

Meet Jose Churrango . . .

When Jose’s family immigrated to the United States from Peru in 1991, they were filled with uncertainty and hope for a better future. Living in an underserved community of Newark, New Jersey, adjusting was tough, but with the support of the community, Jose started to feel at home. Four years later, as a sophomore in high school, Jose discovered the Hispanic Center of Excellence (HCOE) at New Jersey Medical School. Through various activities, Jose was exposed to the medical field and felt confident that he wanted to pursue a career in the health care field. With resources available to him through the HCOE, Jose made medical school his goal. After high school, Jose was accepted to Cornell University, where he graduated in 2001. Today, Jose is a proud member of the New Jersey Medical School class of 2009. He attributes his success in part to the guidance and support he received through the HCOE program.



“Being the first one in my family to attend college and medical school, I was fortunate to have received guidance and mentoring from programs sponsored by the HCOE.”

About the Program

- The Centers of Excellence (COE) are authorized under Title VII of the Public Health Service Act. Together with the Health Careers Opportunity Program (HCOP), COEs function to increase the representation of minority and disadvantaged students in the health professions.
- Program activities include enhancing academic performance of Latinos and other individuals from underserved backgrounds; increasing the recruitment and retention of faculty; increasing the school’s diversity through the recruitment and retention of Latino faculty; and developing the capacity of all graduates to provide culturally competent health care services.
- More information on the HCOE program activities is available on the program website:

<http://njms.umdnj.edu/education/hcoe>

According to Jose . . .

It’s no surprise that a new immigrant family in an underserved community in Newark, New Jersey would encounter many challenges; however, the community support fueled courage and provided encouragement to continue to strive and aspire for our goals. The HCOE at New Jersey Medical School was and continues to be instrumental in my academic development and a valuable contributor to my education.

My relationship with the HCOE began as a participant of the Summer Youth program in 1995. Exposure to the medical field and enrichment courses solidified my interest in pursuing a career in the health professions. The HCOE allowed me access to resources which have helped me throughout my journey towards becoming a physician. Being the first one in my family to attend college and medical school, I was fortunate to have received guidance and mentoring from programs sponsored by the HCOE. As I attempt to quantify the impact of HCOE on my development, I realize one cannot assign a measurement, percent, or number to changes occurring in a person’s life. Valuable, however, is the passion & commitment of the HCOE director and staff in their efforts to improve recruitment of disadvantaged students to the health professions.



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