Purpose
• Medical students are increasingly required to complete research projects (MSR’s).
• Students may struggle to find research mentors and settle for projects unrelated to future career goals.
• Penn State College of Medicine (COM) Hershey Campus is affiliated with a large academic medical center.
• The regional University Park Campus (UPC), still establishing its research program, is affiliated with a smaller community hospital.
• Aim: Bring together Penn State (PSU) health sciences researchers with UPC students to increase collaborations and assist them in selecting meaningful MSR’s.

Methods
• A PSU Nutritional Sciences doctoral student and a faculty member from the Penn State COM planned two research luncheons over 2 years.
• PSU health sciences researchers and UPC students were invited.
• Faculty each gave 3-5 minute overviews of their research.
• UP students were encouraged to seek out those whose research was of interest.
• Data presented are from second luncheon.

Results
• 11 medical students (9 MS 1 and 2 MS2), 10 researchers from the PSU College of Health and Human Development (HHD) and an assistant dean and 4 COM faculty members.
• HHD Faculty represented Nutritional Sciences, Kinesiology, Physiology, Biobehavioral Health, Health Policy and Administration departments.

Post-lunch surveys:
• Two medical students found projects and 1 medical student reported making a connection that may lead to collaboration.
• Three faculty attendees identified collaborators and 1 made a connection that may lead to collaboration.

Comments: Requests for a longer event next year to allow more discussion.

Conclusions
• Event brought together HHD faculty from 5 departments with collaborators from the COM for local/ international health research projects.
• COM faculty made HHD faculty aware of a website where they may post research projects open to medical students.
• First luncheon: 2 medical students matched with research mentors in Nutritional Sciences and Kinesiology departments.
• A manuscript on “Diet Assessment in Clinical Practice” resulting from one collaboration is currently under review at a scholarly journal.
• Second luncheon: 3 research matches made; connections made for 2 potential collaborations.
• This program required minimal resources.

Future directions
• Make this luncheon an annual program.
• Encourage HHD faculty to regularly update their research openings on COM website.
• Consider standing research placements for medical students to increase continuity.
• Plan grand rounds and colloquia that involve speakers from HHD and other PSU departments with the COM to build connections.