

## Honors Senior Spotlight



### **Madison Boulay, '21**

**Hometown:** Oxford, MA

**Major:** Biology, Pre-medicine

**Minor:** Chemistry

**Thesis Title:** *Folate Receptor Expression in HPV Negative Cervical Cancer*

**Thesis Advisor:** Dr. Christina Zito

### **What is your thesis about?**

I am testing three separate HPV negative cervical cancers to see if they have the Folate Receptor. Folic Acid is Vitamin B-9, and helps keep our cells healthy and helps them divide. I want to see whether Folic

Acid is getting into these cancer cells, which is why I'm looking for the folate receptor. This might help us decide whether folic acid can be used as a treatment for cervical cancer, or if the receptor could be a target for cervical cancer!

### **What motivated and/or inspired you to select this as your research topic?**

I did research with Dr. Zito on a similar topic in Spring 2020. Once the pandemic happened, my research was put on hold, so I expanded on it and added some experiments to create my honors thesis.

### **Do you have any advice for future Honors students thinking about writing an Honors Thesis?**

If you're looking for research experience, this is definitely the way to go. Start thinking about what you want to study early, and don't be afraid to start your research as a junior or sophomore, or even freshman!

### **After graduating, what are your plans?**

I am taking a gap year after graduation, but am planning to go to Africa this fall to provide medical care in underserved communities! After that, I am planning on applying to medical school!