



Emily E. Dewar: Practicing medicine is an act of service

MAR 17, 2019

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: Emily E. Dewar, a fourth-year medical student at McGovern Medical School in Houston.

AMA member since: 2015.

What inspired me to pursue a career in medicine: Throughout my childhood I was told by adults that I would grow up to be a nurse or a physician “just like my family members.” I come from a medical family—my grandmother earned a master of science in nursing, my father is a gastroenterologist, and later this year my older brother will start his career as an internist in primary care.

For many years, I defiantly insisted that I was going to work in nanotechnology or advertising, but by the time I was a junior in high school I could no longer deny that medicine was where my passion was. I enjoy that it is a constantly changing scientific field, with endless opportunities for meaningful interactions and professional fulfillment.

How I move medicine: I strive to advocate for my patients at all levels of our health care system. It can be as complex as changing the health care policy landscape through involvement in organized medicine, or as simple as making a few extra calls to a pharmaceutical company, but at the end of the day practicing medicine is an act of service. Each day, big or small, I try to do at least one thing to make a patient’s life better.

Career highlights: I currently serve as the speaker of the Medical Student Section (MSS), which has helped me to develop as a leader and to better learn how the AMA interfaces with patients, physicians, and legislators. Previously, I served as chair of Region III and regional delegate to the AMA House of Delegates within the MSS as well. It has been a true privilege to represent the medical students of the AMA—they are some of the most brilliant, passionate, and kind individuals that I have ever met.

Advice I’d give to those interested in pursuing a career in medicine: The best advice I ever received from my father was “not to become a doctor unless there was nothing else I would rather do.” This is not to say that he is unhappy with his choice in career; I can think of few others as passionate about their patients or their job. Becoming a physician is humbling and rewarding, but sometimes requires tremendous sacrifice. In my hardest moments, my father wanted me to be able to step back and know that there is nothing else that would make me happier than being a doctor.

How I give back to the community: I advocate for patients and physicians by meeting face to face with legislators to discuss problems and policies affecting our health care system. Additionally, I have

written policies on a variety of issues for both the Medical Student Section and the AMA at large, such as increased gender and sexuality options on medical intake paperwork and suicide prevention in correctional facilities.

Aspect of my work that means the most: I feel most rewarded when I help patients regain control of their health. Being sick can be frightening, and navigating our complex health care system only adds to the stress. I chose to apply into pediatrics because I found myself most happy and invested when helping children navigate all the triumphs and pitfalls of growing up. Whether it takes the form of anticipatory guidance to a new mother, or explaining a complex diagnosis to a child at a level they can understand, connecting with my patients and their families is undoubtedly the best part of the job.

My hope for the future of medicine: As physicians, we are true “health care experts,” and it is important that we use our expertise to improve the health of our community at large. I hope that we will continue to advocate for best practice in medicine and physician self-governance. When you empower physicians, this allows them to empower others, and to continue to place patients at the center of their own care.

Visit [MembershipMovesMedicine.com](https://www.ama-assn.org/about/leadership/emily-e-dewar-practicing-medicine-act-service) 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.