

Vijaya Appareddy, MD: From assisting her father to helping patients

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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: VijayaLakshmi Appareddy, MD, is a psychiatrist at Tri-State Psychiatric Services in Chattanooga, Tennessee. She is also board certified in child and adolescent psychiatry, and addiction medicine.

AMA member since: 1993.

What inspired me to pursue a career in medicine: My father, a plastic surgeon trained in the UK in the 1950s. We lived in the same building where my father performed his surgeries. I used to observe and assist my father since my high school days at his small hospital where he treated thousands of needy, sick and poor people.

How I move medicine: It is time to awake and arise. I move medicine by being engaged in organized medicine and in health care policy decisions made both in Washington, D.C. and at the state legislature. Our profession is being challenged—let us protect it.

Career highlights:

- | Appointed by President George W. Bush to the President’s Committee for People with Intellectual Disabilities (PCPID) for two terms between 2002 and 2006. Again, I was appointed by President Trump to the PCPID in 2018. The current focus of the committee is to increase employment for individuals with Intellectual disabilities.
- | Served as the chair of AMA International Medical Graduates Section.
- | Member of the AMA Council on Legislation.
- | Served as the chair of the board of trustees for the American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin (AAPI).
- | Received the AMA Foundation Leadership Award.

Advice I’d give to those interested in pursuing a career in medicine: I wholeheartedly encourage them to pursue their dreams. They need to start talking to physicians in all specialties, follow them in their practice or hospital if possible. They should not be afraid of the time it takes to become a doctor. Residency and fellowship should be looked upon as a job.

How I give back to the community: We need to mentor school children to take up careers in medicine. We need to participate in community health fairs and be easily accessible to people looking for guidance with their health. Physicians need to engage with their lawmakers and educate them in health-related legislation.

Aspect of my work that means the most: Going beyond my specialty to help patients get good health care. Being available to my patients 24/7 to deal with their medical problems. Being involved in advocacy work for physicians and the patients we serve.

My hope for the future of medicine: I feel medicine has a bright future with a lot of challenges. We have to actively engage with our lawmakers in forming the right health care policies for physicians and our patients.

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