

## Scott Chaiet, MD: Attacking disparities in LGBTQ care

OCT 16, 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:** Scott R. Chaiet, MD, an otolaryngologist and facial plastic and reconstructive surgeon in Madison, Wisconsin.

**AMA member since:** 2003.

**What inspired me to pursue a career in medicine:** My curiosity about biology—and later head and neck anatomy—inspired my initial interest as an otolaryngologist and facial plastic and reconstructive surgeon. However, it is the ability to help patients at a time of need with complex disorders—facial trauma, cancer, facial paralysis, among others—that inspires my career and daily practice.

**How I move medicine:** I saw the power of advocacy from the start of my medical career. In my first weeks of medical school, I joined the Texas Medical Association’s efforts to advocate medical liability reform, which transformed Texas into a physician-friendly state to practice medicine after its passage.

My practice and path in the AMA have veered towards LGBTQ patient care. I move medicine by advocating for changes across health care systems for LGBTQ care. This amplifies the voice of one physician to thousands. I move medicine both in my practice and in the AMA by fighting to decrease LGBTQ stigma, and by working to improve insurance coverage and access for gender-affirming surgery for transgender patients.

**Career highlights:** My work on the AMA LGBTQ Advisory Committee has given so much meaning to my professional career and personal life. As a member of the LGBTQ community, this is my opportunity to join other colleagues to advocate for a community that suffers far too many health care disparities. Working with a talented and motivated cohort, we have brought educational programming on transgender care to national surgical organizations.

**Advice I’d give to those interested in pursuing a career in medicine:** I was given tough advice when shadowing in the operating room as a college student, “If there is any other career that will make you equally happy as medicine, then you should do that because medicine is a tough pathway.”

The advice was then repeated for the field of surgery. I like giving that advice because for those of us who cannot imagine any other career besides medicine, we are lucky to have found a job we love (albeit a tough one).

**Aspect of my work that means the most:** I received the “Student of the Year” award from the Texas Medical Association in 2004 for my advocacy in the Texas legislature, and for leadership in organized medicine.

I also spent a summer in Washington, D.C. working for the AMA. After engaging in advocacy with my specialty, the American Academy of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery Foundation awarded me the Adam T. Ross, MD, Leadership Excellence Award in 2011 for service and leadership during residency.

**How I advocate for physicians and patients:** Many of my closest long-term friendships were founded in the AMA either as colleagues or mentors. As a recipient of great advice and guidance from these members, I remain engaged in the AMA for advocacy work, and to also train a new generation of advocates.

**My hope for the future of medicine:** That we see all medical diagnoses as important, worthy of coverage, and with less stigma or polarization. This includes—in my practice—gender dysphoria, but I also hope for changes in treatment of addiction and mental health in our future medical system.

Visit [MembershipMovesMedicine.com](https://www.membershipmovesmedicine.com) 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.