



# GMAP Region 2

September 2021 Newsletter



## Goodbye Summer, Hello Fall: Reflections & New Beginnings

### Catching the SPIRT: Reflections from the SPIRIT-CHD Summer Internship Program

This summer Aliyah participated in the Southeast Partnership for Improving Research and Training in Cancer Health Disparities (SPIRIT-CHD) Summer Internship Program at Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center (LSUHSC) in New Orleans, Louisiana. One of the primary goals of the partnership is to train underrepresented undergraduate and medical students in biobanking, precision medicine, and cancer health disparities through the cancer research education program (CREP).

Reflecting on her experience as a SPIRIT intern at LSUHSC, Aliyah



Aliyah Pierre is a second year medical student at LSUHSC School of Medicine in New Orleans, Louisiana.

recounts why she wanted to participate in cancer health disparities research over the summer, "As a black woman, I am among the demographic that is affected negatively by health disparities, and I believe as a future physician it is my duty to be a proponent of reducing these disparities. The only way to stimulate change is to highlight the problem and implement corrective action..." Aliyah worked under the mentorship of physician scientist, Tara Castellano, MD, a Gynecologic Oncologist I the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at LSUHSC.

Most noteworthy, Aliyah submitted an abstract that was subsequently accepted for the International Cancer Education Conference (ICEC). Her abstract is entitled, "Assessing Baseline Cancer Demographics Versus Cancer Trial Participation Demographics Over One Year in Louisiana," She will present her poster during the conference which will be held virtually in October. This is a great accomplishment for Aliyah considering this was her first time conducting clinical research. When asked how her experience conducting cancer health disparities research as a SPIRIT intern influ-

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enced her academic and career goals, Aliyah mentioned, "This research experience has prompted me to apply for the Honors Program at my institution, which will allow me to continue my research in cancer health disparities."

The SPIRIT partnership is committed to increasing diversity in the biomedical research workforce by training underrepresented undergraduate and medical school students. Aliyah is a great representation of the partnership's efforts in fostering opportunities in biomedical research that will have a lasting impact.



To learn more about the SPIRIT-CHD Cancer Research Education Program visit our website at [www.spiritchd.com](http://www.spiritchd.com)

## New Beginnings: A Return to Familiar Roots at Moffitt Cancer Center

The passage below features Mariana Arévalo, PhD, newly appointed Applied Research Scientist at Moffitt. Dr. Arévalo, previously worked at Moffitt from 2005 to 2013 as a Research Coordinator III. We caught up with her to find out what she did when she left Moffitt and what she will be doing in her new role as ARS I the Department of Health Outcomes and Behavior.

### ***Q: What are your primary research interests?***

My broad research interests span from improving participation of racial/ethnic minorities in biomedical and clinical trials research, to provision of high-quality care for underserved populations, and understanding psychosocial and system-level factors that influence cancer prevention behaviors in vulnerable populations.

### ***Q: What were you doing in your previous role?***

Previously, I was a Susan G. Komen Trainee at the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston (UTHealth). The Komen Graduate Health Disparities Research training helped me grow academically and professionally. As a trainee, I attended professional development workshops in research methods and data analysis, published manuscripts, conducted peer-reviews, and conducted my dissertation project examining disparities in experiences with care among breast cancer survivors. The fellowship was a great platform that prepared me for the role I have today, as an ARS.

### ***Q: What will you be doing in your new role at Moffitt?***

As an ARS I will be working in the labs of Drs. Christy, Meade and Gwede. I will assist in manuscript preparation and dissemination of various cancer prevention studies related to HPV and HCV vaccination uptake, and CRC screening. I will also assist in the development of new protocols, supervise summer interns and trainees, and conduct other scholarly

work. As a behavioral scientist, I am excited about working with this research team, expanding my portfolio, and working closely with students and trainees.

### ***Q: Why did you choose a career in cancer health disparities research?***

I became interested in health disparities research after my work with the Patient Navigation Research Project (MPIs: Roetzheim, Meade). Thanks to that project, I saw first-hand the hardship and inequities that medically underserved populations experienced when trying to obtain cancer prevention services, and it became my career goal to contribute to the reduction of inequities and ensure that vulnerable populations have access to high quality care.



*Dr. Mariana Arévalo, Applied Research Scientist in the Department of Health Outcomes and Behavior at Moffitt Cancer Center.*

### ***Q: What are your long term career goals?***

My long-term goal is to become an independently funded Latina researcher. I have a strong commitment to reducing health disparities in vulnerable and marginalized populations, particularly among Hispanic/Latinx communities.

### ***Q: What advice do you have for other aspiring underrepresented cancer or cancer health disparities researchers?***

Remember why you want a career in research. Personally, it is satisfying to know that the work we do has a direct impact in people's lives and wellbeing. Passion and compassion are key in health disparities research.

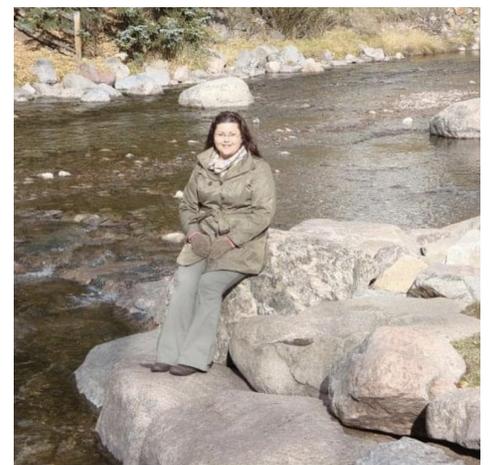
We've learned during this pandemic that it is also important to find joy in other activities besides our academic/research careers. We asked Dr. Arévalo about her hobbies and the most interesting place she's traveled.

### ***Q: What are your hobbies outside of work?***

I love spending time with my cats: Ollie and Vivi. I enjoy traveling, and international foods and cinema.

### ***Q: Where is the most interesting place you've traveled?***

I've been fortunate to visit many places around the world and all of them have been very interesting – Gibraltar, for example. I have enjoyed the experiences and memories from each place, but home (Guatemala) continues to be the most interesting as each time I go back everything seems so different yet familiar.



*Dr. Arévalo pictured in Vail, Colorado doing one of her favorite things, traveling.*

# Footsteps to Funding



**NATIONAL  
CANCER  
INSTITUTE**

**A GMAP Region 2 Training Workshop  
for Doctoral Trainees, Postdoctoral Fellows, and Early Stage Investigators**  
*to provide guidance on preparing and/or advancing your career development grant applications*

**November 3—4, 2021 via Zoom**

## **Description:**

Footsteps to Funding is an interactive workshop open to those who reside in GMAP Region 2 (AL, AR, FL, GA, LA, MI, MS, PR) and is intended to help doctoral trainees, early stage investigators, and post-doctoral fellows in the field of cancer and/or cancer health disparities research. Attendees will become familiar with grant funding mechanisms (e.g. F31, F99/K00, K01, K08, K22, K99/R00, R03, R21) and gain knowledge about the essential components needed for a competitive application.

**Workshop attendees can expect to leave with a clear direction and timeline for submission of their next grant application.**

- Navigating NIH/NCI funding mechanisms
- Establishing an outstanding mentoring team
- Getting to know your program officer
- Preparing a competitive application
- Writing your personal statement
- Specific aims feedback
- Putting into place relevant training activities
- Outlining a program of novel research
- Understanding study section & summary statements
- Learning grant-writing tips
- Knowing your resources
- Enjoying the process!

**[Click Here to Apply](#)**

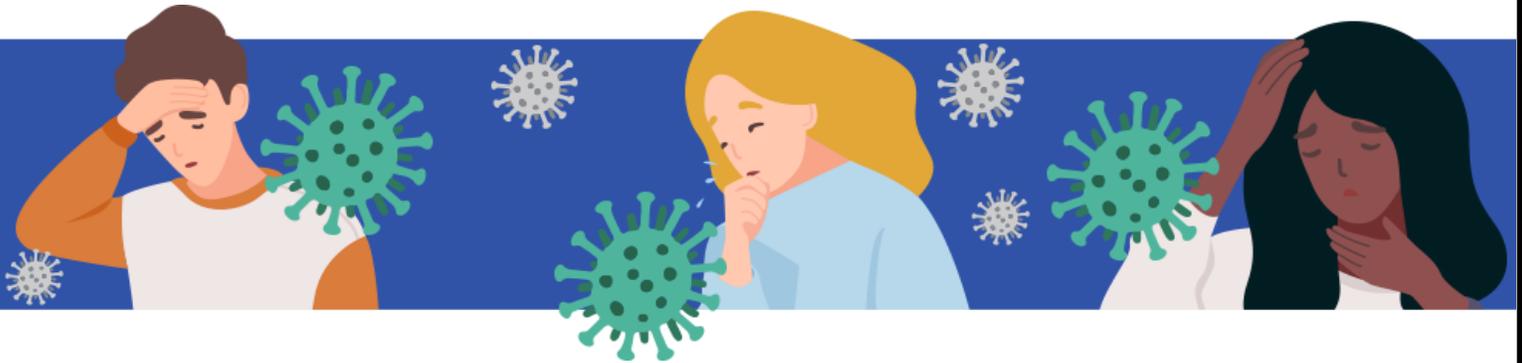
**[Application Deadline : Friday October 15, 2021 11:59pm EST](#)**

For additional information about GMAP Region 2 please our website at [www.gmapregion2.com](http://www.gmapregion2.com) or contact  
Or contact the Regional Coordinating Director, Z'Kera Sims at [gmap.region2@moffitt.org](mailto:gmap.region2@moffitt.org)

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# With Fall Comes the Flu

## Similarities and Differences between COVID-19 and Influenza



The following information and images are directly from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention.

Influenza (flu) and COVID-19 are both contagious respiratory illnesses, but they are caused by different viruses. COVID-19 is caused by infection with a coronavirus first identified in 2019, and flu is caused by infection with [influenza viruses](#).

Compared to flu, COVID-19 can cause more serious illnesses in some people. COVID-19 can also take longer before people show symptoms and people can be contagious for longer. More information about differences between flu and COVID-19 is available in the different sections below.

Because some of the symptoms of flu, COVID-19, and other respiratory illnesses are similar, the difference between them cannot be made based on symptoms alone. [Testing](#) is needed to tell what the illness is and to confirm a diagnosis. People can be infected with both flu and the virus that causes COVID-19 at the same time and have symptoms of both influenza and COVID-19.

While more is learned every day about COVID-19 and the virus that causes it, there are still things, such as [post-COVID conditions](#), that are unknown. So let's compare the two.

### How Long Symptoms Appear After Exposure and Infection



#### **Similarities:**

**For both COVID-19 and flu**, 1 or more days can pass between when a person becomes infected and when he or she starts to experience illness symptoms.

#### **Differences:**

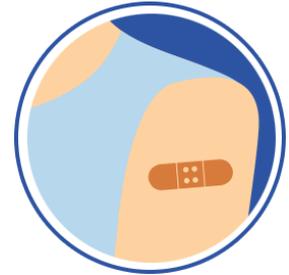
If a person has COVID-19, it could take them longer to experience symptoms than if they had flu.

**Flu**—Typically, a person experiences symptoms anywhere from **1 to 4 days after infection**. [Flu Symptoms](#)

**COVID-19**—Typically, a person experiences symptoms about **5 days after being infected**, but symptoms can appear **2 to 14 days after infection**. [COVID-19 Symptoms](#)



### Vaccine for the Flu and COVID-19



#### **Similarities:**

**Vaccines for COVID-19 and flu** are approved and/or authorized for emergency use (EUA) by FDA.

#### **Differences:**

**Flu**—There are multiple FDA-licensed [influenza vaccines](#) produced annually to protect against the 4 flu viruses that scientists expect will circulate each year. [Flu Vaccines](#)

**COVID-19**—Three [COVID-19 vaccines](#) have been authorized for use by FDA under an EUA. Other vaccines to prevent COVID-19 are under development. [COVID-19 Vaccines](#).



To read this information in its entirety please visit the [CDC's website](#). Content source: [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#).

# GMAP Region 2 Resources

The **GMAP Region 2 Travel Award** is intended to support career development related to cancer research or cancer health disparities research. This scholarship will provide reimbursement (e.g. registration, airfare, hotel, etc.) for ESI's or Trainees to present research at conferences and attend skills workshops/trainings. Applicants must be located in Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri or Puerto Rico, be a trainee or Early Stage Investigator (ESI), and submit a complete application.

To learn more or apply, click [here!](#)



**APPLY TO THE GMAP REGION 2 REGISTRATION SUPPORT SCHOLARSHIP TODAY!**

The **Trainee/Early Stage Investigator Registration Support Scholarship** is intended to support underrepresented scholars and investigators in cancer research or cancer health disparities research by providing reimbursement for registration fees associated with virtual or in-person meetings, conferences, work-



Graphic Courtesy of VectorStock.com 2020

## GMAP Region 2 EXPERT GRANT REVIEWS ARE AVAILABLE!

The Expert Grant Review award is intended to assist New Investigators and Early Stage Investigators who are applying for funding awards with feedback from senior researchers in the region. Region 2 is comprised of a variety of Cancer and CHD researchers who are experienced with the grant writing process and successful grant funding outcomes and are ready to help you!

## *Thank you for Joining GMAP Region 2!*

The Geographic Management of Cancer Health Disparities Program (GMAP) — consists of 7 regions and engages more than 1,200 disparities researchers, diversity trainees, and community health educators — employs a systematic and comprehensive strategy for building networks for the support and efficient management of cancer and cancer health disparities (CHD) re-search, training and infrastructure. **GMAP Region 2** is comprised of Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri and Puerto Rico and is based at Moffitt Cancer Center in Tampa, Florida. GMAP provides enhanced access to career development resources, such as job openings, travel/scholarship funding, grant writing workshops, connections to the Training Navigator at the National Cancer Institute, and so much more!



**Don't forget to follow us on social media!**



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