

## Paul H. Wick, MD: Improving the lives of uninsured patients

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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:** Paul H. Wick, MD, a retired psychiatrist who volunteers to improve the lives of uninsured patients.

**AMA member since:** 1967.

**What inspired me to pursue a career in medicine:** I was aware of the impact of illness on individuals and families and hoped to be able to improve the health of those in need.

**How I move medicine:** Being involved in organized medicine is necessary. I believe that we can best improve the lives of our patients and improve our profession if we work together and advocate for the best care and the best practice environment.

**Career highlights:** I am a member of the AMA Senior Physicians Section governing council and a two-time past chair. I am also a former AMA delegate and alternate delegate representing the American Psychiatric Association (APA), as well as a past president of the Texas Society of Psychiatric Physicians (TSPP). I have been named a Distinguished Life Fellow by the APA and have been fortunate to receive the APA’s Berson Award and TSPP’s Distinguished Service Award.

**Advice I’d give to those interested in pursuing a career in medicine:** There are many career paths and opportunities in medicine. Advances occur daily, so be prepared to be a lifelong learner. Accept that you may best improve the practice of medicine by being a part of, and contributing to, organized medicine.

**Aspect of my work that means the most:** I have most enjoyed direct patient care and seeing individuals return to a productive life and reach their best potential. This meant not only providing the best treatment but also providing education, coping tools and support.

**How I advocate for physicians and patients:** I regularly volunteer at Bethesda Clinic, a faith-based clinic for the working uninsured, where I see patients needing mental health care and coordinate their care with primary care. Through my work on the “kitchen cabinet” of the Episcopal Health Foundation, I help seek answers to improve the health and well-being of fellow Texans. I teach mental health first aid courses as needed. I am a board member of the Texas Foundation for Psychiatric Education and Research and National Alliance on Mental Illness Tyler.

**My hope for the future of medicine:** That basic medical care can be available to all, and that our physician workforce is sufficient to meet these needs. Hopefully, we will see continued advances in the treatment of many of our devastating diseases. Medicine should remain free to regulate itself with minimal intrusion.

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