

Luis E. Seija: Learning to dig deeper, push harder

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Staff News Writer



On the move with: Luis E. Seija, medical student, Texas A&M University College of Medicine.

AMA member since: 2015.

What inspired me to pursue a career in medicine: Growing up, my family didn't have much besides each other. Even when we had little to give, we adhered to a social contract, recognizing and addressing the needs of others, especially those on the cusp of the American dream. I was also a sick kid, always in and out of my pediatrician's office. Over the years, she became more than just a doctor to me and my family, and I became partial to her role as a physician.

How I move medicine: Through organized medicine, I effectively represent the interests and concerns of medical students and our most vulnerable—including children and minority populations—drawing from a shared reality to determine policy priorities and direct advocacy efforts on their behalf at the local, state and national levels. Most importantly, I engage my peers by setting an example of the multifaceted role medical students play in the discussion, implementation, and continuity of equitable health policy.

Career highlights: I maintain leadership positions within the Texas Medical Association, AMA and the American Academy of Pediatrics. Collectively, they have provided far-reaching platforms and facilitated many of my advocacy efforts.

Yet my commitment to service in my local community carries a special and personal significance for me. In college, I promoted health literacy and campus outreach initiatives, such as translating and producing Spanish-language materials on birth control and emergency contraception for the peer education program. I also recently spearheaded the development of a comprehensive and novel hepatitis C screening program for Texas A&M's affiliated student-run free clinic, creating opportunities for care and cure for the homeless and indigent of Central Texas.

Advice I'd give to those interested in pursuing a career in medicine:As medical trainees, we're placed in a daily gauntlet where the highs are high and the lows are personal. We're forced to reflect on the level of honesty we portray to ourselves, and there's no hiding from our insecurities.

However, we learn how to move forward from unmet expectations, pushing harder and digging deeper than ever before. These experiences prove we will fight alongside our patients through their ups and downs because we have overcome our own.

Aspect of my work that means the most: Every day presents an opportunity to fulfill the social contract instilled by my mother all those years ago. Patients deserve a sense of security and dignity when it comes to their health.



The disenfranchised don't need individuals with privilege to serve as their voice. They need compassion, support, and empowerment so they can find their own.

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