

David Welsh, MD: Working hard to put patients first again

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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: David Welsh, MD, a general surgeon in Batesville, Indiana. Dr. Welsh chairs the AMA Organized Medical Staff Section Governing Council and serves on the AMA Council on Science and Public Health.

AMA member since: 1981.

What inspired me to pursue a career in medicine: As an elementary-school student I was attracted to the sciences. In addition, I was blessed to have quintessential family physicians, Dr. Matthews and Dr. McCarthy. One saved my life when I was 6. I was driven to grow up and help others just like my childhood heroes.

How I move medicine: I get the honor to move medicine every day in multiple ways. I get to repair patients through surgery and make difficult diagnoses. I have the pleasure to interact with family members and give moral support even after I transfer their relative to a tertiary center. I mend lives, motivate, laugh and cry with patients and their families. What's not to like?

Career highlights: I have been blessed with many rewards:

- Indiana State Medical Association (ISMA) president and chair of the board of trustees.
- Arthur Ellenberger Advocacy Award for Excellence in State Advocacy from the American College of Surgeons (ACS) Health Policy and Advocacy Group.
- AMA representative to the Joint Commission Hospital PTAC (chair).
- Indiana governor to the ACS and member of the Governors' Executive Committee.
- Ripley County health officer.
- Representative for the AMA to World Medical Association Leadership Conference.

More important, I have been a husband, father and grandfather. The best awards have come when patients or families come up to me and thank me for the care I have rendered, even years ago.

Advice I'd give to those interested in pursuing a career in medicine: If you love people and medicine, give a career in medicine a try. The work is hard, but the rewards are priceless. You can make a difference! You can move medicine.

How I give back to the community: Each day I look for opportunities to help patients and physicians. From working with legislators and setting up a trauma system for Indiana, or getting stop-the-bleed kits in all schools to interacting with members of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Food and Drug Administration and Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services to decrease regulations, I work for better care, solutions to challenges and less hassle for physicians and patients.

I advocate at the local hospitals, with my ISMA, and state and national agencies. I advocate for safety in public health at all levels, especially in my county.

Aspect of my work that means the most: The opportunity to interact with patients and their families and do my part as a physician to help—to try to make things better and to make their situation more manageable. Patients mean the most to me.

My hope for the future of medicine: For the patient to be placed first again. I hope for less complicated delivery of care, more transparency in the system, and more cost effectiveness. I hope for communication to be two-way and of paramount importance. I long for changes that allow physicians to be the professionals that we want and need them to be.

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