

President's Report to the NJAFP House of Delegates

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It's been an eventful year for the NJAFP. Aside from our usual efforts surrounding advocacy and CME, the board poured its energies into three focus areas: (1) Engagement of residents, medical students, and new doctors (2) Educating the public about family medicine, and (3) Leadership Development.

For family medicine to thrive in New Jersey and nationally, we recognize the need to support our younger generations of family doctors. The success of our specialty depends heavily on developing leaders who are proud to be family doctors and care about preserving the power of the family physician to practice family medicine with a sense of autonomy, dignity, and joy. Those leaders should have a clear and unified message about the value that family physicians bring to our patients, communities, and to healthcare in general. And, they need to have the skills and connections to secure a place at the table where decisions are being made in our changing healthcare environment. Decision makers can include, but are not limited to, patients, legislators, employers, community leaders, and hospital administrators. Wherever those decisions regarding healthcare are being made, we want family physicians to have a prominent role and influence.

To improve the engagement of family medicine residents and medical students, the board unanimously agreed to increase the number of medical students and residents invited to attend and participate in our board meetings. Invitations were extended to each NJ medical school and family medicine residency program to appoint a non-voting representative to attend NJAFP board meetings. At our board meeting in October 2023, we had many new students and residents join us.

Additionally, the NJAFP Board, along with our resident trustees, launched a series of interviews on the NJAFP's Instagram site (@nj_afp). The interviews were conducted by one of our resident trustees, Esha Jain MD, with several different board members. Interview topics included: Interview Tips for Prospective Residents, How to Choose Your Residency Program, Advice for Family Medicine Students and Residents, and Prescribing PrEP. I presented the work we did on the Instagram project at the 10 State Conference in Michigan this year. There was a lot of buzz and interest from other chapters in attendance who also feel the need to increase their social media presence and engage family medicine residents.

With the generous support of the NJAFP Foundation, we also hosted a resident education session on advocacy at Dave and Busters in Woodbridge, NJ. It was a successful event and a

wonderful opportunity for our NJ family medicine residents to learn about how the NJAFP advocates for family doctors as well as network with FM residents from other NJ programs and with NJAFP Board Members.

The NJAFP Board also piloted an informational ZOOM room for the Family Medicine Interest Group (FMIG) at Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School and for the family medicine residents at Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson in New Brunswick and CentraState. The ZOOM room was very well attended. For the FMIG, the NJAFP Board encouraged the students to get actively involved in the NJAFP, discussed why to choose family medicine as a career and why they should consider staying in NJ for residency training and beyond. For the family medicine residents, the NJAFP Board discussed how to get involved in the NJAFP, why to stay in NJ post-residency, resolution writing, and how the NJAFP advocates for family physicians.

An effort was also made to re-vitalize our Annual Meeting and include activities that would appeal to family medicine residents. The Annual Meeting Task Force, led by Vice-President, Dr. Kenneth Kronhaus, met several times this year to discuss and implement changes to the Annual Meeting to include activities that would attract and engage our family medicine residents.

To begin the process of educating the public about family medicine and increase our efforts in leadership development, the NJAFP Board worked on developing our “Family Medicine Elevator Pitch”, that consistent and concise message affirming the importance of family medicine in New Jersey. It’s that message we want to convey every time we speak with the media, legislators, hospital administrators, and the public, so that people know who we are, what value we bring, and why they should choose family doctors. This is the message we came up with as a group:

Family physicians provide expert comprehensive care to families across NJ. We act as patient advocates and ensure that all aspects of a patient’s health and wellness are addressed. Both patients and community members turn to family doctors as trusted and reliable resources for all healthcare needs. Passionate about primary care, family physicians proudly provide care to every family member, working with patients to understand all care options and solutions available to them.

Or, as bulleted sound bites to work into a conversation, family doctors:

- Provide expert comprehensive care to families
- Are patient advocates
- Address all aspects of a patient’s health and wellness
- Are trusted and reliable resources

- Are passionate about primary care
- Proudly provide care to every family member
- Help patients understand all care options and solutions available

Next, the board took our family medicine elevator pitch, and had a consultant join us at a board meeting to work on our skills interacting with media. We invited medical students and residents to the board meeting to join us for this learning opportunity and had a robust turn-out.

Recognizing social media as an important tool to educate about family medicine and engage residents and medical students, the NJAFP Board set out this year to refine our goals surrounding a social media communications plan, including social media stats that should be reviewed regularly at board meetings. At the board's request, Amanda Bruck, the NJAFP Manager for Marketing and Communications, has put together focus groups to collect input from the executive committee, residents, and board members to develop our social media plan.

Last, but not least, an NJAFP Swag Store has been launched so we can all show our solidarity and pride with a variety of clothing and other products bearing the NJAFP logo. Look for the NJAFP online store on our website, <https://njafp.org/>.