

Barbara S. Schneidman, MD, MPH: Honoring memory of physician father

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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: Barbara S. Schneidman, MD, MPH, a psychiatrist in Seattle.

AMA member since: 1990.

What inspired me to pursue a career in medicine: My father, who died quite young, was a physician. I was also very young when he died, but many of his books and medical examination instruments were around as I was growing up and I saw it as a way of honoring his memory as well as charting a new course for women in medicine.

How I move medicine: I have been involved in the licensure-and-certification community for most of my professional career. This gave me an extraordinary opportunity to influence and guide many changes in the regulatory environment.

Career highlights: I have been the president or chair of several national medical organizations—the Federation of State Medical Boards, the American College of Psychiatrists, the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology—and I chaired the AMA Senior Physicians Section. I have been invited to speak at both national and international meetings.

Advice I’d give to those interested in pursuing a career in medicine: Look at all opportunities. My career has blossomed because I was open to change and flexibility.

Aspect of my work that means the most: As a practicing psychiatrist, for many years I worked with our local sexual assault center. This was incredibly rewarding work—to be of assistance to women (and some men) who were victims of sexual abuse, either as children or as adults. Also—since change can be quite gradual with psychiatric patients—seeing patients improve over time and lead more productive lives.

My hope for the future of medicine: More diversity, health care that is more affordable, and more emphasis on preventive care.

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