

Celebrating the Summer Studentship Program: Shaping the Future of Rheumatology



This summer, a new generation of bright minds is stepping into the world of rheumatology, ready to drive advancements in patient care and medical research. As the charitable organization working in collaboration with the Canadian Rheumatology Association, the Canadian Rheumatology Association Foundation (CRAF) advances the future of rheumatology by funding research, training, and advocacy—and continues its long-standing commitment to developing future leaders through the Summer Studentship Program. Now in its 24th year, the program is a key part of shaping the future of rheumatology in Canada.

Since 2001, the Summer Studentship Program has supported more than 550 students, offering hands-on experience and mentorship. Notably, 16% of past participants have gone on to become practicing rheumatologists—clear evidence of the program's lasting impact on careers and the field.

Each summer, students engage in meaningful research, build critical skills, and gain exposure to the diverse realities of rheumatology. Their work contributes to medical knowledge while helping them understand the rewards and challenges of the specialty and these early experiences often inspire long-term commitment to the field.

"I didn't know much about rheumatology until my second year of medical school," says Dr. Mo Osman, a clinician-scientist, Associate Professor at the University of

Alberta, CRA member, and CRAF donor. "That changed when I participated in a Summer Studentship—it clearly had a lasting impact because here I am today, a rheumatologist."

Dr. Osman's story reflects the power of early exposure and mentorship. Today, he mentors students as a way of giving back the same encouragement that helped shape his career. Thanks to dedicated professionals like him, the program continues to thrive.

Mentorship is central to the program's success. It builds a strong, collaborative community and helps ensure the next generation is well-prepared to advance the specialty. Each student who participates brings new energy and ideas to the field, while gaining knowledge that can guide their future path.

The Summer Studentship Program remains a cornerstone of CRAF's mission to support emerging leaders in rheumatology. We extend our deepest thanks to the mentors who make this work possible, and to the students who inspire us with their passion and commitment. To support the program and help shape the future of rheumatology, visit crafoundation.ca.

