

Name

Calista Marie Bender

Pronouns

She/Her



Statement of interest

Pursuing a career as a physician would bring many challenges to anyone; experiencing this journey as a woman, I have faced additional questions, comments, and discouragement regarding my passion due to my gender. I have watched as my male counterparts receive praise and opportunities to network in the field to grow their passion for medicine, while my experiences in early shadowing were met with comments such as “by the time we are done today, it is my goal to change your mind about becoming a doctor” or interrogations from men at age nineteen on what I plan to do with my fertility since “this is a hard field for a woman.” I am interested in the Medical Student Section representative position for the Women Physicians Section Governing Council because as I have advanced in my medical career, it has become clear to me that these comments extend beyond discouraging words; there are barriers in the form of policies that create unnecessary obstacles for women in medicine. It is important to me to help lead the change that removes these barriers and reshapes the narrative for young women; women who dream of walking into the medical setting to be inspired, rather than coming home and asking, “am I wanted here?” I want to advocate for my community of women in medicine by joining the AMAs commitment to policies that advance gender equity, helping to tackle barriers such as pay gaps, diversity, and access to leadership positions.

Diversity statement

Diversity has a significant impact on many aspects of medicine, including, but not limited to, patient care; standardized practices; and the health, wellbeing, and equity of care providers. While women of all walks of life face adversity in the healthcare system– from being a patient, provider, and holding leadership positions– women of color face additional barriers that lead to an underrepresentation in healthcare and the subsequent impact on patient care. Diversity is both a

commitment to equal representation as well as a commitment to research regarding the myths and practices of medical care and policies that negatively impact our patients and providers of color. I firmly believe that addressing policies to remove barriers in the healthcare field for women physicians of color will directly translate to the care provided for patients, specifically women, of color. In my own commitment to diversity in medicine, I have read books like *Medical Apartheid* by Harriet Washington to better understand where inappropriate practices came from and how they are upheld. I am devoted to educating myself of past and current practices which negatively impact the health of people of color and am committed to upholding a practice of medicine that identifies whether the “standard of care” is appropriate for my patient. Thus far, as part of a medical care team, I make it a point to be aware of my patients’ backgrounds as I address their questions and concerns of the recommended care practices with respect.