**Dr. Margot Savoy - Match Day interview.mp4**

**Margot Savoy, MD** [00:00:08] Partly I'm biased, so I'm a family physician. I love being a family physician. And I think that the most important reason why family medicine and primary care in general, is really important is because we save lives, literally. If you add ten primary care docs, particularly family physicians, to a community, we actually increase the life expectancy of the community by 250%. So we actually add, add years to people's lives. And we make those lives more healthy so that people actually get to enjoy them and actually be more fruitful and just be very happy and joyful in the time that they have. So we can make you feel better and we can extend your life. I mean, I can't think of anything better than that if you're choosing to go into medicine. But now if you're thinking about sort of the big picture of family medicine, I think the best part is that you really get to know your patients. You end up having these long-term continuous relationships where you're not only spending time with the patient, but also you often get to know the family. Sometimes, if you're lucky, you get to even live in the community. So you get to know the community or you start taking care of communities of patients. I know in my practice I often had people that were all in the same church or like all from the same group. So you really got to know the people around you really well and be able to be a part of their family and a part of their lives in their journeys. And for me that was a blessing. And I just think that's the best part of family medicine. So we get to save lives and we get to be embedded in their families.

[00:01:32] I mean, honestly, there's never a time when you tell me there's more really awesome things that I get upset about it. So more family doctors to me just means more awesomeness. So I'm stoked. I just think that it's fantastic. There is always really great joy in adding to our family of family medicine and knowing that there's going to be future colleagues out doing the really good work. I'm not surprised. I mean, I think that it's really great when you think about all the cool thing that you get to do as a family doctor. Who wouldn't want to get to be the detective and the teacher, the shoulder to lean on and like the good friend of the patients that you're taking care of, like all at one time. So I get it. This is really cool, though, if you're thinking about this from the nation's perspective. So every time we add more family physicians like I said, we're adding to the lives of people. And we know that we need more family physicians. And so what I see is hope. So whenever I see more and more people choosing family medicine. I see people choosing to invest in the health of our country and in the health of our world. And that just makes me really hopeful, and very excited. So, I'm totally thrilled to have new colleagues and I'm glad to welcome them. But I also see our future and I see the hope of us being able to have healthier lives. And that that's just a wonderful thing, just really fantastic.

[00:02:42] We already know that family physicians save lives. But despite that, we still have this sort of shortage. And the shortage isn't shrinking. It's actually, it's actually getting bigger. So even with our increasing numbers going into family medicine, with the retirements and people sort of choosing to go and do other things in life, there just aren't as many family physicians as there were before. And we're already starting to feel that. Even on the other side of Covid, you heard all of the stories about people having access issues and not being able to get in to see their doctor, having to wait an extended amount of time or not, not even being able to see someone maybe in their town and having to go to the whole other town over, maybe even to another part of the state to be able to get the care that they need because the people just don't have openings, they don't have availability, and that's only going to continue to get worse. And so it's really important that we not only keep the folks that we have now, but that we continue to add folks. And so I'm really excited that we have such a great number going into family medicine this year. I need that number to be even bigger. So for us to meet that gap and to close that amount, we're going to need many, many more people choosing primary care and specifically family medicine as we go into the future. The other part that I think sometimes people don't talk about and then I think it's really important to me personally is if you're a person who pays a lot of attention to health equity, you would know that it's not just a volumes game, it's not just numbers. We really need to be able to improve disparities by matching people to spaces and places where they feel comfortable getting care. And one of the things that we know for a fact is that there are groups of people in our country who definitely get more care and better care if they're able to pick the physician that they want to see and that physician is like them, they can actually relate to them. They feel safe and comfortable being able to get care delivered by them. And we can't do that if we don't have enough people from all different groups walking into family medicine and choosing that as their lifestyle. So this isn't just racial disparities in thinking about which classes of people are going in, like rural folks versus urban folks. It's all of that. Like it's including those things, but it's also including gender. It's including having physicians who are really comfortable and able to manage LGBTQ issues. And coming from that community often makes you more sensitive and more willing. And for some people, they feel more safe being able to get care from you. And so being able to have that as an option. And so encouraging people to feel safe and comfortable in family medicine if they're coming from any of those spaces or places. And I always think about ability. I mean, we think about like places where people might be more sensitive to whether or not there is appropriate equity issues being addressed; if you had to deal with those in your own life personally. And so it's not just that I need more numbers or though I totally need more numbers, I need everybody who's interested, and willing and able to do family medicine, to want to choose family medicine. But I also want it to be a diverse pool of people so that we can take care of everyone.

[00:05:24] For me, the best way to promote family medicine is by having students meet family physicians. I just think we sell family medicine better than anybody else because it's our life. It's what we've chosen to do. For many of us, it's a passion. For me, it's really helping students understand that sometimes they get put into a position to have to make what is a forced choice. That isn't exactly a forced choice. So I know that when I was a student, people spent a lot of time telling me that I had to decide, do I want to specialize or not? And that's actually not the choice, right? Family medicine is a specialty. It's a specialty in its own right. We have skill sets and things that we're able to do. And quite frankly, not everybody is cut out to be a really good family physician. So I don't need everybody to do family medicine. Some of the people that are listening are really not cut out to be a family physician and they don't want to be a family physician and they should go do the thing they love that they're passionate about. What I would like to really remind students is that you need to explore all of the things and decide whether or not you're in the right place for you and whether it makes you happy. And if you're choosing to not go on into family medicine for some other reason, like people are telling you things that are not true or they're giving you a false picture, go get some more information. Use your curiosity and find out whether or not that's really true. Because if you've met one family physician, you've met one family physician. And the most beautiful part about family medicine from a student perspective and from an ongoing learner perspective is that our careers and our jobs are ever changing. So that as my career has gone on, my curiosity and interest have drove things that I was more interested in. And because I was in family medicine and I chose a specialty that allows for flexibility, I've been able to lean into things; so I've done hospital medicine, I've done outpatient office medicine, I've been able to teach, I've been able to do research, I've been able to do administrative work. And throughout all of that, I've always been a family physician. And this idea that you don't have to pick and you don't have to narrow and you don't have to be only one thing is something that I think gets lost in this sort of narrative about specialize or not specialize. And so that's one of the most important things, I think, when we're thinking about promoting family medicine. The Academy does some really great things. So if you want to meet more family physicians or you're thinking about where could I find folks? How could I actually meet people? National Conference is like the best thing. It's every year in July, so you can come out to Kansas City, spend some time, meet a whole bunch of students and residents who are interested. But you could also meet a bunch of family physicians who are interested in family medicine and are practicing family physicians. So you get a chance to just interact and meet people. If that national stage is a little too big for you or it's a little too far away. We have state chapters all across the country, and every single one of those state chapters would happily welcome any student to coming to their meeting and getting to meet their members and spending time. Honestly, they'll often give you scholarships and give you opportunities to present your research. There are just so many opportunities where you could actually do things with our state chapters. And so I encourage people to reach out there. If you're just looking for more information and you wanted to know something like right now, we've definitely got a website, so feel free to check out our website AAFP.org. And then we also have, of course, social media, so you can check us out in lots of different social media channels. So all of those are places where you can get more information about the Academy, hear more about our programs and things that we have available for you; just a whole wealth of things from well-being, things that are made just for you to lectures to help you think about how to build your CV and get ready for your new career. There's debt management resources. There's clinical topics to help you get ready for your exams and for your boards. Just a whole wealth of things available for students as members of the AAFP. So I strongly encourage folks to join as a member, even if you're not 100% sure that you want to do family medicine, but you're sort of on that fence. Join AAFP, we don't charge you for it. It's a gift, our gift to you to be able to spend time with us and then figure out if this is a specialty for you. So lots of opportunities for you to engage: State Chapter, National, the Website, and membership. All of those are opportunities, so I'd just welcome students to take advantage of them.