

# Meet Maria Soto-Greene, MD . . .

Without the Health Careers Opportunity Program (HCOP), Dr. Maria Soto-Greene would be living a very different life. As an undergraduate, one of her professors persuaded Dr. Soto-Greene to consider a career in medicine – a profession that she had never considered. As it turns out, that professor was the HCOP director at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey (UMDNJ), and so Dr. Soto-Greene’s journey into medicine began. She graduated from the New Jersey Medical School (NJMS), where she has served as an intensivist for over thirteen years. Soon, she took the reins of the Hispanic Center of Excellence (HCOE) at the school. And just a few years later, she was asked to become Associate Dean for Special Programs, a position she has held for ten years. Today, through her own experiences and her tireless efforts, Dr. Soto-Greene serves as an inspiration for students who, like her, may never have considered a career in medicine.



*“If it were not for HCOP, I would not be where I am today as Vice Dean and a tenured Professor of Medicine.”*

## 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 minorities 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 program activities is available on the website:

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

## According to Dr. Soto-Greene . . .

I entered NJMS three decades ago as a medical student. Ironically, my path to NJMS was a direct result of an evening undergraduate course taught by a former assistant dean at our school who was the HCOP director. This individual would be instrumental in convincing me that I should become a physician, a career goal that I had not contemplated.

Throughout the years, I have been an integral part of NJMS’ mission to serve our underserved community. I have had the benefit of caring for the sickest patients in the Medical Intensive Care Units for over 13 years. Our patients have taught me the meaning of life and what physicians’ roles and responsibilities must be if we are to make a difference.

Since 1991, I have been the PI for the NJMS Hispanic Center of Excellence. Ten years ago, I was asked to join the Dean’s Office. I would dedicate myself to developing programs that would reach out to minority and/or disadvantaged youth and provide them with the tools necessary to pursue a career in the health professions.



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