



# RUTGERS

Robert Wood Johnson  
Medical School

## **Rutgers Medical Students Share Virtual Celebration on Residency Match Day** *COVID-19 Concerns Prompt Changes to Traditional Match Day Ceremonies*

New Brunswick, NJ—It was a year without the excited tearing of envelopes and massive crowd of classmates, friends and family, but regardless of the challenging times, the excitement surrounding this year's Match Day results was undimmed.

As the weeks drew closer to today's national Match Day celebration, graduating Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School student Dustin Crystal of Green Brook expressed increasing excitement about discovering the medical team and city he would be joining for his residency training.

But as COVID-19 concerns resulted in cancellations of events throughout the state, Robert Wood Johnson Medical School made plans for an alternate, online event that would enable students, faculty and staff—as well as family and friends—to share their joy and “get virtual hugs” of congratulations on their matches.

Considered a rite of passage for young physicians, Match Day is the culmination of a months-long process designed to pair graduating medical school students with the programs that will provide them with residency training in their selected specialties for the subsequent three to seven years. This year, in a time of social distancing, the medical school created a 90-minute video conference, beginning a little before noon on Friday, to celebrate. Instead of the traditional sealed envelopes, students were able to learn the results of their matches online.

“This day represents all our students have worked so hard for during their years of medical school, and it's gratifying to be able to celebrate with them and recognize their success, regardless of the venue in which that celebration occurs,” said Dr. Robert L. Johnson, interim dean of Robert Wood Johnson Medical School and dean, Rutgers New Jersey Medical School. “I am confident that the medical education foundation they have received will help them succeed in whatever specialty they choose.”

Ninety-six percent of the 160 graduating seniors participating in the various Match processes matched to a residency program, continuing the medical school's history of excellent Match Rates.

Of those students, one-quarter matched to a New Jersey-based program, 11 percent of whom will continue their residency training at a program based at Robert Wood Johnson Medical School. Approximately two out of five students who matched (43 percent) will be pursuing a primary care field (i.e., internal medicine, pediatrics, family medicine or obstetrics/gynecology). Of the nearly two dozen specialties in which the students matched, emergency medicine,

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anesthesiology, psychiatry, orthopedic surgery and neurological surgery were among the most popular.

“Once again we have done it: our students, with their passionate approach to learning, caring for patients with compassion and humanism, and advancing the missions of research and community service; and our student affairs deans and faculty, with their generous teaching, mentorship and guidance. I am so proud of this organization, and it is truly bittersweet to not be with the students in person for sharing of joy and big hugs,” said Dr. Carol A. Terregino, senior associate dean for education and academic affairs, associate dean for admissions and founding director, Institute for Excellence in Education, at Robert Wood Johnson Medical School.

For Crystal, who plans to specialize in plastic and reconstructive surgery, the future holds training at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia.

“I hope to continue some of the outcomes research that I’ve been a part of, as well as start new endeavors in translational research and device design,” said Crystal, who has contributed to articles in more than 20 peer-reviewed publications and assisted with research not only at the medical school’s Division of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery and Division of Vascular Surgery and Endovascular Therapy, but also at Boston Children’s Hospital Department of Plastic and Oral Surgery and Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center’s Division of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery.

He said his biggest enjoyment as a medical student at Robert Wood Johnson Medical School was the ability to find, work with and learn from great mentors.

Brittany Martinez of River Edge, meanwhile, will be training in the family medicine residency program at NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital/Weill Cornell Medical Center in New York City.

“As a first-generation college and medical graduate, I am excited to stand as a role model for other underrepresented students, like myself, interested in medicine, and to show them that their dreams can become a reality and that they can achieve anything that they set their mind to,” Martinez said.

While at the medical school, Martinez served as the elective coordinator for the Literacy Initiative for Students Teaching Older Spanish Speakers (LISTOS) elective, as well as a teaching assistant for the medical Spanish elective and an interpreter for the Eric B. Chandler Health Clinic, among other activities and research programs.

“As a future Latina Family Medicine physician, I aspire to work daily to form a special patient-doctor alliance, provide mentorship to my patients so that they can embrace good health habits, inspire students from underrepresented groups to pursue a career in medicine, and continue to

stand as an advocate for my patients in the community, especially the Spanish-speaking population,” she said.

Graduating students in Robert Wood Johnson Medical School’s Class of 2020 have been matched with residency programs at a number of other prestigious organizations, including Johns Hopkins Hospital, Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania, Yale-New Haven Hospital, Stanford University, UCLA Medical Center, Rhode Island Hospital/Brown University and Boston University Medical Center, among others.

According to the National Residency Matching Program, more than 40,000 students participated in this year’s Match—the largest Main Residency Match in the history of the program.

### **About Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School**

As one of the nation’s leading comprehensive medical schools, Robert Wood Johnson Medical School is dedicated to the pursuit of excellence in education, research, health care delivery, and the promotion of community health. Part of Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, Robert Wood Johnson Medical School encompasses 20 basic science and clinical departments, and hosts centers and institutes including The Cardiovascular Institute, the Child Health Institute of New Jersey, and the Women’s Health Institute. The medical school has been recognized by *U.S. News & World Report* as among the top 100 medical schools in the nation for research and primary care.

Robert Wood Johnson Medical School and Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital, an RWJBarnabas Health facility and the medical school’s principal affiliate, comprise one of the nation’s premier academic medical centers. Clinical services are provided by more than 500 faculty physicians in 200+ specialties and subspecialties as part of Rutgers Health, the clinical arm of Rutgers University. Rutgers Health is the most comprehensive academic health care provider in New Jersey, offering a breadth of accessible clinical care throughout the state supported by the latest in medical research and education.

Robert Wood Johnson Medical School maintains educational programs at the undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate levels on its campuses in New Brunswick and Piscataway and provides continuing education courses for health care professionals and community education programs. With more than 5,500 alumni since the start of its first class in 1966, the medical school has expanded its comprehensive programming and educational opportunities and is at the forefront of innovative curriculum development and a visionary admissions program. To learn more about Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, visit [rwjms.rutgers.edu](http://rwjms.rutgers.edu).