March 15, 2019

Georgia Clinical & Translational Science Alliance: TL1 Program

Emory University

Dear Committee Members,

I write to convey overwhelming enthusiasm and support for Anish Shah, MD as a candidate for the 2019 TL1 Program and the Masters of Science in Clinical Research. As the Program Director for the J. Willis Internal Medicine Residency Program, I have witnessed Anish’s exponential growth and early commitment to both patient care and clinical investigation thus far in his internal medicine residency training. Myself and the program deeply believe that Anish has the compassion, academic curiosity, perseverance, and enthusiasm to have an exponential trajectory as a clinical investigator.

Anish completed a Bachelor of Science in Neuroscience & Behavioral Biology, with a second major in Linguistics, at Emory University in 2011. He developed his initial interest in research at that time in the field of linguistics, and began to gain programming and statistical skills. He continued to grow his research skills during his time at Texas A&M University College of Medicine, learning data collection and statistical analysis techniques which culminated in a research project that was presented internationally, at the Canadian Association of Pediatric Surgeons. He then returned to Emory University School of Medicine for his training in internal medicine in July of 2016.

During his residency, he has excelled in his clinical rotations and received outstanding feedback on his performance. On his most recent wards month at Grady Memorial Hospital, his attending Dr. Anna Kho noted that “Dr. Shah was by far one of the BEST residents that I have ever worked with in my entire career…While everything that I've written so far is what's normally expected of residents, I will tell you that my month with Dr. Shah has been even better than months where I've worked with former chief residents.” During his last rotation in the intensive care unit, his attending Dr. Sushma Cribbs noted that he “managed the team well (almost at the level of a fellow), always making sure patients were seen, new patients were taken care, transfers were handled.” It is remarkable that during this time, he has also excelled in several professional extracurricular activities. Anish participated in the Distinction in Teaching and Leadership, giving lectures on teaching theory, multiple oral *bite-sized teaching* presentations (including at the regional Southern Hospital Medicine conference), and has coached interns in giving similar talks. He has also been active in developing the point-of-care ultrasonography curriculum with one of our teaching faculty, Dr. Mikhail Akbashev, including independent medical education research on the utility of cardiovascular point-of-care sonography, and is currently writing a manuscript with his results. This serves as an example of how Anish has gone above-and-beyond in multiple arenas of his training, which reflects how I expect he will excel in academic medicine as a physician, researcher, and teacher.

Anish developed a keen interest in the autonomic nervous system and cardiovascular risk after entering residency, and joined the laboratory of Dr. Amit Shah, an academic cardiologist and Assistant Professor of Epidemiology at the Rollins School of Public Health. Anish’s research focuses on heart rate variability, psychological stress, and ischemic heart disease, during which time he has gained valuable experience in programming and biostatistics, along with an increasing understanding of pathology of the autonomic nervous system. Myself, his advisor Dr. Daniel Dressler, and the residency program are all particularly proud of his scholastic achievements, and have gladly supported him in presenting at multiple local, regional, and national conferences. Most recently, he presented at the national level at the American Heart Association Scientific Sessions 2018 in Chicago, where his work was highlighted as one of the two top-rated research posters of the event. He has taken the next step by submitting a manuscript of his work as first author, “Circadian Changes in Heart Rate Variability Predict Abnormal Myocardial Perfusion”, currently under review. The mentorship he has received is distinctive, as I personally have seen the commitment Dr. Amit Shah has shown to Anish throughout his training thus far, from attending . He also has continued to work under the auspices of the Emory Program In Cardiovascular Outcomes Research and Epidemiology at Rollins, establishing relationships with additional mentors, including Dr. Viola Vaccarino on his latest manuscript and a review article on brain-heart interactions for *Hypertension*, and Dr. Alonso Alvaro on his work on heart rate variability and psychological stress with the Atherosclerotic Risk in Communities Study. This spring, as a capstone to his training, Anish presented his Senior Grand Rounds on sudden cardiac death and the autonomic nervous system. This thoughtful lecture was well-received and exemplifies how he has grown as an academic physician during his training. More so, his mentor for this talk, Dr. Marc Thames, invited him to expand on his presentation by writing a review article on cardiac sympathetic innervation. These examples showcase how Anish has demonstrated an eagerness and willingness to pursue clinical questions, and has developed relationships with faculty mentors that all are encouraging his continued growth as a clinical researcher.

As I have seen Anish grow and evolve to become a stellar senior resident, it is without any hesitation that I can say that he has tremendous potential to be a successful clinical researcher. Two of his closest clinical mentors, Dr. Daniel Dressler and Dr. Amit Shah, have both completed the MSCR here at Emory as part of their training, and as such I can be sure that this is the correct path forward for Anish. I know that he will continue his current research, expanding upon it through his TL1 year, and that the formal instruction of the MSCR program will enhance his growing skillset. As you can see from his application, Anish has developed relationships with a robust team of mentors who have established themselves as role-models of clinical and translational investigators in various stages of their career, all of whom are dedicated to his success.

In summary, I truly believe that Anish is an excellent candidate for the MSCR and TL1 program. In the upcoming year, I’m sure that he will be an enthusiastic and disciplined student and have the capacity and support to meet his research goals. He has the intellectual curiosity, technical skills, and perseverance to become an outstanding clinician-scientist, and will grow exponentially through formal didactics and continued mentorship. Anish has my highest recommendation, and I give my strongest support for his acceptance into the program. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

Karen Law, MD

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