



ANNUAL REPORT 2024



Neisha Ramírez Serrano,
Health Research Scholarship 2024



Sebastián Bernaschina Rivera,
Scientific Research PIC Scholarship 2024



Rafael García
Health Research Scholarship 2024



Dr. Francisco Javier Cerra


PRESIDENT

MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

For over ten years, Fundación Intellectus has worked to create a healthier Puerto Rico, driven by a commitment to the mental and physical wellbeing of all Puerto Ricans. We believe in a future where our island has enough primary care physicians and specialists to adequately meet the needs of our population; where a diagnosis such as cancer does not mean financial hardship; where scientific research thrives and grows, leading to new and improved therapies to treat and cure health conditions, a future where everyone can achieve good health.

Addressing the shortage of physicians in Puerto Rico is one of the Foundation's highest priorities. One of the most direct ways we address this need is by providing support to medical students who are committed to practicing in Puerto Rico after completing their medical training. Our scholarships, which contribute to tuition costs and support students research in health related fields, represent our investment in the success and commitment of our future doctors.

In the past decade, Fundación Intellectus has awarded \$2,729,261 in scholarships to medical students to help cover their tuition, and \$275,280 in research scholarships to support their work in health related research.



Our programs, in support of health research, aim to drive innovations in science and health care that accelerate progress toward meaningful, impactful solutions. For this reason, we focus on investing in initiatives with high potential to create positive change in the communities they serve. We also support research that aims to close knowledge gaps regarding how diseases affect different populations, particularly the Latino and Puerto Rican communities.

This past year, we supported initiatives such as “Clínica del Sur”, which seeks to address the lack of access to healthcare providers in the southern and central mountain region of Puerto Rico. These clinics, staffed by medical students from Ponce Health Sciences University, provide primary care services to underserved communities with limited access to medical care.

As we begin our next decade of work, we do so with a strong foundation on which to continue building. Our track record stands as a testament to our commitment and determination to create a future where health is within everyone's reach.



Dr. Francisco Javier Cerra





ABOUT INTELLECTUS

MISSION

To promote the development of individuals and organizations committed to the education and research of the physical and mental health of Puerto Ricans.

VISION

To be the leading entity promoting knowledge and prevention as transformative elements of health in Puerto Rico.



Raymond Quiñones Alvarado, student at the University of Puerto Rico Mayagüez Campus, received the 2024 Health Research Scholarship and presented his project at the 2024 ABRCMS National Conference in Pittsburgh, where he was awarded a prize for Outstanding Presentation in the Immunology category.



INVESTING IN THE FUTURE OF OUR HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS

Since 2014, Fundación Intellectus has made a historic investment of

\$3,671,444



Noeli Delgado Rodríguez, Sexual Violence Prevention Research Scholarship 2024



Tadana Vázquez Rothschild, Health Research Scholarship 2024



David Febre Alemany, Health Research Scholarship 2024

51 students of science, medicine, and research received scholarships from Intellectus.

10 organizations committed to the physical and mental health of Puerto Ricans received funding through scholarships or sponsorships to support initiatives that drive social change.

Total Investment 2024

\$404,775



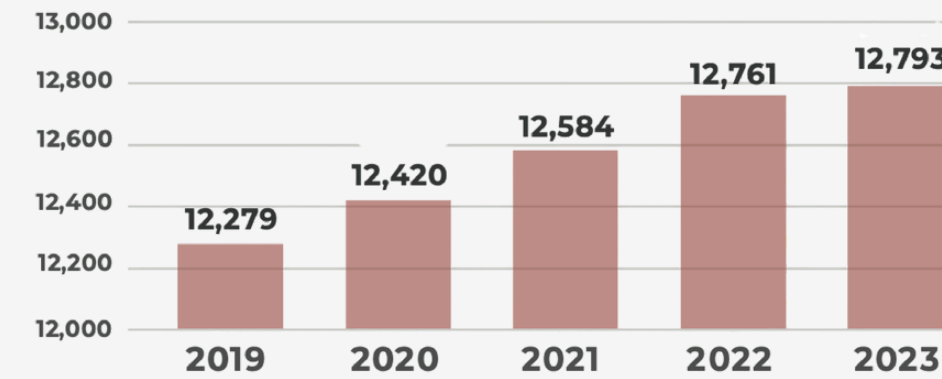
Addressing the SHORTAGE OF PHYSICIANS IN PUERTO RICO

Throughout 2024, we have continued working to ensure that more young physicians remain in or return to Puerto Rico to practice medicine.

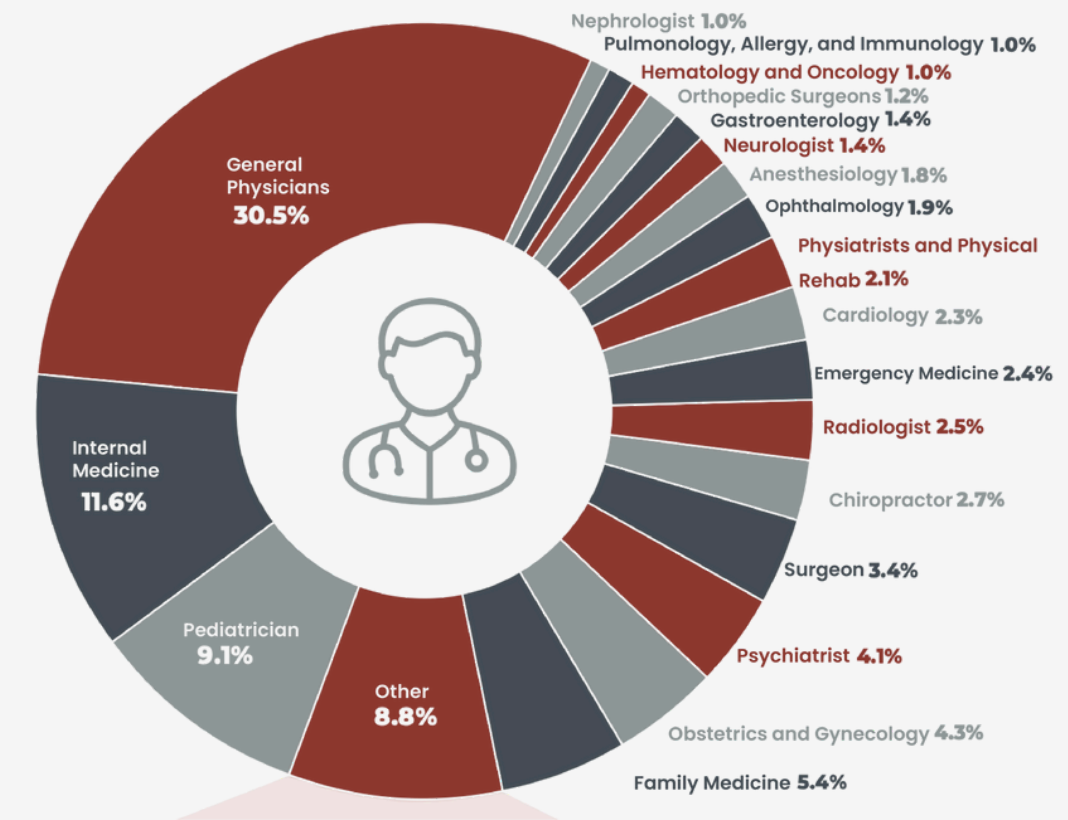
A study commissioned by the Puerto Rico Medical Defense Insurance Co. and conducted by Faro, LLC, shed light on the critical shortage of medical specialists in Puerto Rico and how this shortage could impact the island in the coming years. Our commitment is focused on uniting efforts between the private and public sectors to make practicing medicine in Puerto Rico not just a dream for many young doctors, but an achievable reality.

This is why Fundación Intellectus awards scholarships to help cover tuition costs for outstanding Puerto Rican medical students enrolled in the island's four main medical schools.

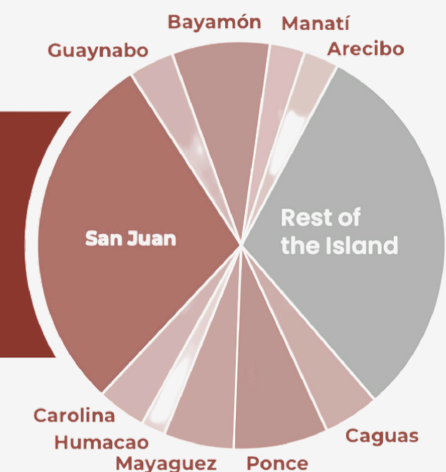
Total number of issued licenses



| | GENERAL PRACTICE | SPECIALIST |
|------|------------------|------------|
| 2019 | 4,546 | 4,749 |
| 2020 | 4,675 | 4,756 |
| 2021 | 4,836 | 4,764 |
| 2022 | 5,013 | 4,765 |
| 2023 | 5,082 | 4,727 |



69% of medical practice is concentrated in the municipalities of San Juan, Ponce, Caguas, Manatí, Mayagüez, Arcibo, Carolina, Bayamón, Guaynabo, and Humacao.



Original data from the "Market Study: Medical Practice in Puerto Rico" commissioned by Faro LLC.



SCHOLARSHIPS FOR MEDICAL STUDENTS





MD PHSU SCHOLARSHIP

FUNDS AWARDED: \$192,326

IMPACT: 10 STUDENTS

The MD PHSU Scholarship provides financial support to talented Puerto Rican students pursuing their medical degree at Ponce Health Sciences University. Intellectus awards a financial contribution of \$22,500, distributed by semester, to support their tuition payments.



Laura Rodríguez

MD PHSU SCHOLARSHIP 2020

“Fundación Intellectus provided me with tremendous support, motivation, and encouragement throughout my four years of medical school. It was a great incentive to keep giving my best and achieve high goals, including being accepted to the Urology residency at UPR Medical Sciences Campus. I’m forever grateful for everything they do for Puerto Rico and for us!”

Laura Rodríguez received the MD-PHSU Scholarship in 2020 and completed her medical degree in 2024 at PHSU. She is currently completing her Urology residency at the University of Puerto Rico Medical Sciences Campus.



MD COMMUNITY SCHOLARSHIP

FUNDS AWARDED: \$30,000

IMPACT: 5 STUDENTS

The MD Community Scholarship honors Puerto Rican medical students who demonstrate a strong commitment to helping communities in need. The scholarship provides financial assistance to help cover a portion of the student's medical school tuition.

Gabriel González

MD COMMUNITY SCHOLARSHIP 2024

"The scholarship awarded by Fundación Intellectus has been essential to my academic and professional growth, allowing me to design research projects and present on International platforms. The Foundation has not only supported me personally, but has also made a significant impact on our organization, Medical Research Group (MRG). MRG is a student led organization with a mission to create and support research opportunities for students at Ponce Health Sciences University. We promote academic excellence through mentorship, financial resources, and activities that enable our students to contribute to studies that positively impact medicine and the community."



SCHOLARSHIPS TO SUPPORT STUDENTS IN THE SCIENCES



Angelique Figueroa, Jomary Álvarez and Katiana Vélez, high school students who received the Intellectus Science Camp Scholarship in 2024.



MCAT & SCIENCE CAMP SCHOLARSHIP

The future of healthcare in Puerto Rico depends on more young individuals choosing and succeeding in professional careers in science and health.

That's why part of our annual scholarship budget is dedicated to supporting high school students who wish to attend specialized science summer camps, as well as college students preparing to take the MCAT exam required for their medical school application.

In 2024, we awarded scholarships to 9 students who wish to pursue a career in health and sciences:

3 MCAT SCHOLARSHIPS: \$6,000

6 SCIENCE CAMP SCHOLARSHIPS: \$2,275



Paula Méndez

SCIENCE CAMP SCHOLARSHIP 2024

“With a broader perspective and valuable new experiences, I am confident that I will continue to make a significant impact in the field of medicine. This Yale Summer Session internship represents a crucial step in my educational and professional journey, and I am committed to making the most of it to achieve my goals and create a positive impact in the world.”



SUPPORTING scientific and medical research in Puerto Rico

We strongly believe that the more and better information we obtain, the greater the technological advancements in healthcare will be. Research is a key component in generating data and new knowledge to support the creation of tools and solutions for the medical conditions and diseases that affect us. We support scientists and students in the fields of science and health to foster the development of research with the potential to create meaningful change in the wellbeing of our people.

SCHOLARSHIPS TO SUPPORT RESEARCH INITIATIVES

In 2024, Fundación Intellectus supported research initiatives by awarding 35 scholarships to students and healthcare professionals.

PIC Publication Scholarship

\$570

Impact: 2 students

PIC Scientific Research Scholarship

\$20,000

Impact: 6 students

PIC Conference Scholarship

\$6,800

Impact: 7 students

Health Research Scholarship

\$65,028

Impact: 17 students

Sexual Violence Prevention Research Scholarship

\$5,000

Impact: 3 students



Paola Flores Pérez, Health Research Scholarship 2024 and Miguel de Jesús, Conference Scholarship 2024



HEALTH RESEARCH SCHOLARSHIP

**Raymond
Quiñones Alvarado**



UPR MAYAGÜEZ

“The Intellectus scholarship has been a cornerstone in my development as a future physician-scientist, providing me with the resources to advance my research on innovative cancer immunotherapies (CAR-NK cell therapy) and generate findings with the potential to transform access to advanced treatments in underserved communities. This support has brought me closer to my mission of developing cutting edge therapeutic platforms that can be implemented in Puerto Rico.”

RESEARCH PROJECT: ENGINEERING NATURAL KILLER CELLS FOR UNIVERSAL CELLULAR THERAPIES AGAINST CANCER.

“Cancer remains a pressing concern in Puerto Rico, with an alarming increase of 347.6 cases and 100.7 deaths per 100,000 inhabitants. This crisis is further exacerbated by the high prevalence of aggressive cancers such as breast, prostate, colorectal, and lung cancer. Unfortunately, inequality in access to advanced treatments, compounded by socioeconomic barriers and geographic limitations, prevents many Puerto Ricans from receiving the urgent care they need.

In response to this urgent need, our research offers a ray of hope by integrating the fields of oncology and immunology to develop NK cell based therapies for cancer. What sets this approach apart is its potential to be both cost effective and universally applicable. This is not just an addition to the current arsenal of cancer treatments; it has the potential to transform the way cancer is treated. Our “off-the-shelf” therapy concept aims to overcome the limitations of patient specific treatments. By creating a standardized approach capable of targeting various types of cancer, we aim to lower production and treatment costs. This would ensure that even those living in resource limited settings or facing financial hardship can access life saving therapies.”



PREVENTION IS KEY

Health is the foundation of everything. When people are healthy, they can focus on building a better future for themselves and their families. We work with medical professionals, organizations, and institutions to improve and expand access to healthcare services in underserved areas.



We support projects that work hand-in-hand with communities to address their specific health needs.



DURING 2024,

we awarded the following donations in support of organizations committed to health in Puerto Rico:

Enlace Volunteering Group

\$10,200

Donation to support free healthcare services for women and minors provided by the community clinics “Clínica Mujer Metro” and “Clínica Enlace Especial Pediátrica”.

Ponce Health Sciences University Scientific Journal

\$15,000

Donation to support the operation of a new peer reviewed, open access scientific journal at Ponce Health Sciences University School of Medicine.

Health Career Collaborative Academy

\$3,700

Donation in support of the Health Career Collaborative Academy program, which promotes health sciences education among high school students.

CREPS

\$18,000

Donation awarded to support the development and growth of the student organization CREPS, which provides pre med and medical students with opportunities for community health service experiences and physician shadowing.





DURING 2024,

we awarded the following donations in support of organizations committed to health in Puerto Rico:

POPZE Project

\$3,536

Support for the ProSOLEAR study (Study of Life Experiences, Adversity and Resilience), which focuses on the effects of adversity in pregnant women. This study is part of the Pediatric Outcomes of Prenatal Zika Exposure project.

Ponce Medical School Foundation Dermatology Residency

\$7,690

Donation awarded for the acquisition of research equipment to carry out a pioneering research study on skin color classification in Hispanic populations.

Ponce Medical School Foundation

“Clínica del Sur ”

\$15,000

Multi-year donation to support the operational expenses of the Student Run Free Clinics at “Clínica del Sur,” a mobile community clinic offering integrated medical services to underserved communities in the southern region of Puerto Rico. These clinics provide multidisciplinary clinical training experiences for first through fourth year medical students while delivering vital healthcare services in areas with limited access to medical providers.

Ponce Medical School Foundation “Clínica del Sur” Student Run Free Clinics

Since January 2023, the Student Run Free Clinics have made the following impact through their free community clinics:

- 16 clinics organized and led by students
- 546 patients served
- 157 patients received psychological services
- Student volunteers participated in over 20 health fairs and community education events.

The volunteer team includes:

- 98 medical students
- 28 psychology students
- 56 nursing students
- 10 public health students
- 17 physicians, including specialists in dermatology, otolaryngology, and pediatrics.

“

“During our community outreach through “Clínica del Sur”, we have witnessed an alarming healthcare landscape in Puerto Rico. There is a growing number of patients with poorly controlled chronic conditions such as hypertension and diabetes. Many arrive without taking their medications regularly, and others have normalized living with high blood sugar or blood pressure levels, clear signs of a troubling lack of health education. Additionally, every clinic reveals a high need for psychological services, reflecting the emotional and mental toll faced by our communities. While many of our patients are older adults, we recently participated in a clinic where we treated young individuals showing signs of serious medical conditions such as thyroid disorders, immune system issues, hypertension, and anxiety. This experience underscores the limited medical attention many people receive from an early age and reinforces the urgent need to expand access to healthcare and preventive education across the Island.”

— **Dr. Laura Domenech, Senior Medical Officer**
Ponce Medical School Foundation, INC





IN 2024,

we sponsored the following events that supported the development of our future physicians:

Latino Medical Student Association

\$1,150

Support for the LMSA event at the Medical Sciences Campus for medical students, residents, and faculty from Puerto Rico's four medical schools.

Medgala 2024

\$500

Sponsorship for the MedGala event organized by the Ponce Health Sciences University Class of 2025.

Pre-Med Circle of UPR-Mayagüez

\$1,000

Donation to cover the costs of the 13th Health Professionals Symposium organized by the Pre-Med Circle of the University of Puerto Rico at Mayagüez.



Velaña DE SALUD & SUEÑOS



10th ANNIVERSARY

We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone who joined us in celebrating our tenth anniversary on October 26, 2024, at Aldeana. It was a very special evening filled with joy and hope for a healthier future for Puerto Rico. Thanks to the incredible support of all who attended, and our generous sponsors, we were able to raise over \$95,000 in funds to benefit Puerto Rican medical students committed to the health of their communities.



THANK YOU!



Velada DE SALUD & SUEÑOS

10th ANNIVERSARY





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BE PART OF THEIR JOURNEY!

SUPPORT
OUR FUTURE
DOCTORS



Karla Reyes
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Miguel de Jesús Rodríguez
PIC Conference Scholarship 2024

Angelymar Vélez
MD Community Scholarship 2024