

Sanjay Desai, MD, discusses medical education innovation and more

In September 2021, the AMA announced the hiring of Sanjay Desai, MD, as its new chief academic officer and group vice president of medical education. Now a few months into his role, we asked Dr. Desai to tell us a bit about his plan for the medical education unit.

Featured leadership



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Chief academic officer and group vice president of medical education at the AMA

What inspired you to apply for the chief academic officer role at the AMA?

I have been dedicated to medical education my entire career and have always aspired to focus on big issues. My experiences as a principal investigator on one of the Reimagining Residency grants gave me meaningful exposure to the unique possibilities at the AMA. I was inspired by the team leading that effort and by the partners they assembled so effectively across the country. When this opportunity came up, I could not think of a more exciting platform from which to have impact on medical education in our country.

What are you most excited about as you get to know the work of the AMA medical education team?

The people and the work are equally exciting to me. I came to the role with very high expectations after witnessing the work of some of the team. My expectations were quickly surpassed as I got to know the entire team. The people bring an incredible combination of professionalism, purpose, work ethic, ambition, creativity, teamwork and joyfulness. In addition, the work is even broader in scope and deeper in content than I imagined. The work of this team and its consortium interfaces across a vast portfolio and with the leading edges of medical education.

What does “medical education innovation across the continuum” mean to you?

I believe we need to move from compartmentalized to continuum-based approaches in all aspects of medical education. This continuum begins before students enter medical school through their years in practice. It includes the traditional structures in place today to the many additional structures and influences that are not addressed by our current approaches. It includes a humble awareness that many of our processes need to be reexamined and an unyielding pursuit to reinvent models of education for the equitable outcomes we aspire to achieve.

What are your top three priorities for 2022?

I hope to build on the successes this team has achieved already and focus on several new issues. In particular, I am eager to engage leading stakeholders to identify the most urgent issues in medical education for the country. Our goal will be to decide from among those urgent issues which ones we will lead the solutions, which ones we will partner with others in solutions, and which ones we are ready to support others as needed. With our team, its many collaborators and our collective ambition, I am confident we can help shape the future landscape of medical education. I could not be more



excited to begin this journey with all of you.