

Catherine G. Coughlin: Helping identify human trafficking victims

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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: Catherine G. Coughlin, who is a fourth-year medical student at Albert Einstein College of Medicine in the Bronx, New York.

AMA member since: 2017.

What inspired me to pursue a career in medicine: Medicine is an opportunity to help others, while building meaningful relationships, serving the community, and advocating for a better world. Plus, I get to work with wonderful kids and their families. I cannot imagine a more satisfying career!

How I move medicine: By learning and teaching every day.

Career highlights: I am a strong advocate for my patients in many ways, but much of my work is focused on educating medical personnel on how to identify sex trafficking victims. I had the extraordinary privilege of giving a talk about human trafficking at AMA Interim this year, and I was thrilled to teach AMA members about this important topic.

Advice I’d give to those interested in pursuing a career in medicine: Medicine is a marathon, not a sprint! Every day is an opportunity for growth, learning, and opportunities for you and for your patients.

How I give back to the community: I think working with community partners is so important, as they have a pulse on what our patients really need. I also am the co-chair of the American Academy of Pediatrics Section on Pediatric Trainees advocacy campaign this year, which is such a joy and honor.

Aspect of my work that means the most: I have spent the past four years teaching medical students at my school how to identify victims of human trafficking. Human trafficking is a complex problem, and change is always incremental. However, the true reward is when someone tells me that they identified a human trafficking victim at the hospital as a result of my lecture.

My hope for the future of medicine: My dream is for medical practice to encompass all of the needs that patients have, outside of the clinic and the hospital. I want all my patients to have food security, safe housing, and high-quality education, so that they can truly be well.

Visit [MembershipMovesMedicine.com](https://www.ama-assn.org/about/leadership/catherine-g-coughlin-helping-identify-human-trafficking-victims) 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.