UCSF Fresno Selects Students to Research Valley Health Issues This Summer

FRESNO – Ten students from the Central San Joaquin Valley were recently selected to take part in the 28th UCSF Fresno Summer Biomedical Internship Program (SBI). SBI pairs selected students who are going into their senior year of high school with faculty members at UCSF Fresno to work on research projects for two months over the summer. The program is aimed at providing students with hands-on biomedical research experience while introducing them to careers in health and medicine.

Some of the research projects students will be working on involve cancer, clinical simulation training, diabetes and lupus. The students will conduct research at California State University, Fresno, Community Regional Medical Center, Sierra Pacific Orthopaedic Center and UCSF Fresno Center for Medical Education and Research.

The students will present their research findings on Thursday, Aug. 5 from 6 to 8 p.m. at the UCSF Fresno auditorium, located at 155 North Fresno Street in Fresno.

Students selected for the UCSF Fresno Summer Biomedical Internship Program include:

- Fayyaz Ahamed from University High School in Fresno
- Clara Briley from Yosemite High School in Oakhurst
- Ashmeet Goraya from Clovis West High School in Fresno
- Suhas Nareddy from Clovis North High School in Fresno
- Dustin Newman from El Diamante High School in Visalia
- Neha Pondicherry from Clovis North High School
- Tom Pritsky from Buchanan High School in Clovis
- Anindita Rajasekaran from El Diamante High School
- Mathias Tevendale from University High School
- David Wu from University High School

“A career in medicine would be fascinating and very enjoyable for me” said Briley of Oakhurst. “Working with others collectively to create vaccines and cures for diseases that will help people all over the world compels me to become a doctor of biomedical research. Another career in science that I am looking at is a forensic scientist or forensic detective. Working with police to solve crimes with science is something that piques my interest.”
“As soon as my aunt got LASIK eye surgery and my grandpa had cataract surgery to fix their respective vision problems, I wanted to become an ophthalmologist,” said Rajasekaran of Visalia. “My main goal in life is to do pop-up clinics in third world countries, where many are already struggling. I want to lead thousands of people in the dark to the light.”

“By working alongside doctors, I intend to gain more insight into medicine as a profession, which will allow me to make informed decisions about my future educational and career goals,” said Pritsky of Clovis. I particularly hope for exposure to the surgical aspects of medicine, especially to the technology involved in noninvasive surgery. I believe that the surgeries of tomorrow will be primarily noninvasive, leading to lower risk of infection, faster operation times, more standardized procedures and higher success rates.”

“Medicine stands out to me as a strong candidate for a career because I feel that I would be able to contribute to human health and advance scientific knowledge about the study of medicine,” said Wu of Fresno. “In order to learn more about medicine, I took part in UCSF Fresno’s Mini Medical School. I enjoyed listening to lectures that explained about the heart and sleep patterns. In addition, I currently volunteer at Saint Agnes Medical Center where I work as a floor assistant. These opportunities lead me to consider the medical field as a career that fits me.”

Sixty-six students applied for the program this year. Since it was established in 1988, more than 200 high-achieving students have graduated from the Summer Biomedical Research Internship Program. Many of the SBI graduates are now health professionals. A number of them have returned to the San Joaquin Valley and are working as doctors, pharmacists and nurses.

Students from Fresno, Kings, Madera, Mariposa, Merced and Tulare counties are eligible to apply. Students are selected based on academic merit, questionnaire responses, interviews, and letters of recommendation from their teachers.

UCSF Fresno SBI is funded by the Fresno Regional Foundation, Cal-Viva Health and other contributors. For more information, please visit http://www.fresno.ucsf.edu/sbi/ or email sbi@fresno.ucsf.edu or call (559) 499-6423.

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UCSF Fresno, established in 1975 and now celebrating its 40th anniversary, plays a vital role in providing healthcare services to residents of the San Joaquin Valley, training medical professionals in the region, conducting research that addresses regional health issues and academically preparing a pipeline of students for careers in health and medicine. Please visit www.fresno.ucsf.edu

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