Sophia X. Bogdasarian, RN — Reflections of Her Presidency (2019–2021)

It has been an honor and a privilege to have served as your president these past two years. Although we didn’t have the opportunity to meet in person as we ordinarily would have, we made the best of what the world threw at us. Isn’t that what all medical families do? As Massachusetts Medical Society Alliance (MMSA) members, we support the physician family, and I believe that these past two years we have supported each other in successful ways that we never imagined we would have to confront.

COVID-19 especially affected medical families in serious ways. The Alliance took on this challenge with gusto! We became proficient in Zoom as we “met” and supported each other during the frightening times. We also educated ourselves as our focus shifted to racial equity.

I encourage all of you to continue your support and membership of the Alliance. One of the great opportunities offered to Alliance members is that we may participate on MMS committees. I serve as the liaison for two (the Committee on Public Health and the Senior Physician Committee, both of which are a pleasure), and all MMS committees value our voices. But most of all, it is the lasting, meaningful friendships that we forge in the Alliance. We are lucky to have each other, and for this, I am most grateful.

— Sophia X. Bogdasarian, RN

Read Sophia’s 2021 presidential report on page 20.
This issue of *Prisms* is dedicated to Sophia Bogdasarian, our immediate past president. The MMSA is grateful to Sophia for her devoted leadership, especially during the pandemic.

I would like to thank Jill Cricones for her invaluable organizational skills, her tenacity in learning Zoom, and her patience teaching us all how to maneuver in our new virtual world these past many months. Without her expertise and commitment, my tenure as president would not have been successful. — Sophia X. Bogdasarian, RN
A Vision for the Future of the MMS Alliance

Message from the 2021–2022 MMS President

As a proud new member of the Alliance, let me begin by congratulating you all on another remarkable year of service even during such an extraordinary year due to COVID — a year that we were unable to meet in person and therefore forced us — our Alliance — to be creative in how we help and serve others. On the plus side, I know that the Alliance met more often this year, partly because virtual meetings mean no traffic! Although nothing can compare to seeing each other in person — I hope one of the silver linings that emerges from this pandemic is that we appreciate and utilize the benefits of remote meetings to help us get our work accomplished. At the Medical Society we’ve actually seen committee participation increase and I hope are engaging members who have evening commitments like kids’ bedtime or who live far away. I will admit, I miss the Alliance’s sale table at the Interim Meeting and the art show at the Annual Meeting. So, I don’t wish to do everything by Zoom, but if we can drive a bit less and do more and help more — then that is a win-win situation!

Congratulations on your continued engagement and leadership of a dedicated dynamic membership, whose mission is to advocate and promote good health among the citizens of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

The Alliance has conducted some incredible and important work throughout the year, and each of you should feel proud.

During this year of COVID, a year where systemic racism has come to the forefront in our country, the Alliance’s work has been a year of dedication, introspection, growth, and education.

I truly appreciate and believe in the work that you do. I’m particularly impressed by who and how many have benefited from your generosity and creativity.

The Alliance kept doing what it does best during this challenging year — help others in need...

For example, we created an informational flyer on “How Families Cope with the Stay-Home-Advisory” that was disseminated on social media to help Massachusetts families more easily navigate the realities of being stuck inside due to COVID, and participated with Community Servings to provide home-delivered meals and nutrition services to individuals and families living with critical and chronic illnesses.

The Alliance also helped the health care community by donating to the Massachusetts COVID-19 Relief Fund, which supports frontline health care professionals, first responders, and other essential workers, working families, and households disproportionately affected by the impact of COVID-19.

And, this year, you joined forces with the Worcester District Alliance to fund and send individually prepared meals to three major hospitals in Worcester for physicians and nursing staff working the night shift. We also donated 20 boxes of single-packaged protein bars and nuts to St. Vincent Hospital to support their tremendous work during the pandemic. The Alliance, along with the Charles River District Medical Society, donated to the Newton-Wellesley COVID-19 Relief Fund and the Beth Israel Deaconess Healthcare Heroes Relief Fund. Our help to frontline workers was very much needed and appreciated. On their behalf, I thank you.

On top of all that, this year you have done work to acknowledge, examine, and address racism — especially in health care. You created several Zoom interviews that discuss work the MMS and the Alliance are doing to address racism, health care disparities due to discrimination, and the challenges around vaccine confidence.

In one of the videos, the Alliance’s immediate past president, Sophia Bogdasarian, RN, was interviewed by nursing student Hade Dabbagh on systemic racism. In this interview, Past President Bogdasarian discussed the Alliance’s new book club created this past year to discuss difficult and important topics such as racism.

You started with White Fragility: Why It’s So Hard for White People to Talk about Racism, and then moved on to Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents, which describes racism in the United States as an aspect of a caste system — a society-wide system of social stratification characterized by notions such as hierarchy, inclusion, and exclusion and purity.

One of the most powerful videos that we developed was during the Alliance’s Interim Meeting where MMS members Dr. Fatima Cody Stanford and medical students Carole E. Allen, MD, MBA
LaShyra Nolen and Avneet Soin shared heartfelt personal stories about growing up and living with racism. These profound and important conversations with our amazing members will surely begin to change this world.

I offer you my thanks — on behalf of the Medical Society — for all your hard work, and for the graciousness and impact that surrounds everything you do. In the coming year, I look forward to partnering with incoming Alliance President Bonnie Dunlap, President-Elect Gail Gordon Sanchez, and Secretary/Treasurer Catherine Lew. — Carole E. Allen, MD, MBA

MMS Alliance President Bonnie G. Dunlap, RN

Vision for 2021–2022

I am delighted and honored to be your new president. Being your new president energizes me, and I hope that this enthusiasm will be contagious. Thank you for the vote of confidence that you have placed with me.

Being part of the Alliance, this outstanding organization of physicians’ spouses committed to making a difference in the lives of the community has been a gratifying part of my life. Being able to work with inspirational and talented people like you is a blessing.

Wouldn’t it be wonderful to press a reset button for the past year and a half? Of course, that’s impossible, but many things are not.

Our most recent president, Sophia Bogdasarian, has left me to continue and start new missions. The Alliance will continue with our Zoom meetings and conferences, as well as our book club sessions.

I will work to increase our membership and to support the Alliance’s mission of supporting our physicians’ families and the communities we live in.

I would like to thank you for this opportunity to grow and learn by taking part in so many meaningful and rewarding opportunities. — Bonnie G. Dunlap, RN

2021–2022 Massachusetts Medical Society Alliance Strategic Leadership Council

The MMSA is composed of its district alliances and focuses on three major areas of focus: health promotion, legislation, and charitable contributions. The SLC (Strategic Leadership Council) is the initial decision-making and oversight body of the MMSA. Consisting of elected officers, past state presidents, standing committee chairs, and presidents of active districts, the Alliance meets monthly to administer all programs and special events of the MMSA. The SLC oversees the standing committees’ activities (Administration, Communications, and Membership), prioritizes initiatives, and coordinates activities with the MMS.

The SLC formulates the direction of the MMSA for the coming years, including how the MMSA will work with the MMS to support outreach activities and further the objectives of both organizations. In addition to the long-range planning, the responsibilities of the SLC are leadership development, membership recruitment and retention, and planning the Interim and Annual Meetings.

Massachusetts Medical Society Alliance Strategic Leadership Council

Bonnie G. Dunlap, President
Gail Gordon Sanchez, President-elect
Catherine Lew, Secretary/Treasurer
Sophia Bogdasarian, Immediate Past President
Mary Kay Albert, Past State President
Sandra Delgado, Past State President
Paula J. Madison, Chair of Membership
Sandra Celona, Co-chair of Administration
Mariette Young, Co-chair of Administration
Margaret Igne, President, Boston North District
Paula Madison, Usha Upadhyay, Francine Vakil, Maureen Zacharia, Worcester District Board
A Vision of a Longstanding
MMS Alliance Member Perspective

Which presidential accomplishments are you most proud of?

I am most proud of the accomplishment of planning, organizing, marketing, and orchestrating our first Northeast Regional Leadership Conference that was held at the Cranwell Spa and Resort in Lenox, MA. This event came together with the combined efforts and brainstorming of Jill Cricones, Francine Vakil, and myself over the summer and was held in the fall of 2013. We committed to meaningful event planning to provide stimulating speakers, healthy meals, and a hefty dose of fun for attendees, taking advantage of the resort, the Edith Wharton Mansion, and a chocolatier. We hosted AMA Alliance members from six different states for two and a half days. The necessary promotion of this event was used to get our members to attend. It was a huge learning experience, and I am forever grateful that it was a success.

What was one of the biggest challenges you faced?

New member recruitment and retention continues to be an ongoing concern for each president, it seems. We are an organization of volunteers that asks our members to serve the community in health promotion, advocacy, and philanthropy. Our number of members was highest in the very early 1990s and continues to decrease. I believe that the glue that keeps many of us in the Alliance is the friendships that developed over the years — when we were most in need of support from one another. My approach to the retention of our members was to reach out with personal contact by phone calls and correspondence. One regret is that I was unable to solicit new members on a grand scale because of my introverted personality. However, I feel that our current membership reflects quality, not quantity.
What do you hope to see in the Alliance’s future?

The Alliance’s future. . . In my view, the Alliance has always adapted well with membership requirements allowing for spouses and partners, male and female, and regular members and affiliates (friends of members) and physicians. Our goals for health promotion have kept pace with the times over the decades — teaching sex education in schools in the late 1980s, seat belt use, obesity, mindfulness, the opioid crisis, and systemic racism most recently. We have been relevant, kept up with the times, and supported the public health issues that the Medical Society supports. So, in response to this question, I hope to see our members continue to serve in leadership roles in order to sustain our organization. I took my turn as president and have been rewarded many times over.

How has your experience as Alliance president shaped you?

To begin with, as a district president in the 1990s, I had to learn computer skills and leadership skills to function in that role, for which I am very grateful and still utilize those skills today. Being the MMSA president for 2013–15, I felt obligated to be involved in multiple MMS committees. By first being a member of the district and then the MMS Committees on Public Health. Today, I am still very interested Public Health. Last May–July, I filled a role for the local DPH of calling COVID-19 positive patients in the early phase of the pandemic. Also, during my MMSA years as president, I felt it was important to continue the Soapy presentations at schools in the Southeast district, which put me in front of large groups of students to teach handwashing. Being Alliance president provided me with self-confidence for public speaking and to lead.

How do you see the effects of your membership working in life today?

I feel that the lasting effect of my membership in the Alliance is my close bonds and steadfast friendships with multiple members from the Alliance. I also feel loyalty and a deep commitment to my district alliance, the MMSA and to the MMS. — Paula Madison

Making a Difference

Boston North District

COVID-19 arrived in the United States near the end of March 2020 and Boston went into lockdown. A hiatus took place instead of our festivities to celebrate the accomplishments of 2019–2020.

When we were unable to hold our district annual meeting in person, we pivoted to meet virtually by Zoom on May 14; we were still learning how to adjust to talking and seeing ourselves at the same time.

With all the new adjustments, the Boston district kept its enthusiasm throughout the year. Our mission remained the same, to be working with the MMS, advocating against domestic violence and homelessness, healthy nutrition, and — in particular this year — advocating for equity. We also planned to assist the MMS in advocating for legislative policies.

COVID-19 did not stop us!

Our projects included working with the New England Center for Veterans (NECV), partnering with the Friends of Boston’s Homeless Shelter and the Y2Y youth shelter in Cambridge.

As a yearly tradition, we had our Thanksgiving pie-baking and decorating for the veterans by Zoom connection. I had a good time baking in front of a camera. I baked and decorated 15 pies, and our loyal member Catherine Lew and her husband were extremely nice to volunteer their time to deliver them to our friends at the NECV. We held our holiday celebration by Zoom and asked members to consider donating to support the Pine Street Inn Shelter.

The district attended several Zoom meetings related to the pandemic and equality. The district is currently developing a project related to food insecurity.
Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, our in-person meetings and social events were suspended. It became necessary to postpone our plans for a fundraising event for our nursing scholarship, with a special guest speaker from Old Sturbridge Village.

Several of our members made personal donations of energy bars that were delivered to the COVID-19 frontline workers at our area hospitals.

In collaboration with the Worcester District Medical Society Alliance, the MMSA, the Worcester District Medical Society (WDMS), and Legacy Financial, we provided a catered meal for the overnight shift of COVID-19 frontline heroes at UMass Memorial and Saint Vincent’s Hospital.

Through coordination with the WDMS and its executive director, Martha Wright, our district Alliance web page was updated and given a fresh, new look.

Feeling the desire to stay connected with our Alliance friends, we held a Zoom get-together to check in with one another — and also discuss a TV series.

Our recent book club selection was Get Well Soon: History’s Worst Plagues and the Heroes Who Fought Them by Jennifer Wright. The author was invited and attended via Zoom, and we had a lively Q&A discussion about the writing of her book. The next book club discussion was held on June 1, 2021. We hope that you can join us as we discuss our next selection, The Doctors Blackwell: How Two Pioneering Sisters Brought Medicine to Women and Women to Medicine.

Also, it is with great sadness that our long-time member, Norma Bowen, passed away and will be missed dearly.
The Massachusetts Medical Society and Alliance Charitable Foundation have awarded grants to health-focused organizations across the state.

Grants were recently awarded to the following organizations, many of which have shifted their operations to support their communities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Behavioral Health**
- Cooley Dickerson Health Care
- Interfaith Social Services
- Lynn Shelter Association
- MetroWest YMCA

**Health Promotion**
- Boys and Girls Clubs of MetroWest
- Martin Luther King Jr. Family Services
- GreenRoots
- Sociedad Latina

**Improved Access to Health Care**
- Family Health Center of Worcester
- Father Bill’s and MainSpring

**Addressing Social Determinants of Health**
- Amherst Survival Center
- Brockton Area Multi-Services, Inc.
- Chelsea Collaborative/La Colaborativa
- Food Link, Inc.
- Old Colony YMCA
- The Open Door
- Volunteers in Medicine Berkshires

The Massachusetts Medical Society and Alliance Foundation is a supporting organization of the Massachusetts Medical Society, the statewide association of physicians,
and the MMS Alliance, the organization of physicians’ spouses, physicians, medical students, partners, and friends committed to advancing the health and well-being of the family of medicine. The foundation’s mission is to support the charitable and educational activities of the Society and Alliance and address issues affecting the health, benefit, and welfare of the community.

More information on the MMS and Alliance Charitable Foundation may be found at www.mmsfoundation.org.

Systemic Racism in the Medical Community and Beyond

The MMSA hosted an open discussion on December 3, 2020, “Systemic Racism in the Medical Community and Beyond,” by virtual connection.

The panelists included Fatima Cody Stanford, MD, MPH, MPA, FAAP, FACP, FAHA, FTOS, obesity medicine physician scientist, Massachusetts General Hospital and Harvard Medical School; LaShyra Nolen, Harvard Medical School; and Avneet Soin, Tufts University School of Medicine. It was moderated by David Rosman, MD, MBA, president, Massachusetts Medical Society, and Sophia Bogdasarian, RN, president, Massachusetts Medical Society Alliance.

This program included an interactive panel discussion and the opportunity for participants to ask questions.
Avneet Soin — Tufts University School of Medicine

Avneet Soin is a member of the Class of 2021 at Tufts University School of Medicine. She graduated from Tufts University with a degree in Biopsychology and is a proud Double Jumbo. When she is not studying, she enjoys finding new cafes with great latte art, going to concerts, and reading.

In the past few years, Avneet has focused much of her research on the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) population. Her research projects have focused on examining cultural competency standards for South Asian patients, analyzing the public health needs of the Sikh American population, and working closely with the mental health campaign devoted to the young Asian women population. She is committed to her focus of being an advocate in the areas of public health and medicine for the AAPI community, and she continues to educate herself and learn more about the needs of this population.

Avneet takes her commitments seriously. She would like to help remove some of the stigmas associated with this vulnerable group of patients (APPI) sometimes seen in the medical world. She is an active member of the MMS and AMA student section, as well as the Asian Pacific American Medical Student Association. Through involvement in these associations during medical school, she hopes to provide valuable insights into this at-risk population, and advocate for them by helping to shape the direction of medicine and public health policy.

LaShyra “Lash” Nolen — Harvard Medical School

LaShyra Nolen is a second-year student at Harvard Medical School (HMS) where she serves as student council president, the first documented Black woman to hold this role. In her role, she has led numerous initiatives for community advocacy within HMS and beyond. She is a published author and continues to be a fervent advocate for social justice. Her commentaries have been published in the Washington Post, NPR, Teen Vogue, Health Affairs, Undark Magazine, and many more. Her work has earned her honor of becoming the youngest 2020 National Minority Quality Forum 40 under 40 Leaders in Minority Health and one of 25 selected 2020 Young Futurists for The Root. Her community and family continue to drive her passion for social justice and plans pursue an MD and MPP dual-degree to continue to advocate for humane health care reform on both local and national scales.

Fatima Cody Stanford — Assistant Professor of Medicine, Massachusetts General Hospital, Obesity Medicine Physician for Adults, Adolescents, and Children, MGH Weight Center

Fatima Cody Stanford, MD, MPH, MPA, FAAP, FACP, FTOS, is an obesity medicine physician scientist, educator, and policymaker at Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH) and Harvard Medical School (HMS). She is a national and international sought-after expert in obesity medicine — who bridges the intersection of medicine, public health, policy, and disparities.

Dr. Stanford received her BS and MPH from Emory University as an MLK Scholar, her MD from the Medical College of Georgia School of Medicine as a Stoney Scholar, and her MPA from the Harvard Kennedy School of Government as a Zuckerman Fellow in the Harvard Center for Public Leadership. She completed her Obesity Medicine and Nutrition Fellowship at MGH and HMS after completing her internal medicine and pediatrics residency at the University of South Carolina. She has served as a health communications fellow at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and as a behavioral sciences intern at the American Cancer Society.

Upon completion of her MPH, Dr. Stanford received the Gold Congressional Award, the highest honor that Congress bestows upon America’s youth. Dr. Stanford has completed a medicine and media internship at the Discovery Channel. She was also an American Medical Association (AMA) Foundation Leadership Award recipient in 2005, and the AMA Paul Ambrose Award for national leadership among resident physicians in 2009. She was selected for the AMA Inspirational Physician Award in 2015. The American College of Physicians (ACP) selected her as the 2013 recipient of the Joseph E. Johnson Leadership Award and the Massachusetts ACP selected her for the Young Leadership Award in 2015. She is the 2017 recipient of the Harvard Medical School Amos Diversity Award and Massachusetts Medical Society Award for Women’s Health. Dr. Stanford is the recent author of an article entitled “Obesity and Overall Health: How to Help Your Child.” To access this important resource, visit www.massgeneral.org/children/obesity.

If you would like to listen to each of their personal stories of racism, please visit the Alliance web page at www.massmed.org/alliance.
Antiracism Resources

Suggested Reading

- **Uprooting Racism: How White People Can Work for Racial Justice** by Paul Kivel
- **How to Be an Anti-Racist** by Ibram X. Kendi
- **White Fragility: Why It’s So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism** by Robin Diangelo
- **So You Want to Talk About Race** by Ijeoma Oluo
- **The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Color-Blindness** by Michelle Alexander
- **Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption** by Bryan Stevenson
- **A Syllabus: A History of Anti-Black Racism in Medicine** by Antoine S. Johnson, Elise A. Mitchell, and Ayah Nuruddin

Suggested Children’s Books

- **The Story of Ruby Bridges** by Robert Coles
- **Little Leaders: Bold Women in Black History** by Vashti Harrison
- **Malcolm Little: The Boy Who Grew Up to Become Malcolm X** by Ilyasah Shabazz
- **Let It Shine: Stories of Black Women Freedom Fighters** by Andrea Davis Pinkney
- **Global Babies** (a book series) by the Global Fund for Children

Organizational Resources

Massachusetts Medical Society: www.massmed.org/antiracism

Showing Up for Racial Justice: showingupforracialjustice.org

Movement for Black Lives: m4bl.org

Critical Resistance: www.criticalresistance.org

Poor People’s Campaign: www.poorpeoplescampaign.org

Ella Baker Center for Human Rights: www.ellabakercenter.org

The Groundwater Approach: www.racialequityinstitute.com/groundwaterapproach

Black Lives Matter: countway.harvard.edu/news/black-lives-matter-antiracism-health-suggested-resources

The EMPOWER Lab (Engaging Minorities in Prevention Outreach Wellness Education and Research): https://www.empowerlab.org

Racial Trauma Guide: psyc.franklin.uga.edu/racial-trauma-guide

Coping with Racial Trauma: psyc.franklin.uga.edu/coping-racial-trauma

Being a Better Ally: psychology.uga.edu/being-better-ally

Worcester State nursing student Hade Dabbagh interviews Sophia Bogdasarian on systemic racism.
Massachusetts Medical Society on Racism, Violence, and Commitment to Equity

The Massachusetts Medical Society stands with all who are mourning and all those who experience racism, including our physicians and patients of color. Racism permeates all sectors of society. Health care is no exception. Systemic racism, in and of itself, causes illness and premature death for people of color. That is wholly unacceptable. Hashtags and words are well-intentioned gestures, but we must hear, and we must act. The Massachusetts Medical Society will ensure that our commitment to working for the best possible health care for all patients is focused on the lens of equity and racial justice.

— David A. Rosman, MD, MBA, president, Massachusetts Medical Society

Health Promotions

The MMS Alliance contributed to organizations that would have a positive effect on the COVID-19 crisis. They have made several of contributions to organizations in the Commonwealth.

Community Servings — $1,500

The Community Servings program provides home-delivered meals and nutrition services to individuals and families living with critical and chronic illnesses. They deliver to 21 cities and towns throughout Massachusetts.

Massachusetts COVID-19 Relief Fund — $1,500

The Massachusetts COVID-19 Relief fund provides support to the frontline health care professionals, first responders, and other essential workers, working families, and households disproportionately affected by the impact of COVID-19.

The MMSA funded the Worcester District Alliance that will send individually prepared meals to night-shift doctors at three major hospitals in Worcester. Also, the nursing staff is partnering with the Worcester District Medical Society and Legacy Financial, each entity donating $1,000 each.

Worcester District Alliance members made a generous donation to St. Vincent Hospital in Worcester with 20 boxes of single-packaged protein bars, nuts, etc., supporting them in their tremendous work during this time. Additionally, multiple boxes of power bars were delivered to the COVID-19 units at both campuses of UMass Memorial Hospitals.

The MMS Alliance has joined with the MMS Charles River District to contribute $1,800 to BI (Beth Israel) Deaconess Needham’s, Healthcare Heroes Grant Fund, to support frontline caregivers as well as $1,800 to Newton-Wellesley Hospital’s (NWH), NWH COVID-19 Relief Fund, earmarked for frontline worker support.

Domestic Violence Shelters Supported In Massachusetts

Casa Myrna
REACH
DOVE
Elizabeth Freeman Center
Friends of the Homeless of the South Shore
Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children
HAWC
Safe Passage
Womanshelter/Compañeras
The Women’s Center
YWCA Central MA

Tara Huard: Worcester YWCA

The YWCA serves 60 cities in central and northcentral Massachusetts by providing support and advocacy for victims of domestic violence and abuse. The services and outreach include a 24-hour helpline, a hotline, a chat line, and two emergency shelters, providing counseling, support groups, and community partnerships with the courts, local police departments, and housing assistance.

Deborah Parkington: Elizabeth Freeman Center

Elizabeth Freeman Center offers hope, help, and healing to all experiencing or affected by domestic and sexual violence through free, accessible, and confidential services in Berkshire County. We work to end the cycle of violence through community mobilization, advocacy, and education. Promoting social justice and working to end all forms of oppression are essential to our work.
COVID-19 Pandemic — A Snapshot in Time

I stand at the door of Peirce Elementary School in Newton and smile with encouragement alongside my colleagues as we greet students and parents who are anxiously dropping off their children at the entrance. It’s back to school — here we come ready or not! All of us try to be brave in the face of uncertainty and wonder how this idea of in-school learning is going to succeed in the face of COVID-19.

We have gone from a year of remote learning via Zoom, to transitioning to a hybrid program of two days in the classroom and three days at home. Not all children have that choice; some need to be in school full-time to compensate for social or emotional needs, some have parents who teach, and some lack the necessary resources at home. During this time of transition, my role as a teacher’s aide was multifaceted and included supporting students grade K through 5, in a small classroom designed to provide educational support to them via Zoom on the days that they were not in their classrooms. Art, math, science, music, gym, reading, and social studies all were taught in this manner. It was fun going back to elementary school and seeing it again from children’s perspectives and listening to their insights. You should know that I am a retired pediatric oncology nurse. After a career caring for children with serious, often fatal, illnesses, I found it exhilarating to help children overcome challenges of a different nature.

My non-teaching responsibilities included providing teacher support by producing teaching materials for those days of at-home learning, subbing in for classroom teachers, and organizing at-home learning materials for the cohort of children who were learning exclusively from home.

When the governor and the city of Boston decided that it was time for children to return to classes full-time, there was a lot of apprehension and fear of the unknown. At that point, no one was eligible for vaccination, and an undercurrent of vulnerability flowed through students and teachers alike. Could we keep each other safe and adhere to all the CDC recommended guidelines while providing a nurturing and engaging learning environment? This daunting task was met with a can-do attitude by teachers and students alike. There were windows open in the winter, jackets on, lunches on beach blankets to maintain social distancing, masks, and pajama days, while a firm commitment to maintain each other’s safety prevailed. When vaccines became available, the teachers and support staff were encouraged to receive them. I donned my nursing hat to do public health teaching, provide up-to-date health information, secure vaccine appointments, and provide ongoing reassurance.

Once school COVID testing was initiated, our school nurse, Chloe, and I became actively involved in COVID surveillance screening of our students and teachers.

Once public vaccine clinics were established, I participated in the immunization efforts at both the Needham Public Health Department and at the larger mass vaccination site at Mass General Brigham Newton/Wellesley Hospital Vaccine Clinic at Tripadvisor in Needham. Both clinic experiences were rewarding on so many levels. People entered the clinics feeling vulnerable and uncertain, and for many we were the initial contact with the outside world. These encounters were an opportunity to provide hope, emotional support, accurate health care information, and a sense of human connectiveness after a long period of social isolation. While observing people after their injections, I was afforded the opportunity to share some intimate conversations with people. Some were experiencing grief from the loss of family members or friends from COVID, while others had survived hospitalization for COVID and came in for immunization. Many frail seniors and those with serious comorbidities or disabilities came through, after a long and terrifying year. It was exciting to see young adults and children, and expectant parents coming in to be immunized prior to delivery.

Hope comes in the smiles and courage of the people you care for and in the commitment of your peers. It was humbling and so rewarding to work side by side with my nursing colleagues at Tripadvisor and Needham Public Health, and the experience made me proud to be a nurse.

— Catherine Lew
How Families Can Cope with Stay-at-Home Advisory

Bring the beauty of spring indoors. If your daffodils or tulips are blooming, cut a few to enjoy inside.

Burn a scented candle for a calming effect.

Stay active, because you will sleep better at night.

Find exercise or yoga videos on YouTube or TV.

Go outdoors for a power walk or jog.

Make a schedule for you and your family — one day at a time or for a week. Having structure helps.

Give your family members chores to do. The house needs to be cleaned, and clothes need to be washed, folded, and ironed. This is an opportunity to teach life skills that we may have allowed our family to skip in the past.

Every day, be grateful for something. Write it down so you can look back on your gratefulness list.

Donate blood! There’s a significant shortage right now. Make an appointment at the closest donation center near you.

Donate monetarily to local food banks.

Keep it positive on social media.

Call fellow members to check in, especially our older members.

Read some books. Many libraries offer e-books online.

Binge-watch your favorite program that you never had time for. Now’s the time to indulge!

Connect with your family — play games or read books together. Amazon has free Audible audiobooks for children.

Cook or bake something together.

2,500 museums offer virtual tours.

Grandparents can read to your grandchildren by FaceTime or other computer applications.

Create daily activities on sticky notes and put them on the wall.

Have one day for a family film afternoon.

Let teens have some private time to FaceTime their friends.

Homeschool Spirit Week

**Monday: Superhero Day** — In honor of the hospital workers, first responders, grocery employees, and other essential personnel.

**Tuesday: Crazy Hair/School Colors Day** — In honor of hair stylists and the school you miss.

**Wednesday: Dress like a Grandparent Day** — In honor of a grandparent that is most at risk.

**Thursday: Jersey Day** — In honor of your favorite sports team that is not able to play right now.

**Friday: Pajama Day** — Because pajamas are the best part of your homeschooling.
Medical Libraries in Africa and in Developing Countries

In 2005 siblings Beatrice Igne-Bianchi and Jonathan Igne-Bianchi, members of the Massachusetts Medical Society Alliance, designed an operational model to collect and send medical textbooks to the University of Yaoundé in Cameroon after learning that students shared a very limited number of textbooks among an entire medical school class. This lack of educational resources hindered hardworking students from reaching their full potential as future medical professionals. We partnered with the Massachusetts Medical Society’s Committee on Global Health and the MMS Alliance’s Boston district and expanded our project to reach other African nations and developing countries.

We are an education project and a global health initiative. Our mission is simple: to give medical students in developing countries the educational resources they need to succeed in school so that they can go on to provide quality health care for their communities. Even with the advent and growth of the internet, many medical schools in Africa and across the globe do not have adequate access to electronic educational resources, including textbooks. While the United States and Europe develop technologies for tablets and smartphones, several university medical libraries in African countries don’t even have enough basic textbooks for their doctors in training. It’s our goal to bridge this education gap for future leaders in the medical profession.

With the generosity of the Alliance, we have shipped more than 3,500 textbooks to Cameroon, Ghana, and Zambia, as well as Vietnam and Iraq since 2005. We want to keep increasing these numbers and the schools we touch so the medical students can learn how to provide quality health care to the people in their communities. In March 2019, we expanded our project to Brazil, more specifically to Recife, where we opened a new Medical Library at the Federal University of Pernambuco in Recife. With the invaluable help of Dr. Jonathan Spector and committee head Dr. Marcus Harding, the Medical Library in Africa became a reality. This past February, we donated to the same university more medical books as well as eyeglass frames to the population in need. The project was very well received, and we had full media coverage.
While in Brazil I witnessed how much this project, which started as a small effort in Africa, is now expanding to Latin America and making a huge difference in these countries. I had the opportunity to talk with Dr. Seine, an ophthalmologist and our liaison to the hospital, as she expressed her enthusiasm and gratitude: “This action is very important because there was a need to increase the number of books in the Hall of Residency Research and it is an initiative in which everyone wins. In addition to the books, eyeglass frames were also donated to patients who were in great need. We are extremely thankful to the Medical Society Alliance and Beatrice and Jonathan Igne Bianchi.”

We would like to invite you to join our project and start collecting medical books to be donated to countries in need. — Margaret Igne

To learn more, visit www.medicallibrariesinafrica.com, contact Margaret Igne at margaret.igne@gmail.com or Jill Cricones at jcricones@mms.org.
Dear Alliance Members,

The 2021–22 membership year for your district and the Massachusetts Medical Society Alliance (MMSA) has begun. We hope you will renew your membership, as our organization gives value to your life. Your $35 dues give you access to the programs of the Massachusetts Medical Society, our quarterly meetings, and networking with your peers — some things that we all need. Please go online now, using our secure site, www.mmsalliance.org, to renew your membership or mail your check to MMS Alliance, 860 Winter Street, Waltham, MA 02451.

I also encourage you to join the National AMA Alliance at https://amaalliance.org by paying $65 for national dues.

We look forward to seeing one another in person as soon as it is deemed safe. We have plans for many enjoyable and educational programs. Please take a moment to renew your membership today and remain part of this vital organization.

I look forward to connecting with you.

Sincerely,

Bonnie G. Dunlap, RN
President
Massachusetts Medical Society Alliance

For more information, call the Alliance office at (800) 322-2302, ext. 7372, or by email at alliance@mms.org. You can also visit our website: www.mmsalliance.org.
Established in 1922, the AMA (American Medical Association) Alliance is the largest organization representing the physician family. Its nationwide network encompasses all stages of the physician family lifestyle from the training years to retirement. We are the volunteer voice for the physician family!

With over 90 years of history, we have changed from a female-driven social and advocacy group to a diverse membership organization that includes spouses, partners, and physicians of the physician family. The AMA Alliance (AMAA) is proud of its history and is committed to honoring its past by building on the core principles of which it was founded: to focus on the care and support of those who live within the physician family.

As an affiliate of the AMA, the AMAA is the most valuable organization for today’s significant challenges to the physician family in the current medical environment. We support our members by providing resources to help each individual or couple as they negotiate the ups and downs of this unique lifestyle. Our goal is to unite and empower our members. The result is an engaged organization helping each other and the communities in which we live.

To learn more about the AMA Alliance visit their website at https://amaalliance.org or by email at amaallianceinfo.org.

MMS Alliance Dues
Join us and let your voice be heard

$100 annually — Physician/Physician Spouse or Partner (includes national, state, and district dues)
$35 annually — Physician/Physician Spouse or Partner (includes state and district dues)
$35 annually — Friend of the Alliance (includes state and district dues)
$25 annually — Residents/Fellow/Spouse or Partner (includes national, state, and district dues)
$10 annually — Residents/Fellow/Medical Student/Spouse or Partner (includes state and district dues)

Every member has the opportunity to learn about current health issues when serving as a liaison to an MMS committee. Every member may attend MMS educational programs at free or reduced rates. Check out the MMS Alliance website and Facebook page for regular updates and the latest posts sharing information about our district and state events and posts on health issues. The AMA Alliance has posted links to all of the county and state websites on the AMA Alliance web page.

Join today!

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT WWW.MMSALLIANCE.ORG OR FIND US ON FACEBOOK
2021 MMS Alliance Annual Meeting President’s Report

What a strange year 2020 has been! The entire past year of my presidency had to be conducted via Zoom.

We, the Alliance, are also indebted to Jill Cricones for her time, skills, and effort in keeping us all together this past year. We would never have had the year we did if it had not been for Jill, with her blooming Zoom skills, her willingness to meet morning, noon, afternoon, and night. Jill made this year incredibly meaningful for me in particular, but also for you too, my fellow members... I hope! Jill, Thank you from the bottom of my heart. Thanks to your amazing Zoom skills, we were able to host meetings quite often, more than we ever would have if we had been meeting in person. We supported our communities in so many ways and educated ourselves about systemic racism and the health of our nation.

What we did mostly though, especially in the beginning when we met almost weekly, was to support each other emotionally as our loved ones went out into the dangerous and unknown world of COVID-19.

Our support morphed into a monthly book club, where we educated ourselves about systemic racism, especially after the murder of George Floyd. We followed the lead of the MMS and Dr. Rosman’s focus on systemic racism and equity in our country. Our book clubs included *White Fragility*, *Caste*, *How to Be an Antiracist*, *The Nightwatchman*, and *Get Well Soon*. If you haven’t read any of these books yet, I highly recommend them, especially *Caste* by Isabella Wilkerson.

As you know, the MMSA has a long history of participating in school health fairs in various locations throughout the Commonwealth. The Sizer School, located in Fitchburg, my hometown, was not going to let COVID stop their plans for a school fair! Nursing students, from Worcester State University, helped to prepare videos for their school’s virtual health fair last November.

Alliance members Gerrilu and Dr. Svend Bruun, long-time champions of school health fairs, were contacted by the university, and in turn, they contacted me to participate. A student, Hade Dabbagh, looked at the MMS website and saw that we were concentrating on systemic racial inequality, and the conversation flowed from there. You can find the video on the Alliance web page.

At our 2020 Interim Meeting, moderated by Dr. David Rosman and me, we hosted an extraordinary panel of women of color: Dr. Fatima Cody Stanford of MGH and medical students LaShyra Nolen and Avneet Soin made up our panel. It was powerful to hear their personal stories of how racism has affected their lives, and I was proud to host such a well-attended event.

In lieu of Doctor’s Day, we donated to Domestic Violence Centers across the state. I am particularly proud that we contributed to 10 shelters located in almost every one of our districts.

And now, my presidential term is coming to an end. It was not what I had envisioned when I took on the role two years ago; however, I actually think it was better! I am particularly grateful to Dr. Rosman and his powerful leadership during this last difficult pandemic year. The Alliance piggybacked our focus on equity, just as Dr. Rosman did for the MMS, and I am proud that we have learned so much this past year together.

I would like to acknowledge the Strategic Leadership Council from 2020 to 2021: Mary Kay Albert, Ulku Akyurek, Sandra Celona, Sandra Delgado, Bonnie Dunlap, Margaret Igne, Catherine Lew, Paula Madison, Gail Gordon Sanchez, Mariette Young, and Donna Zucker. Your support as we navigated this year together was invaluable. You are the leaders whose involvement and hard work continue the mission of the Alliance. Most importantly, I consider you dear friends.

As we enter into this new year, I look forward to assisting Bonnie Dunlap, our incoming president. I know Bonnie’s going to do an amazing job.

It has been a great honor for me to serve this wonderful organization. I look forward to remaining active with all of you as we go into the future together as Alliance members.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve you. I am looking forward to seeing you all in person soon.

— Sophia X. Bogdasarian, RN
7th Annual Food is Medicine Symposium

Wednesday, October 23, 2019

Opening Remarks:
Robert Greenwald, JD, Center for Health Law and Policy Innovation, Harvard Law School

Improving Nutrition Education in U.S. Medical Training
Emily Brod Lado, JD, Harvard Law School Food Law and Policy Clinic

Driving Change in Massachusetts: A Discussion with the Leaders of the Food is Medicine Massachusetts Task Force
Massachusetts Medical Society Alliance Past State Presidents

Harriet Johnson — 1948–49
Elizabeth Ayers — 1949–50
Hester Root — 1950–51
Abigail Lebrecht — 1951–52
Kathryn McCabe — 1952–53
Frances Ward — 1953–54
Marie Campbell — 1954–55
Florence Angley — 1955–56
Elizabeth Cheney — 1956–57
Ethel Chatigny — 1957–58
Mary Wheeler — 1958–59
Elizabeth Ross — 1959–60
Katherine Hines — 1960–61
Mary Morrin — 1961–62
Rose S. Rappeport — 1962–63
Alberta Holden — 1963–64
Ruth Michelson — 1964–65
Margaret Butts — 1965–66
Evelyn Fierman — 1966–67
Margaret Dias — 1967–68
Marise Zellman — 1968–69
Claire Bagenstose — 1969–70
Gretchen Kraus — 1971–72
Mary Terzian Killelea — 1972–73
Peggy LaVigne — 1973–75
Catherine G. Matzilevich — 1975–77
Ann Bouras — 1977–79
Jane T. Condon — 1979–80
Dorothea S. Rodkey — 1980–82
Claire B. Gordon — 1982–83
Vi Meeker — 1983–85
Anna A. Ferguson — 1985–86
Sharyn Dingman — 1986–87
Patricia L. Boyd — 1987–88
Veronica A. Gregg — 1988–90
Sandra Celona — 1990–92
Mary Firth Corcoran — 1992–84
Jeanne K. Gaz — 1994–96
Mariette A. Young — 1996–98
Bonnie B. Lavoie — 1998–99
Gerrilu H. Bruun — 1999–2000
Beverly A. George — 2000–01
Nancy B. Ghareeb — 2001–03
Vanessa P. Kenealy — 2003–05
Margaret Igne Bianchi — 2005–07
Mary Kay Albert — 2007–09
Mari-Christine Reti — 2009–11
Gladys Chan — 2011–13
Paula J. Madison — 2013–15
Ulku Akyurek, MD, MBA — 2015–17
Sandra Delgado, BSN, MHA — 2017–19
Sophia X. Bogdasarian, RN — 2019–21