



# AAFP Board of Directors Resident and Student 2021 Annual Report

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## AAFP BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### Resident

Anna Askari, MD, MSBS  
Eisenhower Health  
Family Medicine Residency  
*Class of 2021*

### Student

Cynthia Ciccotelli, MD, MPH, MHA  
Geisinger Commonwealth  
School of Medicine  
*Class of 2021*

Thank you for choosing us to be your voices to the AAFP Board of Directors for 2020-2021, which continues to be an unprecedented year! We are grateful to have had this incredible experience. Our efforts in sharing your perspective and experiences at the mostly virtual board meetings was well received, highly valued, and influential to discussions and decisions made by the Board.

### Purpose and Scope of Work

As the student and resident board members, we have been able to represent more than 14,000 residents and 37,000 medical students on a national level. As future family physicians, our perspective was valued during Board discussions. We were able to bring the student and resident voices to the Board as we discussed a multitude of issues. We also served as Board liaisons to the Commission on Education (Dr. Ciccotelli) and the Commission on Health of the Public and Science (Dr. Askari). We also virtually attended the student section meeting of the College of Family Physicians of Canada, worked closely with fellow national resident and student leaders on national programming and leadership development efforts, served on the Commission on Education's Subcommittee on Resident and Student Issues, and wrote blog posts on various topics including the virtual interview season and the Match. We also attended the virtual National Conference of Constituency Leaders, the virtual National Conference of Family Medicine Residents and Students in July and the (in-person!) Congress of Delegates in September.

Due to the pandemic, much of our time on the Board consisted of virtual meetings. However, we were grateful to have had at our first in person meeting with the entire Board of Directors in Coeur d'Alene Resort in Idaho during the summer of 2021 and closed out the year at our final Board meeting in Kansas City at COD/FMX.

## **Activities and Achievements**

### *Transitions in AAFP Leadership*

First and foremost, we felt privileged to be a part of the tenure of our new Executive Vice President/Chief Executive Officer of the Academy, Shawn Martin. He brings over 20 years of experience with health care organizations (both with the AAFP and the AOA), and a personal passion regarding family medicine as a son of a family physician himself. He is an experienced leader as well as a nationally recognized expert on primary care delivery, payment, and workforce issues. He is passionate about advancing the interests of family medicine and has always served as a supporter of resident and medical student interests within the organization. It has been a joy and privilege to watch him take on this new leadership role within the AAFP and to work with him this year on the Board of Directors.

Stephanie Quinn has taken over as Senior Vice President, and we look forward to her continued leadership in Washington. We also said farewell to Chief Operating Officer, Todd Dicus, but were happy to welcome new Chief Financial Officer Charlotte Kerner and her expertise. We were also very happy to hear of the promotion of our very own co-director on the Board, Dr. Margot Savoy, who joined the AAFP Executive Team as the new Senior Vice President for Education. We can tell you from our experience working with Margot, she is the perfect leader and advocate to represent both medical students and residents. We are consistently impressed with the direction that the AAFP is moving in by hiring their senior management team and look forward to seeing the changes that are coming.

### *COVID-19 Global Pandemic and Organized Response*

In 2020, COVID-19 was a priority focus for the Board as we helped our members navigate through uncertain times. As a Board, we had many discussions around the impact of this pandemic on our most vulnerable communities and the need for continued advocacy to prevent worsening health disparities. When the vaccine was approved by the FDA and our patients were able to receive it, we spoke about ways we could improve vaccine distribution efforts utilizing and elevating the role of the family physician as a community resource, proponent of public health, and trusted expert in their communities. As student and resident members, the discussion on the impact of COVID-19 on learners in the clinical space was particularly important to us. We also shared our voices on new topics that emerged from this COVID world like navigating the new virtual residency interview space and the challenges of finding mentorship in family medicine when in-person events and some clinical rotations were cancelled. We spoke directly to student interest in family medicine and how to engage learners in virtual settings to help them explore our specialty further. We hope to see more in-person events this upcoming year so we can further engage students and residents in family medicine.

### *Policy and Advocacy Efforts*

Continuing with our longitudinal efforts to establish rapport with our legislators, the AAFP Board spent a great deal of time and energy on our advocacy efforts on behalf of the Academy. In

February, our virtual Board meeting included virtual Capitol Hill visits to the offices of our elected officials and their staff. We advocated for increased Medicaid reimbursement for primary care, a waiver for high-deductible health plans to provide primary care coverage to beneficiaries prior to meeting their deductible as an extension of the CARES Act, and the COVID-19 reconciliation legislation. We also further advocated for access to PPE for healthcare workers and improved vaccine distribution efforts that should include primary care providers. As representatives for our medical students and residents in particular, we both provided our perspective and personal stories with these legislators and their staff on how these issues affect us, our student and resident peers, our specialty as a whole, and our patients personally. We are so grateful to the AAFP staff for their efforts in preparing us for these meetings. We look forward to watching our advocacy efforts in action.

#### *Anti-racism*

During our meeting in Spring 2021, we had a thought-provoking conversation with Dr. Camara Phyllis Jones regarding the crisis of racism in the time of the COVID-19 crisis. AAFP has raised its voice, and continues to support the efforts of the Center for Diversity and Health Equity in these times where we as family physicians must act in our role as social justice advocates for our patients. Letters were written to legislators declaring racism a public health issue and asking for the development of a federal response to address systemic racism in our country, the backbone of poor health outcomes in our country. COVID-19 was addressed specifically as it relates to the health disparities faced by people in vulnerable communities. Academy leadership also participated in a Virtual Town Hall around the public health crisis of racism. Prior resolutions passed by our Congress of Delegates were acted on directly, taken to outside governing bodies to advocate for changes in medicine. While our country, organization and members continue to gain further awareness and learn more about this issue, we as the Student and Resident members to the Board have been able to amplify the voices of our colleagues and advocate for change.

As a board, we participated in an implicit bias training as suggested by a resolution brought by the Congress of Delegates. This workshop during the 2021 Winter Cluster Meeting specifically addressed the topics of guiding principles of equity, racism, anti-racism, and white supremacy. It was a fantastic training session with Sophic Solutions that was full of pearls and left us with so much to reflect on. There are plans for education students, residents, and all members of AAFP regarding implicit bias training. This includes development of the most up to date race equity curriculum for our AAFP members as well as longitudinal health equity education.

This year, the AAFP is taking diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice into account when reviewing all functions of the Academy, from membership to educational pursuits. Working with external consultants to advise on improving diversity within the Academy occurred beginning in January 2021. A task force was also created to decide on future steps the Academy could take to improve equity, including development of programming for diverse groups, celebrating the diverse membership of the organization, and increasing knowledge about diversity and inclusion related concepts for all members.

*NASEM Report*

On Friday May 21st, the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM) released a consequential new report, *Implementing High Quality Primary Care: Rebuilding the Foundation of Health Care*. AAFP joined a number of primary care organizations in the US to send a letter to the Department of Health & Human Services Secretary, Xavier Becerra, in support of this report and pledged to work with their team to implement the key findings of this report, and highlighted the emphasis the report placed on the value of primary care to individuals, families, communities, and a high-functioning health care system. The report contained a series of recommendations that presented opportunities to improve the health of our patients through a more robust primary care workforce and delivery system.

Overall, this year continued to be different than years past, but we enjoyed and were humbled by the experience to serve as representatives on this Board. We have learned so much about just how much work goes into running this organization and serving on this Board. We highly recommend every resident and medical student member who is interested in a leadership development experience with heavy emphasis on advocacy to consider pursuing this opportunity within the AAFP. You will be met with encouragement, support, and a smile from each of the members of the Board as you embark on this journey. We want to thank our fellow members of the Board of Directors and the amazing AAFP staff that have helped us this year. We thank our constituents for this opportunity that they gave us to grow as leaders within this organization.

**Anna Askari, MD, MSBS**

Resident Member of the Board of Directors

**Cynthia Ciccotelli, MD, MPH, MHA**

Student Member of the Board of Directors

*Note: This report was prepared by the resident or student representative(s) listed and includes their account(s) of the business conducted during their term. This is not an official record of business proceedings from the AAFP or any other entity. To find out more about the business of the AAFP, its congresses, commissions, and current policies visit [aafp.org](http://aafp.org).*