Join HOSA's Alumni Division

Joining HOSA's Alumni Division is simple! Whether you've recently graduated or it's been a few years since you were an active member, you're eligible to join and continue your journey with HOSA.

Head to the HOSA–Future Health Professionals website and navigate to the Alumni section, or simply visit hosa.org/alumni. There, you'll find easy steps to register for the Alumni Division and unlock all its benefits. Once you've found the alumni membership page, simply fill out the form with your details. After registering, you'll instantly gain access to the network, resources, and exciting events that will help you continue your path of inspiration and success in the healthcare field.

V. Stay Connected with HOSA: Receive regular updates and news about HOSA events, new programs, and the activities happening across the network. This keeps you informed about all the exciting developments within HOSA–Future Health Professionals, ensuring you're always in the loop.

VI. Read HOSA's e-Magazine: Stay inspired and connected by receiving HOSA's e-Magazine, which features stories from local chapters and alumni. You'll get insights into how fellow members are advancing in their careers, along with useful tips and inspiration for your own professional journey.

VII. Volunteer as a Judge or Workshop Presenter: As an alumni member, you can give back by volunteering as a judge at local, state, or international conferences. You can present workshops, sharing your knowledge and experience with students and fellow alumni at events, helping to shape the future of healthcare professionals.

VIII. Receive Exclusive Discounts and Perks: When you become a part of the HOSA Alumni Division, you also unlock exclusive discounts and perks from HOSA's partners including GEICO Car Insurance, Budget Car Rental, and Princeton Review.

IX. Hear From HOSA Alumni and Share Your Story: One of the most powerful ways to stay connected to the HOSA community is by exploring the inspiring stories of fellow alumni and sharing your own HOSA journey. Visit hosa.org/news to read firsthand accounts from members who have taken their HOSA journey and turned it into a lifetime of achievement.



Stay Powered by Inspiration

As healthcare professionals, we know that the path to success is fueled by inspiration. The HOSA Alumni Division is a community where former members can continue to learn, grow, and inspire one another. Joining this network means continuing your journey with a passionate group that understands the impact you've already made and the greater potential you hold for the future.

So, whether you're looking to stay connected, advance your career, or give back by mentoring the next generation of healthcare leaders, HOSA's Alumni Division is the place where your inspiration will continue to thrive. Join today and be part of a community that's always powered by inspiration. Let's continue to make a difference—together.

Exploring Military Medicine at the 2025 AMSUS Annual Meeting

Tolu Oluwafemi, Maryland HOSA, sponsored by AMSUS

The 2025 AMSUS Annual Meeting brought together healthcare professionals, researchers, and leaders from military, federal, and civilian health sectors to discuss advancements in medical practice and healthcare delivery. Hosted at the Gaylord Hotel in National Harbor, this prestigious conference provided a unique platform for collaboration and knowledge-sharing.



Maryland HOSA had the distinct opportunity to attend the event, where students connected with top military healthcare professionals and gained valuable insights into careers in federal medicine and public health. A key highlight for HOSA students was an exclusive panel discussion featuring distinguished military health professionals, including, [Dr. Stephen Ferrara](#), [Dr. Leith J. States](#), [Lt. Gen. John J. DeGoes, MC, USAF](#), [Jonathan Woodson, MD, RADM](#), [Denise Hinton, MS, RN, FAAN](#), and others, who shared their journeys to successful careers.

Hearing first hand from individuals who serve on the frontlines of military medicine gave Maryland HOSA members a fresh perspective on what it means to make a difference in healthcare.

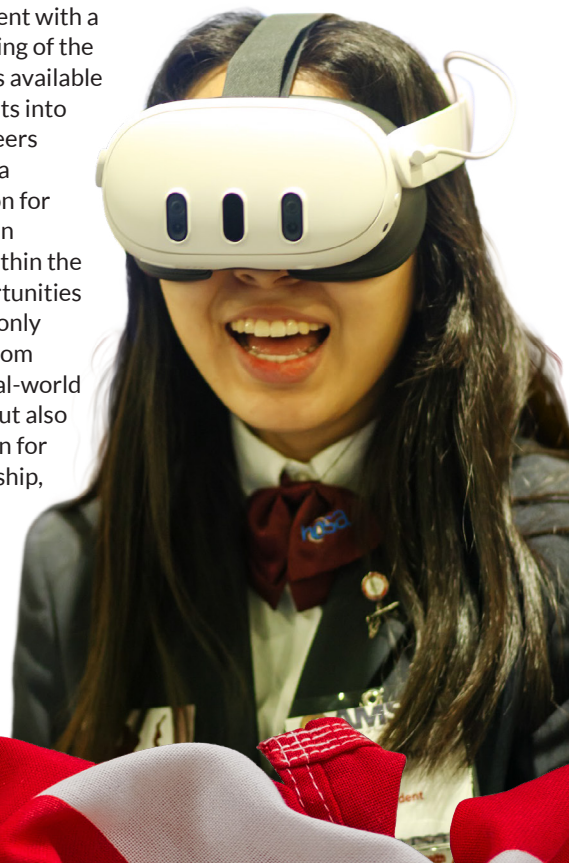
"The first part of the conference had inspiring people who had become successful, oftentimes from nothing. It taught me that success can happen anywhere, at any time, and to always be prepared for any opportunity that may come my way," said Sravika Bolla, a Maryland HOSA member.

Following the panel, students were able to attend the expo, where they engaged with virtual reality, combat medicine simulations, and refined their networking skills. The conference featured exhibits covering a wide range of careers, including clinical medicine and research, as well as military and government health services.

"Being in that environment and learning from such knowledgeable people was truly inspiring," said Bala Pothuraju, another Maryland HOSA member.

Attending the AMSUS conference reinforced Maryland HOSA's mission to inspire and prepare future healthcare leaders.

Students left the event with a greater understanding of the diverse career paths available in healthcare, insights into achieving these careers at a lower cost, and a deeper appreciation for those who serve in medical roles within the military. Opportunities like these not only bridge classroom learning to real-world experiences but also ignite a passion for service, leadership, and lifelong learning in the next generation of healthcare professionals.





No-Cost Mental Health Training That Empowers K-12 School Staff

- **NOTICE** when students show early warning signs of mental health concerns
- **TALK** with students about mental health to engage and support them
- **ACT** to refer students to the right kinds of resources they need

Learn more at apaf.org/schools or email schools@psych.org to schedule a meeting today



Wondering if you might be spending too much time on social media?

Start by asking yourself these questions:



- Am I staying up late scrolling through social media content . . . while feeling tired and sleepy at school?
- Do I feel fidgety, worried, sad or angry whenever I don't have my device or after using social media?
- Am I becoming less interested in everything else or finding it hard to pay attention?

If you answered yes to any of these questions or want to learn more, you can watch the full video [here](#) or use this QR code



Zion,
searching patient



Zion's search for a cure

Zion, a spirited 4-year-old from Richmond, Va., has been fighting against sickle cell disease since he was diagnosed at just one week old. Zion faced his first sickle cell crisis at eight months, suffering a stroke and seizures that left lasting brain damage. His condition worsened and he developed moyamoya disease, a rare condition that narrows blood vessels and increases his risk of future strokes.

Zion has undergone two surgeries and monthly blood transfusions, but these treatments are only temporary solutions. Zion's family is now on a mission to find a blood stem cell donor, as it is Zion's best hope for a cure. Driven by their faith and love, they remain unwavering in their belief that Zion will find a donor.

A life-saving partnership

We're thankful for the students who've dedicated their time to our life-saving movement. NMDPSM is proud to be a **Premier Service Project partner** with HOSA and together we will continue to make an impact for patients like Zion who depend on NMDP to find a cure.

Do something life-saving today

TO GET STARTED, VISIT [NMDP.ORG/HOSA](https://www.nmdp.org/hosa)

Stay up to date with NMDP. Follow us at [@nmdp_org](https://www.instagram.com/nmdp_org)



Join the movement



SAVE LIVES

Help us create a world where blood cancer and blood diseases are a thing of the past



RECRUIT REGISTRY MEMBERS

Encourage potential blood stem cell donors to join the NMDP RegistrySM



RAISE FUNDS

Support patients and their families

LEAD. LEARN. SERVE. INNOVATE.

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