

Happy DOCTORS' Day! March 30, 2023

On National Doctors' Day, celebrated each year on March 30, we honor the dedication and contributions of physicians as they positively impact their patients. To celebrate, we asked some Valley doctors across different specialties to share why they wanted to be a doctor, what they love about their specialties, their influences, and how they practice self care.



Patricia Auerbach, MD Renton Landing Urgent Care

Why did you decide to become a doctor?

When I was young and thinking about what I wanted to study and learn, I really wanted to be in a profession that helped someone or something. I considered being a veterinarian at first, but I decided to study medicine because I wanted to help humans/people get better when they were ill.

What do you love most about your specialty?

I work in an urgent care center and we see anyone who has an urgent condition. We see a variety of illnesses with people of all ages. We can care for them immediately and get them the best follow up care at VMC, if it is needed.

Who or what has influenced you the most throughout your career?

I have been practicing medicine for over 30 years. When I first started practicing, my clinician mentors and teachers were the people that influenced me the most. Now in this phase of my life, I am influenced and inspired by my patients. Their grace, intelligence, and humor inspire me every day to continue caring for them. In addition, after working with people during and after the Covid experience, the dedication of my colleagues and clinic staff reminds me daily of how important our work of caring for people in need is and has become.

When you're not practicing medicine, how do you practice self-care?

When I am not working, I enjoy my down time with friends and doing some of the hobbies that I seldom get to do. I like sculpting, reading, walking and working out on my Peloton. I find walks by the Seattle waterfront very relaxing, and I try to walk with friends when they are available. I belong to a book club, and I also love to spend time with animals. Self care for me also includes traveling which I love to do.



Callie Byrd, MD Covington Primary Care/ Pediatrics

Why did you decide to become a doctor?

There are many reasons that I decided to become a doctor and to this day I am grateful that I was given the chance to do so. Medicine is a challenging and rewarding career and looking back I would not change a thing.

What do you love most about your specialty?

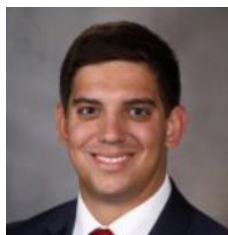
I feel privileged to be able to take care of children. I love seeing them grow and develop as babies/toddlers into young children/adolescents where each stage of growth poses new challenges and concerns. Being able to build relationships with my patients and their families is a big reason why I went into primary care.

Who or what has influenced you the most throughout your career?

Over the years the two groups of people that have influenced me the most have been my coworkers and my patients. My coworkers show up every day ready to see patients and help people despite things going on in their lives and in the world. They dedicate their time and energy for our patients and it is inspiring! I also learn from my patients on a daily basis and I strive to do the best I can with them in mind.

When you're not practicing medicine, how do you practice self-care?

I try to make time for myself every day and also enjoy spending time with my family and going outside.



Nicholas Clark, MD Proliance Orthopedic Associates

Why did you decide to become a doctor?

I chose to become a doctor, for reasons similar to the vast majority of my colleagues - I wanted to make an impact in people's lives by helping them. I found the best way for me to do that was through orthopedic surgery as it allowed me to treat patients of all ages with many different types of issues/problems and get them back to the activities that they enjoy.

What do you love most about your specialty?

As a spine surgeon, I often see patients in severe discomfort that I can help through surgical care to significantly improve their pain and improve their quality of life. I love the challenge of my work, both in the operating room and in the office. Additionally, I love the people I work with and the patients that we are privileged to treat.

Who or what has influenced you the most throughout your career?

I've been most influenced by my mentors throughout my career, as well as my current partners. Like many other specialties, we "stand on the shoulders of giants" that have come before us. I am lucky

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enough to be able to utilize their previous experience and knowledge to help guide my practice today. I hope to continue to take the lessons that they have taught us to help improve upon spine surgery in the future.

When you're not practicing medicine, how do you practice self-care?

I practice self-care by spending time with my wife and son. We try to remain active by taking advantage of the wonderful outdoor activities in the Pacific Northwest, including hiking, backpacking, camping, bicycling, and time on the water.



**Kris Sherwood, MD
Valley Family Medicine**

Why did you decide to become a doctor?

I liked the combination of science and the humanities and I wanted to do work that I thought would feel important and meaningful every day.

What do you love most about your specialty?

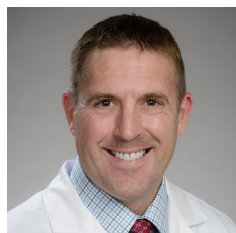
There are too many reasons to list—but I enjoy the variety, I enjoy seeing patients across the whole life spectrum from birth until the end of life, I love getting to know people and the families and communities they are a part of.

Who or what has influenced you the most throughout your career?

I think my OB patients have influenced me most. I am inspired by the extraordinary commitment of parents to their children both unborn and born. I have seen people make just amazing positive shifts in their life in order to provide a safe and loving environment for their children.

When you're not practicing medicine, how do you practice self-care?

When I am not working, I love to spend time with my wife, son, and our wonderful friends and family. I enjoy playing piano and guitar and doing just about any sort of outdoor recreation (skiing, biking, hiking etc.).



**Chad Ulrich, MD
Associated Emergency
Physicians**

Why did you decide to become a doctor?

When my family and I decided to leave active duty in 2010, we were looking for a new career. My wife brought up

medicine due to my other interests. The more I thought about it, the more I thought it would be a good fit. I love the opportunity to help people from all aspects of society when they are having their worst day, being a part of a team that has to respond in crisis to potentially save a life, real time dynamic problem solving, and working in a field where you must be a lifelong learner, as medicine is always changing.

What do you love most about your specialty?

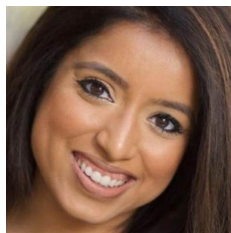
I love not knowing what is coming through the door next, as well as the variety each day brings. It is a constant challenge and blessing to care for patients from birth to death, from medical, psychiatric, to traumatic emergencies.

Who or what has influenced you the most throughout your career?

The desire to provide the best care for my patients, and to never grow complacent in my skills or knowledge.

When you're not practicing medicine, how do you practice self-care?

I enjoy exercising; it has been my stress relief through multiple deployments, the major career transition from active duty to medicine, and throughout medical school, residency, and through today!



**Padhma Venkitapathy, DPM
Podiatry**

Why did you decide to become a doctor?

I wanted to become a doctor to help people improve their health and to help someone improve a health concern that affects their everyday life.

What do you love most about your specialty?

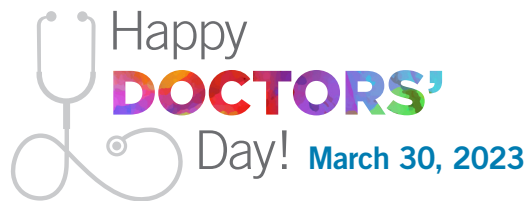
I love that I literally help people get back on their feet! Sometimes foot and ankle concerns are an overlooked aspect to their body, until it becomes painful, and it affects everyday function and every step they take.

Who or what has influenced you the most throughout your career?

A variety of people have influenced me throughout my career. If anything, my patients that I see every day are the biggest influence. I try to be the best doctor I can be in terms of knowledge and practice skills so that we can work together as a team to help make their health better. They are my driving force every day.

When you're not practicing medicine, how do you practice self-care?

I enjoy being with my friends and family—typically watching NFL or MLB games.



Note: We look forward to recognizing our other medical staff practitioners during their national recognition weeks later this year, including Physician Assistant Week (Oct. 6 – 12) and Nurse Practitioner Week (Nov. 12 – 18).



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