Wayne State University School of Medicine, Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, Oakwood are pleased to announce the award of the Brain Injury Fellowship to resident Riley Smith, MD. Dr. Smith’s academic background includes a BS in Biomechanical Engineering from the University of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and an MD from Ohio State University College of Medicine, Ohio. Dr. Smith has distinguished himself through participation in academic poster presentations in the areas of multiple sclerosis and traumatic brain injury classicization and evaluation, and published on the topic of Culture-Specific Diagnoses in the Encyclopedia of Immigrant Health. Dr. Smith has also contributed to service to the community through his leadership as a team physician at high school athletic events and at Wayne State University Athletic Department. When asked what motivated him to consider becoming a physician in the field of physical medicine and rehabilitation, Dr. Smith explains, “After being exposed to a traumatic brain injury unit in medical school I fell in love the subspecialty. Over just a month as a student I could see massive improvements in cognition and function over their inpatient stays. Additionally I had an opportunity to see the life-long connection between physiatrists and patients in the clinic setting.” Dr. Smith shared his enthusiasm in making a difference in the lives of his patients, “The most exciting parts of training as a resident physician is the opportunity to expand my knowledge and then be able to use this knowledge to help actual patients.”

When asked what he has learned about being a physician from his patients, Dr. Smith shares his insight and experiences: “There have been very few problems that have arisen which have not been helped by taking the time to listen to patients and their families. Patients have gone as far as to say that listening and taking time to talk are the only things they care about in a physician.” Dr. Smith’s passion for learning more about concussion and brain injury medicine have led him to pursue a new research project to study sports concussions in young athletes with a rat model. His volunteer work within the community includes patient education and outreach. “I have taken part in Oakwood Joint 101 classes which is an opportunity to teach the community about management of arthritis and the role of physiatry.” Dr. Smith’s work in healing and restoration includes not only brain injury medicine and healing the human person, but also his hobby of restoring vintage British cars; a 1960 Austin-Healy Sprite and a 1976 Triumph TR-6. Riley is a proud husband to his wife of Amanda, who also works in the health care profession as a fundraiser for the school of nursing at U of M.

Dr. Smith describes what he enjoyed most about residency as, “Making new friends with the rest of the residents and learning about the field of Phsyiatry. Dr. Smith looks forward to commencing his new fellowship program at Wayne State University School of Medicine by continuing current research projects, starting new projects, and getting a more complete mastery of the field of brain injury medicine. Please join us in celebrating the accomplishment s of Riley Smith, MD!