



Luis T. Sanchez, MD: Treating patients, helping physicians

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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: Luis T. Sanchez, MD, a Boston psychiatrist in private practice.

AMA member since: 1998.

What inspired me to pursue a career in medicine: I developed an interest in medicine after graduating from the U.S. Military Academy. Realizing I did not wish to pursue a military career, I spent time reflecting on my career interests, combining science, education and being able to meaningfully assist people.

My pursuit of a career in medicine was influenced by a physician uncle who served as a mentor and advisor, coupled with seeing a close friend who—in his 20s—had an acute onset of cancer and was well treated by his physicians.

How I move medicine: Even as a senior physician, I continue to be actively involved in the treatment of patients, focusing on my subspecialty: addiction psychiatry. I work in a methadone program, an acute detoxification service and in private practice. I am committed to be available to those patients most affected by the opioid epidemic.

Career highlights: I directed the Massachusetts Medical Society (MMS) physician health program for 15 years, retiring five years ago. This was an opportunity to provide support and assistance to many medical students, residents and physicians with health and practice-related problems. It was a very personally rewarding experience.

I now chair the MMS senior physician committee. I’m also the AMA Senior Physician Section alternate delegate to the AMA House of Delegates. Both positions allow me to assist senior physicians in their late careers and retirement plans.

Advice I’d give to those interested in pursuing a career in medicine: To do their homework in learning about health care and what a career in medicine entails to ensure there is a match with their own personality, interests and dedication to helping others.

Aspect of my work that means the most: Assisting patients with addictions to recognize and accept that treatment works and that life can be lived without alcohol, opioids and other debilitating substances. Watching patients get better and being involved is deeply satisfying.

How I advocate for patients and physicians: I have always been interested in addictions and the importance of destigmatizing the illness and treatment needed. I am always looking for opportunities in the community and with my physician colleagues to emphasize the importance of being open-



mindful, self-aware and being available to assist those in need.

My hope for the future of medicine: That it continues to be a dynamic and progressive part of our culture, that we expand medical services to reach all those in need, and that those entering the medicine field enjoy and remain intrigued by the art and science of medicine.

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