



Russell C. Libby, MD: Helping kids achieve optimal health

JAN 3, 2020

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: Russell C. Libby, MD, a pediatrician at Virginia Pediatric Group in Fairfax.

AMA member since: 1981.

What inspired me to pursue a career in medicine: It evolved as the most realistic and rewarding way to do good things for people and it gave shape and substance to my altruistic instincts. After exploring career and lifestyle options, I realized there was no better way to make a positive difference in this world.

How I move medicine: By understanding that my values and model behavior can help inspire and help elevate the profession. By planting the seeds that grow in colleagues and patients that empower them to achieve their best outcomes.

Career highlights: Most notable is building a practice that has helped dozens of clinicians (and students) understand the beauty and satisfaction of independent practice and providing a trusted medical home to tens of thousands of families throughout my community.

I have been president of my county and state societies and have served in leadership at the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), American Academy of Home Care Medicine, and am a delegate representing the AMA Integrated Physician Practice Section.

I have been involved in many facets of health care: As an innovator in physician practice, evolving the science and practice of home care (I chaired the section and wrote a textbook for the AAP), moving technology into practice, and having a successful side interest in media where I have done medical radio and television.

Probably the most important accomplishment was being a signature on the class-action lawsuits that significantly improved the patient care nuances and business practices of health insurance companies and was the birthplace of the Physicians Foundation, on whose board I am actively involved.

Advice I’d give to those interested in pursuing a career in medicine: It is a great and enduring pleasure, with an opportunity to help people and communities, continuously learn with fascination and make a reasonable living.

How I give back to the community: As a pediatrician, helping kids achieve their optimal developmental, mental and physical health is the greatest contribution. As a physician or a citizen, participating in work groups on school health, political advocacy, and being there to help your

community in times of stress and need. Charity is also an important facet, with learn, earn and return at its core. We need to give when we can!

Aspect of my work that means the most: There is no greater privilege and purpose than to have a close and effective relationship with your patients. Seeing children and their families thrive is the ultimate fulfillment, creating the currency of the heart that sustains and inspires in ways unique to the practice of medicine.

My hope for the future of medicine: Health care and the practice of medicine is under tremendous stress and I don't see that changing anytime soon. I hope that the profession can continue to innovate and adapt to the changing needs of our patients, communities and societies, and nuances of care. We need to sustain our relevance and responsibility to our patients and the profession.

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