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**Resident Spotlight: Maily Cruz, DO**

For Georgia South Graduate Medical Education psychiatry resident Dr. Maily Cruz, a passion for science, advocacy, and patient care naturally led her to a career in medicine.

Born in Havelock, North Carolina, Cruz spent much of her childhood in several different communities, including Chalfont, Pennsylvania, Watkinsville, Georgia, and Leonardtown, Maryland. She attended the University of West Florida in Pensacola, where she completed her undergraduate studies before continuing her medical education at Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine South Georgia in Moultrie.

Her path to South Georgia began after high school when her family relocated to the military base in Albany. Wanting to remain close to family, Cruz chose to attend college in Florida before eventually moving even closer when she was accepted into PCOM South Georgia's Master of Biomedical Sciences program.

“I’ve always been interested in science and the human body,” Cruz said. “When I was younger, I became babysitting certified through the Red Cross, later earned my CPR and AED certification, and worked as a lifeguard. Taking anatomy and physiology in high school really confirmed that healthcare was the right path for me.”

As a medical student at PCOM South Georgia, Cruz completed clinical rotations at Colquitt Regional, where she worked closely with residents and faculty in both the family medicine and psychiatry programs.

“By the time I was applying to residency, I had worked with Georgia South residents for two years,” Cruz said. “I saw firsthand the support and camaraderie between residents and faculty, and I knew this was where I wanted to train.”

Now a psychiatry resident at Georgia South, Cruz says the experience has exceeded expectations.

“It has been great so far,” she said. “The second-, third-, and fourth-year residents go out of their way to make sure interns feel supported. There’s always something new to learn, and I’ve found incredible mentors and co-residents who genuinely want to help each other succeed.”

Cruz chose psychiatry because of its rapidly evolving nature and its opportunity to advocate for vulnerable populations.

“Psychiatry is a field that continues to grow as technology advances and our understanding of emotional and cognitive processes deepens,” she explained. “I also felt drawn to this specialty because many psychiatric patients are misunderstood or face discrimination due to their illness. I wanted to be someone who could advocate for them.”

She has developed a particular interest in neuropsychiatry and psychiatric conditions related to medical illness, finding the relationship between physical health and mental health especially fascinating.

Looking ahead, Cruz hopes to practice psychiatry in a small, rural community similar to Moultrie.

“In 10 years, I hope to be practicing psychiatry in a town like this one,” she said. “I enjoy the sense of community and the opportunity to make a meaningful impact.”

One of her favorite memories from residency so far was the annual resident retreat to Orlando, where all four residency classes spent time together enjoying games, laughter, and a visit to Aquatica.

Outside of medicine, Cruz enjoys listening to comedy podcasts, spending time with family, and tackling puzzles. In fact, one fun fact about her is that she can solve a Rubik's Cube in about three minutes.