

Christopher Clifford, MD: Looking out for those who need help

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Staff News Writer



The AMA "Members Move Medicine" series profiles a wide variety of doctors, offering a glimpse into the passions of women and men navigating new courses in American medicine.

On the move with: Christopher Clifford who served as the AMA's Government Relations Advocacy Fellow and is a member of the 2018 graduating class of the University of Reno Nevada School of Medicine. He will be entering residency training in emergency medicine.

AMA member since: 2013.

What inspired me to pursue a career in medicine: In my undergrad, I had the opportunity to volunteer for a free health clinic that took care of indigent patient populations. Seeing the need for health care in this population and observing how even a single physician can make a substantial difference inspired me to pursue medicine.

How I move medicine: By staying involved in local and national decision-making. There are a lot of people in government who make decisions about health care, but very few have the background of actually working with patients and their day-to-day struggles. I hope to be a strong patient advocate in these debates by sharing their real-life experiences.

Career highlights: Working to develop a new office in Nevada's health department known as the Office of Minority Health and Equity. Having a minority health office in your state is a staple for indigent communities and we have lacked this resource for a while. By developing this office, I believe I am advocating for some of the most vulnerable patient populations in my state.

Advice I'd give to those interested in pursuing a career in medicine: Keep your mind open as you progress, and be open to new experiences. I never had any health care advocacy experience until medical school. However, once I obtained that first experience, I instantly knew this was going to be a strong passion of mine.

Aspect of my work that means the most: The opportunity to make a significant difference in people's lives. The trust and connection you establish with people is rare outside of health care. The physician-patient relationship is one of the most important and sacred aspects of medicine and is something that should be protected.

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