



Siobhan M. Wescott, MD: A mentor to Native American med students

OCT 19, 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: Siobhan M. Wescott, MD, assistant professor of public health at North Dakota State University.

AMA member since: 2013.

What inspired me to pursue a career in medicine: What I could accomplish in public health without a medical degree was limited. Now I have the crucial clinical perspective to fine-tune my public health work.

How I move medicine: As an Alaska Native, I move medicine by tirelessly working to raise the chronically low number of Native American students entering medical school. The people who first lived on this land survived for thousands of years by being tough, adaptable, wise and, most importantly, by caring for one another. It is time that we have more of them in medicine.

Career highlights:

- | Starting at Harvard Medical School at age 35.
- | Member, Association of American Indian Physicians board of directors.
- | Assistant professor at North Dakota State University, in the only MPH program that offers an American-Indian specialization.

Advice I’d give to those interested in pursuing a career in medicine: Get the chance to experience what health care is like (shadowing, work opportunities) to make sure that health care is for you, then seek out mentors to help you through the lengthy, intricate process.

Aspect of my work that means the most: Mentoring Native American students.

How I advocate for patients and physicians: In public health, I conduct community-based research that directly benefits Native American communities. As a member of the Association of American Indian Physicians board of directors, I advocate for all Native American physicians in the U.S.

My hope for the future of medicine: That in spite of the many fragmenting forces on the practice of medicine, the core of healing stays intact—a good connection between the patient and the physician.

Visit [MembershipMovesMedicine.com](https://www.ama-assn.org/about/leadership/members-move-medicine) 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.