



AMA President Patrice Harris, MD: Standing tall and telling truths

SEP 12, 2018

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: Patrice A. Harris, MD, psychiatrist from Atlanta and AMA president-elect.

AMA member since: 1989.

What inspired me to pursue a career in medicine: Marcus Welby, a fictional television doctor. Dr. Welby not only cared for his patients’ health needs, but he also took an interest in his patients’ lives outside of the exam room. That holistic and community approach appealed to me.

How I move medicine: By working within our AMA and with the entire physician community to advocate for patients and our profession; coaching and mentoring the next generation of physician leaders; and working in partnership with other stakeholders to ensure health equity.

Career highlights: My most recent election as president-elect of the AMA is absolutely my most notable accomplishment forged from years of hard work, persistence and support from family and friends. I am also chair for the AMA Task Force to Reduce Opioid Abuse and a member of the AMA Task Force on Health Equity.

I have also served on the board of the American Psychiatric Association (APA), was an APA delegate to the AMA and was a member of the AMA Women Physicians Section Governing Council. I also received the Jeanne Spurlock, MD, Minority Fellowship Achievement Award and the Joseph P. Bailey Jr., MD, Physician Distinguished Service Award.

Advice I’d give to those interested in pursuing a career in medicine: If a career in health care is your passion and your purpose, pursue it. It is a long road, but worth it. There will be challenges, but see every challenge as a learning moment and an opportunity. Surround yourself with coaches, mentors and sponsors who believe in you and enjoy the ride.

Aspect of my work that means the most: The honor of caring for my patients. Every day I am in awe of the privilege, responsibility and trust that is the foundation of the patient-physician relationship.

Qualities that make me a successful leader: Successful leaders maintain their authenticity and are willing to speak truth to power. I try to live those attributes. One of my favorite leadership poems starts with, “Leaders are called to stand in that lonely place between the no longer and the not yet and intentionally make decisions that will bind, forge, move and create history.” Leaders must be willing to stand in that place.

How I give back to my community: I am a member of the steering committee of a collaborative in Atlanta that is daring to dream of transforming the health of the metro Atlanta region. We seek to drive



a movement that unites community perspective with institutional action to accelerate health improvement.

Visit [MembershipMovesMedicine.com](https://www.ama-assn.org/about/leadership/ama-president-patrice-harris-md-standing-tall-and-telling-truths) to learn more about other AMA members who are relentlessly moving medicine through advocacy, education, patient care and practice innovation, and join or renew today.