Cultural Competence Included in Physical Assessment Training in a First at NYCPM

A first for NYCPM occurred on March 10th, when “Cultural Diversity and Racial Bias in the Medical Sector” was presented virtually to its second-year class; it was the first time that cultural competence – the ability to understand, communicate with and effectively interact with people across cultures – was integrated into their Physical Assessment Course, abbreviated as PASS.

Presented by Sandie Luna and moderated and produced by Lily Burd-Orama, Managing Director of C3NY, a New York City-based company that trains and supplies standardized patients (SP) to medical schools, the program included many relevant graphics as well as several SP scenarios depicting interactions between patients and medical personnel (all actors). Each of the three SP scenarios demonstrated different aspects of implicit bias and how it could potentially affect medical care.

Small break-out rooms with students, as well as the actors depicting the patients and medical staff, were important elements of the program, and enabled Ms. Luna and Ms. Burd-Orama to comment about their observations. The subject of this training was taken from Textbook of Physical Diagnosis, a textbook by Mark H. Swartz, MD, NYCPM’s Vice President for Medical & Professional Affairs. Dr. Swartz has taught PASS at NYCPM for more than 20 years and says that this training will be incorporated into future PASS curricula.