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.
- 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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URL: https://www.ama-assn.org/about/leadership/l-carlos-zapata-md-shaping-evidence-based-health-care-policy
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