FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ELECTRONIC PHOTOS AVAILABLE (rjennings@excelahealth.org)

Anthony D’Onofrio and Ziqian Wang

SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS EXPLORE FAMILY MEDICINE AT EXCELA HEALTH

LATROBE, PA, June 25, 2016 ... Two aspiring medical students gained experience in family medicine at Excela Health Latrobe Hospital this year as recipients of the Andrew D. Bagby Family Medicine Scholarship. Anthony D’Onofrio and Ziqian “Zee” Wang, both students at Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine at Seton Hill (LECOM); participated in a month-long program, training alongside doctors completing Excela Health's Family Medicine Residency Program.

The Bagby Scholarship was established by family and friends in memory of first-year resident Dr. Andrew Bagby, who died tragically in November 2001. The scholarship fund has increased substantially in the 13 years the scholarship has been awarded. It is supported by the Bagby family, as well as private donors, to give opportunities to aspiring family medicine physicians. The scholarship is administered by the Latrobe Area Hospital Charitable Foundation.

Although Anthony D’Onofrio never met his grandfather, Dr. Patsy D’Onofrio, the 23-year-old has been inspired by his legacy to pursue a medical career. Like his grandfather, the young man is an alumnus of Saint Vincent College, and while engaging in career exploration as an undergrad, he participated in a patient relations internship at Excela Health Westmoreland Hospital. It was there that he heard stories from older patients about the kind of physician his grandfather was prior to his death in 1983. “I could tell that the relationship he made with them had a lasting impression and I believe that is the reason he is remembered as an excellent family physician. Having the chance to truly get to know patients and build meaningful relationships will be an especially rewarding aspect of practicing medicine.”
His hospital experience also reinforced the value of communication and how much healing can occur just through conversation. While the Greensburg Central Catholic grad can continue to learn from the family stories, he also has present examples of the doctor-patient relationship in both his father, Samuel, a Jeannette optometrist, and his uncle, Matthew, a Greensburg internal medicine physician.

Shadowing various specialists as well as the Latrobe family medicine practice of Dr. Howard Bursch provided additional insights into the world of a primary care physician. “Unlike other specialists, primary care physicians are often charged with the most important step in the health process – identifying the problem. This is a craft that I look forward to working toward perfecting,” said D’Onofrio.

Ziqian Wang knows what it’s like to be on technical side of health care. A biology major at the University of Pennsylvania, the 26-year-old spent the two years prior to enrolling at LECOM helping train emergency physicians in the use of an electronic medical record, and developing scribe teams within their emergency departments. His assignments with PhysAssist Scribing took him to Chicago, Houston and Atlanta and finally Yonkers, NY, to St. Joseph’s Medical Center where he was the chief medical scribe. His career aspirations were also guided by stories shared by his father, a transplant surgeon.

But his experiences on the playing field as a teen-ager are where he made the lasting connection to the people side of medicine. Wang and his family emigrated from China when he was 12. An awkward age for any adolescent, it was all the more difficult for a boy who did not speak English and looking to fit in. “On the gridiron, I found an unexpected sense of belonging by speaking fluently the universal language of sports. Here jarring differences between myself and my peers were replaced by the common pursuit of teamwork, excellence and brotherhood.”

Through sporting fitness, Wang found freedom, identity and fulfillment, and the realization that he could help others find and sustain health through lifestyle changes. This will one day lead to a career in sports medicine. “My experiences taught me that an
active lifestyle leads to happiness and fulfillment. I expect to leverage this passion of mine as a physician ambassador of an active lifestyle and wellness.”