

## Joanna T. Bisgrove, MD: Battling barriers for women in medicine

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Staff News Writer

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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:** Joanna T. Bisgrove, MD, a family physician in Oregon, Wisconsin.

**AMA member since:** 2011.

**What inspired me to pursue a career in medicine:** Originally, I wanted to be a doctor for deaf and hard-of-hearing patients. Years later, I’ve found myself caring for patients with a wide range of disabilities, as well as advocating for women’s health and health care for other disadvantaged groups. It just goes to show that you never know where your path will take you.

**How I move medicine:** By breaking boundaries as a hard-of-hearing physician. My role as a physician with a disability is to advocate for a country where there are no barriers for persons with disabilities anywhere. And I have no intention of stopping until we get there.

**Career highlights:** Women continue to be underrepresented in health care leadership, but I am glad to say that I am working to push back that boundary as well. I am a member of the Board of SSM Health Wisconsin. I also recently started my first term on the AMA Women Physicians Section governing council.

On the governing council, I plan to use my experience as a current corporate board member as we push forward in fighting for equal pay for women physicians and greater gender equity in top health care leadership both, in the boardroom and academia.

**Advice I’d give to those interested in pursuing a career in medicine:** Sit down and make a list of all the reasons you want to be a physician. And then put that list somewhere you can easily find it. Because becoming a doctor is tough. And being a doctor is tough.

So for all those times when the work and the emotions seem overwhelming, you can pull out that list and remind yourself why you’re here, and why you chose this career path.

**Aspect of my work that means the most:** Eleven years. Wow. That’s how long I’ve worked in the Oregon Clinic. We live in Oregon, and both of my girls go to school here. So easily the most meaningful aspect of my work is being a true small-town family physician.

I am so lucky to be the physician for multiple generations of families, to be caring for young adults I have known since they were children, and to have deep, meaningful relationships with members of my community that go back years. There’s something truly special about being part of a community’s fabric and making a true contribution to community wellbeing every single day.

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