The 2025-2026 Dr. Rosemary Underhill Medical Scholar Program

of the

New Jersey Myalgic Encephalomyelitis/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome Association

Dear Applicant:

Thank-you for your interest in the Dr. Rosemary Underhill Medical Scholar Program, offered by the New Jersey Myalgic Encephalomyelitis/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome Association (NJME/CFSA).

Dr. Underhill was a patient, a physician, a ME/CFS researcher, and one of those who assisted in the founding and nurturing of this program. We honor her 2021 passing by giving this program her name. The purpose of the Medical Scholar Program is to encourage men and women training to be healthcare providers to learn how to diagnose and to treat Myalgic Encephalomyelitis/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (ME/CFS) by researching and writing an essay about the illness. ME/CFS is also known by other names: Chronic Fatigue Immune Dysfunction Syndrome (CFIDS), Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS), ME (meaning either Myalgic Encephalomyelitis or Myalgic Encephalopathy), and ME/CFS. Despite the Institute of Medicine proposal to rename the illness *Systemic Exertion Intolerance Disease (SEID)*, the U.S. government and the worldwide scientific community continue to call this disease ME/CFS.

The Dr. Rosemary Underhill Medical Scholar Program is **not** a financial need program. It is open to **all** students studying in the health professions (medical, physician assistant, and nurse practitioner students, etc.) in New Jersey. It is also open to **all** New Jersey state residents studying the health professions **anywhere**. It is open to individuals engaged in post-health degree training at an academic institution if they are training in New Jersey or are a New Jersey state resident training anywhere. Proof of enrollment or participation needs to be demonstrated for the 2025-2026 academic year. Previous recipients of a Medical Scholar award are ineligible for the award, but previous applicants, who have not received the award, are encouraged to reapply.

The recipient of the award shall receive $5,000. If the recipient is paying tuition for the 2025-2026 academic year, the recipient will receive a $5,000 tuition reimbursement that will be applied toward the tuition of the academic year. If the recipient is in a qualifying training program and is not paying tuition, a direct payment will be made to the recipient with the understanding that the funds will be used to defray former educational expenses.

As an additional incentive for encourage students of the healthcare professions to apply, we are asking a research question which we hope will provide data suitable for publication. Applicants whose data are included in the publication will be listed as junior authors of the publication whether they are the recipients of the award or not. We hope the possibility of becoming an author of a peer-reviewed, medical journal article will be an attractive incentive for you to participate in the Medical Scholar Program.

Completed applications must be postmarked or electronically submitted no later than January 5, 2026 unless written permission for an extension is granted. Applications are to be submitted as indicated in the table below:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Applicant’s Institution** | **Send Completed Application To:** |
| Rutgers: NJMS, RWJMS | Ms. Jeannine Hodkey, Coordinator, New Jersey Health Foundation, Inc., 155 Village Blvd., Suite 130, Princeton, NJ , 08540. Phone: 908-731-65962; Fax: [732-247-0017](tel:732-247-0017); [jhodkey@njhf.org](mailto:jhodkey@njhf.org)**.** |
| Rowan: Cooper MS | Ms. Kyhna Wingate, Assistant Director of Financial Aid, Cooper Medical School of Rowan University (CMSRU), CMSRU Financial Aid Services, 401 South Broadway, Camden, NJ 08103. P: (856) 361-2850, option #4; F: (856) 361-2828; email: [financialaid@coopermed.rowan.edu](mailto:financialaid@coopermed.rowan.edu) |
| Rowan SOM | Ms. Gail L. Forman, J.D., Senior Director of Development, Rowan University School of Osteopathic Medicine, Office of Advancement, 42 East Laurel Road, Rowan Medicine, Suite 3610, Stratford, NJ 08084. P: (856) 566-6635; F: (856) 566-6652; email: [forman@rowan.edu](mailto:forman@rowan.edu) |
| Hackensack-Meridian | Robert Macauley, Director, Office of Student Financial Services, Hackensack Meridian School of Medicine, 123 Metro Boulevard, Nutley, NJ 07110. 862-660-5120, robert.macauley@hmhn.org |
| All Others | Contact [Kenneth.j.friedman@gmail.com](mailto:Kenneth.j.friedman@gmail.com) for instructions |

We hope that the process of writing the essay for this award will contribute to your becoming a healthcare provider better able to assist and provide compassionate care for patients suffering from ME/CFS and similar, complex, chronic illnesses such as Long Covid.

In the event that the Judging Committee deems no submission satisfies the rigorous standards of scholarship needed to receive the Dr. Rosemary Underhill Medical Scholar Award, we reserve the right to not make an award this year.

NJME/CFSA, Inc. is a registered 501(c)(3), not-for-profit, charitable organization dedicated to supporting ME/ CFS patients and their families, and promoting education and research into the causes and finding a cure for ME/CFS.

If you have questions concerning ME/CFS, the New Jersey Myalgic Encephalomyelitis/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome Association, or are in need of assistance in obtaining source material for your essay, please contact Dr. Kenneth J. Friedman, Chair of the Dr. Rosemary Underhill Medical Scholar Program by mail (NJME/CFSA, P.O. Box 477, Florham Park, NJ 07932), by telephone (973-379-1048), or by email (kenneth.j.friedman@gmail.com).

Sincerely,

Kenneth J. Friedman, Ph.D.

Chair, Dr. Rosemary Underhill Medical Scholar Program

New Jersey Myalgic Encephalomyelitis/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome Association, Inc.

Adjunct Associate Professor of Medicine

Rowan-Virtua School of Osteopathic Medicine

Stratford, NJ 08084

Retired Associate Professor of Pharmacology & Physiology

The New Jersey Medical School

University of Medicine & Dentistry of NJ

Newark NJ 07103

Dr. Rosemary Underhill Medical Scholar Award Program

New Jersey Myalgic Encephalomyelitis/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome Association

*Application/Applicant Requirements*

Please read the application/applicant requirements below:

Applicants must:

* Be currently enrolled as a health profession student or in a post-baccalaureate, health professional degree training program at a medical training facility in New Jersey, or be a New Jersey state resident receiving such training elsewhere.
* Complete the application in every detail. An incomplete application may disqualify the applicant.
* Research and complete the application on the stated topic. The application must be submitted on or before January 5, 2026. The work must be the applicant’s original work and not have been submitted elsewhere.
* Agree that the submitted work becomes the property of the NJME/CFSA, and that the work may be used by NJME/CFSA for advertisement purposes, and/or published by the Association.
* Provide a one-page, biographical/personal statement as part of the application. Include any information that you would like the Award Committee to consider when reviewing your application.
* Provide the name and address of your local newspaper.

**The Dr. Rosemary Underhill Medical Scholar Award Program**

**APPLICATION FORM**

**PART A: APPLICANT INFORMATION** – To be completed by applicant -

Please type:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Sex: M\_\_\_\_\_\_ F \_\_\_\_\_\_

Name of Healthcare Provider Program in which you are enrolled: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Your standing in that program (Class of, 1st year, etc.):\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Place of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

U. S. Citizen: Y \_\_\_\_ N \_\_\_\_ Marital Status: Single \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Married \_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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City, State, Zip Code

**PART B: APPLICANT’S ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENTS** (Please list and include awards/honors):

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**PART C: APPLICANT’S COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT** (Please list volunteer activities or other forms of community service performed beyond high school):

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**PART D: APPLICANT’S WORK EXPERIENCE** (Please list work experiences performed beyond high school, the dates of your employment, your employer, your position held, etc.):

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**Part E: APPLICANT’S BIOGRAPHICAL/PERSONAL STATEMENT** (Attach optional photo here.)

**Write a brief biography emphasizing why you decided to pursue a career in the health professions and what your career goals and aspirations are.** (You may attach a separate sheet)

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

Signature of Applicant and Date

**Essay Question**

At the current time, there is a need for medical care for patients with ME/CFS and Long COVID. Should they or should they not receive similar treatment, and should that treatment be administered at the same or different treatment centers?

**Background:**

ME/CFS has been recognized as a disease since 1934 (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK284897/>). There are an estimated 2.5 million patients in the U.S. who theoretically can be treated at one of an estimated 15-20 ME/CFS Treatment Centers1 making the patient load of each treatment center somewhere between 125,00-166,667 patients.

In comparison, Long COVID is a relatively new disease, first recognized late in 2020, affecting approximately 23 million patients in the U.S. for which there are an estimated 400 Long COVID Treatment Centers1 making the patient load of each treatment center approximately 57, 500 patients.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | ME/CFS | Long COVID |
| Year Recognized: | 1934 | 2020 |
| # of Patients (11/2024): | 2,500,000 | 23,000,000 |
| # of Treatment Centers (11/24): | ~15-20 | ~400 |
| Ratio of Patients/Center | 125,000-166,667 | 57,500 |

ME/CFS and Long COVID appear to be similar diseases. Both appear to be triggered by a viral onset and both result in chronic conditions whose symptoms overlap.2,3

Moreover, the case definition (the criteria which need to be satisfied for a person to be diagnosed as having a specific disease or syndrome) for Long COVID developed by the National Academy of Medicine (NAM), published in June, 2024, does not require the demonstration of any previous viral infection, and is based solely upon the symptoms of the patient.4 Many to most ME/CFS patients fulfill the NAM case definition of Long COVID.

If ME/CFS patients have multiple symptoms in common, and if many ME/CFS patients fulfill the NAM case definition of Long COVID, is it possible that ME/CFS and Long COVID patients could be treated by the same physicians at the same treatment centers? Alternatively, if ME/CFS and Long COVID prove to be sufficiently different so as to warrant different treatments, treating physicians will need to use case definitions other than those proposed by the NAM. ME/CFS patients will need to be distinguished from Long COVID patients, treated differently, and perhaps treated in separate treatment centers.

**The applicant’s essay needs to include the following:**

1. *Your identification of the symptoms in common of ME/CFS and Long COVID and your comparison of the treatments for these symptoms.*
2. *Your identification of the symptoms which are unique to each disease.*
3. *The results of your search of the medical literature for ME/CFS and Long COVID treatment centers and the results of your inquiries of appropriate treatment centers in the United States.*
4. *A conclusion as to whether ME/CFS and Long COVID patients should be treated by the same or differently trained physicians. Support you conclusion with a summary of the results of your research.*

**Notes:** Applicants’ responses will be used to support or negate: (1) the hypotheses that ME/CFS and Long COVID are sufficiently similar to warrant treatment at the same healthcare facilities and by physicians similarly trained, (2) that the treatments of these symptoms are the same or similar, regardless of diagnosis, and (3) that separate Long COVID and ME/CFS treatment centers should or should not be combined to treat patients suffering from these diseases. Usable data collected by applicants will be compiled and used to generate a manuscript suitable for publication. Applicants whose data are used will be co-authors of the resultant manuscript whether they are recipients of the 2025-2026 Medical Scholar award or not. The intent is to publish the gleaned data and consensus of our applicants. The publication will most likely appear in the *PAPIS Topical Collection* in the journal *Healthcare* ([Healthcare | Topical Collection : Why Some Patients Never Fully Recover: Post Active Phase of Infection Syndromes (PAPIS)](https://www.mdpi.com/journal/healthcare/topical_collections/PAPIS" \l "editors) ).

**References:**

1. Chat GPT queried Nov. 29, 2024
2. [Frontiers | ME/CFS and Long COVID share similar symptoms and biological abnormalities: road map to the literature](https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/medicine/articles/10.3389/fmed.2023.1187163/full)
3. [Long COVID and Myalgic Encephalomyelitis/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (ME/CFS)—A Systemic Review and Comparison of Clinical Presentation and Symptomatology](https://www.mdpi.com/1648-9144/57/5/418)
4. [Long\_COVID\_Definition\_Highlights.pdf](https://nap.nationalacademies.org/resource/27768/Long_COVID_Definition_Highlights.pdf)

Attach an official transcript from the registrar’s office of your participating school or arrange to have a transcript sent. Transcripts are to be sent to the Medical Scholar Program Administrator indicated in the table below:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Applicant’s Institution** | **Send Completed Application To:** |
| Rutgers: NJMS, RWJMS | Ms. Jeannine Hodkey, Coordinator, New Jersey Health Foundation, Inc., 155 Village Blvd., Suite 130, Princeton, NJ , 08540. Phone: 908-731-65962; Fax: [732-247-0017](tel:732-247-0017); [jhodkey@njhf.org](mailto:jhodkey@njhf.org) |
| Rowan: Cooper MS | Kyhna Wingate, Assistant Director of Financial Aid, Cooper Medical School, Rowan Medical School ([wingate@rowan.edu](mailto:wingate@rowan.edu)) |
| Rowan SOM | Ms. Gail L. Forman, J.D., Senior Director of Development, Rowan University School of Osteopathic Medicine, Office of Advancement, 42 East Laurel Road, Rowan Medicine, Suite 3610, Stratford, NJ 08084. P: (856) 566-6635; F: (856) 566-6652; email: [forman@rowan.edu](mailto:forman@rowan.edu) |
| Hackensack-Meridian | Robert Macauley, Director, Office of Student Financial Services, Hackensack Meridian School of Medicine, 123 Metro Boulevard, Nutley, NJ 07110. 862-660-5120, robert.macauley@hmhn.org |
| All Others | Contact [Kenneth.j.friedman@gmail.com](mailto:Kenneth.j.friedman@gmail.com) for instructions |

**The Dr. Rosemary Underhill Medical Scholar Award Program**

**APPLICATION FORM**

**PART A: APPLICANT INFORMATION**

To be completed by applicant (please type).

Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Sex: M\_\_\_\_\_\_ F \_\_\_\_\_\_

Name of Healthcare Provider Program in which you are enrolled: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Your standing in that program (Class of, 1st year, etc.):\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Place of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

U. S. Citizen: Y \_\_\_\_ N \_\_\_\_ Marital Status: Single \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Married \_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Permanent Legal Address: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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City State Zip Code

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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Area Code and Number

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City, State, Zip Code

**PART B: APPLICANT’S ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENTS** (please list and include awards/honors):

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**PART C: APPLICANT’S COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT** (please list volunteer activities or other forms of community service performed beyond high school)

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**PART D: APPLICANT’S WORK EXPERIENCE** (please list work experiences performed beyond high school) (Please list work experiences performed beyond high school. Dates of employment, employer, position held.)

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**Part E: APPLICANT’S BIOGRAPHICAL/PERSONAL STATEMENT** (Attach optional photo here.)

**Write a brief biography emphasizing why you decided to pursue a career in the health professions and what are your career goals and aspirations.** (You may attach a separate sheet).

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

Signature of Applicant and Date

**Essay Question:**

Despite diverse, physical symptoms which manifest variably across multiple body systems (Missailidis D, Annesley SJ, Fisher PR. Pathological Mechanisms Underlying Myalgic Encephalomyelitis/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome. Diagnostics (Basel). 2019 Jul 20;9(3):80. doi: 10.3390/diagnostics9030080. PMID: 31330791; PMCID: PMC6787592.), ME/CFS patients carry a significant mental health burden resulting from historical and name-related stigmatization of the disease both by healthcare professionals and the general public, disbelief in the actual existence of the disease, a lack of understanding of the cause and true nature of the disease, inadequate availability to healthcare providers knowledgeable about the disease (especially for homebound and bedbound patients), the limited number of proven treatment options, and the lack of a cure. The mental health impact of the disease has recently been reviewed:

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2405844024030627>

1. Review the literature documenting the biochemical and physiological nature of ME/CFS which argue against psychological/psychiatric causation of the disease. You may include arguments taken from other diseases.

2. Given the mental health burden of the disease on ME/CFS patients, develop recommendations as to how the healthcare provider can reduce or relieve these burdens.

 Your essay must not exceed 15 double-spaced pages of 12-point type with 1-inch margins.

 All facts and opinions in your essay must be supported by references that you cite.

 References should be cited within the text of the essay using standard, medical journal format.

 No more than 40 references should be cited.

 A bibliography containing all references cited in the essay should be included at the end of the essay.

 The bibliography should be formatted using standard, medical journal format.

 The document needs to be scholarly and well-referenced. Cite monographs and scholarly journal articles either in print or online. Citing web sites of not qualified or not respected sources as references is *not* acceptable.

 The essay must not have been offered or submitted elsewhere.

 Essays not conforming to these standards will not be considered.

 A committee will be formed by NJME/CFSA to review the submitted essays and select the winner. Judging will be on the basis of scholarship, and the demonstration of understanding the difficulties involved in diagnosing and providing compassionate and effective care to patients with ME/CFS and related illnesses. If, in the opinion of the judges, no essay meets the rigorous standards as set forth herein, NJME/CFSA reserves the right to not make an award this year.