

Emi Gacaj

Emi is a rising sophomore at Columbia University, passionate about exploring the intersections between medicine, social justice, and holistic care. Though born and raised in Minneapolis, Minnesota, Emi takes her heritage from Labëria, where her parents are originally from Vlora, very seriously. Emi brings her grassroots experiences as a full-spectrum birth doula, sex educator, youth activist, and founder of The Body Org, a national sexual wellness organization, into her future aims of becoming a reproductive health provider. After her father passed from cancer last summer, Emi chose to take a gap year to conduct research with the University of Minnesota, studying cancer metastasis through microfluidic devices and cardiac remodeling during pregnancy and postpartum, while also serving as an Albanian and Spanish medical interpreter. Infusing her research and clinical background with these lived experiences is the ethos of her work.

Emi applied to college as a Questbridge scholar, highlighting her first-generation, low-income status. Her field of study is the Evolutionary Biology of the Human Species, and on campus, she works with the Osteology Society, Gynecology Journal, and as an Alice! Health Peer Educator trainer, uniting her captivation with science to support the communities around her. She is also the co-founder of Manglovo Health, providing next-gen contraceptive care with the intention of merging technology and reproductive health solutions. Emi finds joy in fermenting kombucha, trying new foods, and exploring different styles of movement. She's also a Virgo Sun, Virgo Moon, and Libra Rising (finding pleasure in organizing and scheduling emails).