

**From:** [Case, Colleen R](#)  
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Good afternoon,

Christa wanted you to have this information as the press release for this new position will be released today. Best, Colleen

**\*The following is sent on behalf of Dean Page and Dean Zehle\***

### **Wells Named Inaugural Director of Social Medicine at Larner**

Christa Zehle, M.D., Senior Associate Dean for Medical Education, has announced the appointment of Katie Wells, M.D., M.P.H., as the inaugural Director of Social Medicine in the Office of Medical Education (OME) at the Larner College of Medicine at the University of Vermont, effective April 3, 2023.

In her new role, she will collaborate closely with medical educators and colleagues in Larner's OME, Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ODEI), Dean's Advisory Committee on DEI, Medical Education Anti-Racism Task Force, and across the community and UVM Health Network. She will be responsible for reviewing and further developing the college's social medicine curriculum, providing student and faculty mentoring on social medicine and health equity-related topics, and helping establish Larner as a leader in health equity and social justice research and education.

"I am grateful to our students, current and former members of the Social Justice Coalition, and the Medical Education Anti-Racism Task Force for identifying a need for and the importance of a designated faculty member to lead our efforts in addressing social medicine within our medical education programs. Dr. Katie Wells is an inclusive and collaborative leader whose extensive knowledge, diverse experiences, and innovative approach will enhance the antiracism and health equity education of future Larner College of Medicine physicians."

An Assistant Professor of Emergency Medicine, Wells was recruited to join the UVM faculty in 2018 as the first Director of International Emergency Medicine. She also serves as the Department of Emergency Medicine's Network Director of Health Equity, Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI), member of the faculty and residency selection committees, and Chair of the New American Indigenous Migrant Health (NAIMH) Task Force. A co-faculty advisor to the Social Justice Coalition (SJC) medical student leadership group, Wells co-led the implementation of the Social Determinants of Health curriculum in the required fourth-year medical student emergency medicine rotation and pioneered the development of the Health Equity Curriculum for the Department of Emergency Medicine. Her UVM honors include the Gender Equity Rising Star Award, the Alpha Omega Alpha Distinguished Faculty Award from the Larner medical Class of 2022, and co-recipient of a Frymoyer Scholarship for the development of a novel multidisciplinary gender-affirming care curriculum. In addition, she received an Emerging Needs Grant from the Community Health Investment Committee focused on culturally contextual healthcare delivery for Vermont's New American, Indigenous, and Migrant communities.

A self-described "convener of collaborators," Wells said, "I am honored to serve in this position and grateful for the support of my incredible department colleagues and chair, as well as my Larner and UVM Health Network colleagues for supporting my work thus far." She added, "I am also appreciative of the Larner College of Medicine's pledge to support work in the area of social medicine."

Wells has served as an independent consultant to the United Nation World Health Organization Programme on Emergency, Trauma, and Acute Care in Geneva, Switzerland in

2019, a visiting consultant in emergency medicine for Makerere University/Mulago Hospital in Kampala, Uganda, and Mbarara University of Science and Technology in Mbarara, Uganda. In addition, she has been a visiting consultant on emergency care system development for the Ugandan Ministry of Health and is currently building a multilateral health equity-focused partnership with Stellenbosch University and the University of Cape Town, in Cape Town, South Africa.

“It has been clear that our College would benefit from having a Director of Social Medicine, and I congratulate Dean Zehle on this outstanding appointment. Dr. Wells’ experience in care and advocacy for equitable care of diverse and underserved groups, both here and abroad, make her the perfect candidate to fill this important inaugural role,” said Richard L. Page, M.D., Dean of the Larner College of Medicine.

After receiving her B.S. in Biology and Psychology from the University of Georgia, Wells earned an M.D. at Mercer University School of Medicine in Macon, GA. She completed four years as a general surgery resident at The Ohio State University Medical Center and then concurrently completed a global health research fellowship at the University of Utah Center for Global Surgery building trauma care systems in Mongolia and earned an M.P.H. degree from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health with a focus in refugee health and large-scale disaster response. Wells then completed an emergency medicine residency – including a year as Chief Resident – at the University of Utah before joining UVM.

“I have been incredibly impressed by our medical students’ dedication and focus on social justice and look forward to working not only across the College of Medicine and health network, but also with the community to create more opportunities to build authentic relationships and trust with community partners,” said Wells.

*Colleen R. Case*

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