

Alberta Doctors' Digest

Student Spotlight: Asha Hollis

Working alongside fellow medical student Asha Hollis or conversing with her before class reveals that she is engaged, smart and caring. But it's when you get to know more about her – the research and initiatives into which she has poured her energy – that you see she is someone impacting the world around her.

Asha's master's degree work in neuroscience before beginning medical school focused on a clinical trial to strengthen motor skills through non-invasive brain stimulation in children. This research aimed to impact the one in 3,000 children in Canada who experience lifelong disability as a result of a stroke at birth. Her excellence in her program was recognized when Asha was awarded the prestigious Banting and Best Canada Graduate Scholarship in 2018.



Asha Hollis invests time and energy in initiatives close to her heart. (Photo credit: Riley Brandt)

Asha has also made an impact on her university; she was the main driver behind the University of Calgary adopting Global Access to Medicines Principles in 2019. This important set of values ensures that health-related inventions developed by the University of Calgary researchers will be accessible in countries that typically experience financial barriers to securing these technologies. Enabling access to health innovation to those who cannot afford them is a priority for Asha; she has seen first-hand the effect of financial barriers that make needed health innovations inaccessible.

Even during medical school, Asha continues to invest time and energy in initiatives close to her heart. A natural collaborator, Asha is an executive and co-founder of SAAVE (Stop addicting adolescents to vaping and e-cigarettes), working with others to advocate for more strict regulation of vaping and e-cigarettes to protect children. She has contributed as a commentator to many local news programs and advocated directly for youth protection, including through a recent editorial in the *Calgary Herald*.

While Asha invests in initiatives around her, she makes time for family and friends – and other pursuits she continues to enjoy. One of these is her lifelong love of music. Asha is a talented violinist in both the U of C Orchestra and the Cumming School of Medicine Chamber Quartet.

While we are only a few months into medical school, it is clear from Asha's past and current advocacy work for others – particularly those less fortunate than herself – and her collaborative and energetic approach, that this physician-in-training will bring passion and energy to her new field.

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