



L. Carlos Zapata, MD: Shaping evidence-based health care policy

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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: L. Carlos Zapata, MD, an emergency physician at Nassau University Medical Center in East Meadow, New York. Dr. Zapata is speaker of the AMA Young Physicians Section Governing Council.

AMA member since: 2006.

What inspired me to pursue a career in medicine: When I was in middle school, my uncle Leo was brutally assaulted while he was at work. When I visited him in the intensive care unit, I was able to witness him wake up from a coma and see some of the amazing work that his team of physicians did to save his life. At that time, he was also uninsured. I got to see firsthand the struggles that he suffered from in obtaining the appropriate treatment to recover.

How I move medicine: Through my involvement in organized medicine at the national, state and local levels, I help shape evidence-based health care policy that I hope will increase access to high-quality care for all patients. I also help train and mentor residents and medical students to become better physicians.

Career highlights:

- | Speaker of the AMA Young Physician Section.
- | Councilor, Medical Society of the State of New York (MSSNY).
- | Councilor, American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP).
- | President, Medical Society of the County of Queens.
- | Founding faculty of the Emergency Medicine Residency and Transitional Year Residency at Nassau University Medical Center.
- | New York ACEP 2017 Young Physician Leadership and Advocacy Award.
- | Lead author of MSSNY policy that led to New York repealing nonmedical exemptions of childhood vaccinations to attend school.

Advice I’d give to those interested in pursuing a career in medicine: Although it takes a long road with many sacrifices to become a physician, it is the most rewarding career that I can imagine.

How I give back to the community: As an emergency physician, I am proud to be willing and able to take care of any patient, presenting with any problem, at any time. I help provide the safety net for my community and help train and educate residents and medical students. Every year, I meet with legislators and policymakers to advocate for my patients and colleagues.

Aspect of my work that means the most: Getting to make a difference in the lives of my patients



and helping foster the professional growth and development of my residents.

My hope for the future of medicine: That everybody in this country will be able to access high-quality health care from the physician of their choice, and the best and brightest young people continue to find their calling in medicine.

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