

Medical student awaits Match Day destination

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Chicago Medical School student Henry Del Rosario, who grew up in Gurnee, learned on Friday, during Match Day at Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Science, that he will undergo a residency in family medicine at West Suburban Medical Center in Oak Park, his first choice for a residency match. | Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Science

Match Day envelope-opening event

Held every third Friday in March at medical schools across the country, Match Day is when fourth-year students learn where they will undergo their medical residency — advanced training in a medical or surgical specialty. About 170 members of the Chicago Medical School Class of 2014 tore open envelopes to discover where they will live and work for the next three to five years.

Medical students who will graduate this spring from CMS, one of five colleges at Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Science in North Chicago, matched to more than 20 specialties at top teaching hospitals in dozens of states, including Johns Hopkins Hospital in Maryland, University of Chicago Medical Center and UCLA Medical Center in California.

CMS Class of '14 President Brett Simpson, who is headed for a neurological surgery residency at the University of Texas Medical School-Houston, addressed students and their families before the en-masse envelope-opening at 11 a.m.

"When you open your envelopes today, remember all you have sacrificed and all you have done to get to this point, and how much more you still have to offer the world," Simpson said.

Last weekend, it was Selection Sunday, the made-for-TV event when college basketball players find out where they will participate in March Madness.

On Friday, March 21, it is Match Day, the more modest but just as traditional occasion when fourth-year medical students learn where they will spend their residency.

Gurnee native Henry Del Rosario, completing his studies this year at Chicago Medical School, said anyone who followed the "Harry Potter" series has an easy point of comparison: the Sorting Hat ceremony, in which Harry and his peers learned where they would live at Hogwarts.

"It's like you find out if it's going to be Hufflepuff or Gryffindor or something," he said with a laugh. "It's pretty magical, I think, because everyone at school, we open an envelope and find out what we're going to be and where we're going to be for the rest of our lives."

The 26-year-old added that "it's pretty exciting and pretty scary," but he will went into Friday's 11 a.m. ceremony at Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Science in North Chicago with the knowledge that no matter where he ends up, he will take one more step toward a goal of practicing family medicine.

By going into primary care, Del Rosario will be entering a field that the American Academy of Family Physicians says will need to add 52,000 doctors over the next 15 years to meet growth in the general population, the ranks of the elderly and the pool of newly insured Americans.

The Journal of the American Medical Association reported in 2012 that the U.S. faces “a severe shortage of generalist physicians” as more medical students opt for sub-specialty careers.

But in a personal statement that Del Rosario wrote prior to Match Day, he revealed how his lifelong love for art and his third-year clerkships during medical school taught him and that “family medicine is who I am.”

“Every rotation became like learning a new art medium,” he wrote.

“I learned how to dive into surgical cases and procedures, rejoice with mothers during deliveries, patiently listen to the intricacies of mental health patients, talk to and have fun with kids, and grow trust and life-long relationships with people who were in sickness or in health.

“Family medicine,” he added, “is the only specialty that could promise variety like this and more.”

Elaborating on those thoughts during an interview this week, Del Rosario talked being inspired by the altruism he has seen from doctors working in underserved rural and urban areas, saying “I really fell in love with their stories, and their personalities kind of matched mine.”

He also pointed out that the realities of paying off his medical-student loans could be assisted by participating in federal programs like the National Health Service Corps, which offers funds to assist with loan repayment in exchange for working in areas with limited access to health care.

“My immediate, short-term goal after residency is to go to the Lawndale Christian Health Center, which is in the Lawndale (neighborhood) in Chicago,” he said.

“There are a lot of family doctors there that are under the National Health Service Corps program, and they’re getting some of their loans repaid by



Chicago Medical School student Kamilah Banks-Word, waits to open the letter that will tell her where she will undergo her residency during Match Day 2014 at Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Science in North Chicago. Banks-Word grew up in the Cabrini Green housing project in Chicago.



Kamilah Banks-Word, reads the Match Day letter that announces her acceptance into a residency program for psychiatry at Advocate Lutheran General Hospital in Park Ridge. Her mother and brother are pictured at left.



Kamilah Banks-Word, reacts after reading her Match Day letter.



helping the poor.

“And there are actually a lot of other places I could go to as well, like North Chicago and probably Waukegan. I just have to look.”

Before any of that can happen, the 2006 graduate of Warren Township High School would have to open an envelope on the third Friday in March to see where his residency will take place. He fielded some indications that his destination might be West Suburban Medical Center in Oak Park, but everywhere from Indiana to the East Coast is a possibility.

“All our classmates and friends and family gather in this big hall,” he said, describing the setting as conveyed to him.

“So it’s this big ceremony, and then we all get our envelopes, count down and open them. Then a lot of people cry and are yelling and happy.”



Fourth-year Chicago Medical School students celebrate during Match Day at Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Science in North Chicago, which also houses colleges of podiatry, health professions, pharmacy, graduate and postdoctoral studies.



Chicago Medical School students compare Match Day letters announcing where they will spend the next several years of their lives in medical residency.