

Samuel Nwaobi, MD

RESIDENCY

Piedmont Columbus Regional-Midtown Family Medicine Residency Program,
Columbus, GA

MEDICAL SCHOOL

University of Benin (UNIBEN), Benin City, Nigeria

Dr. Nwaobi counts receiving the AAFP Award for Excellence in Graduate Medical Education, being a resident member of the Georgia Academy of Family Physicians Board of Directors, and serving as the resident delegate at the 2021 and 2022 AAFP National Conference of Family Medicine Residents and Medical Students as his top professional accomplishments. Professionally, his areas of interest include substance use disorder (SUD) treatment, health care leadership, eliminating health disparities and inequities, and medical education. Following residency, Nwaobi plans to complete an addiction medicine fellowship, provide broad-spectrum care to underserved populations, and continue advocating for more accessible and equitable health care. In his free time, he enjoys spending time with family and friends, traveling, learning random facts, Jeopardy, policy discussions, and watching basketball, soccer, and football.

Awards and Recognition

2020	Georgia Southern University Graduate Poster Award Winner
2019	Omicron Delta Kappa National Leadership Honor Society
2012	University of Benin Distinction/Honors in Physiology

Offices and Appointments

2022	Member, Standing Committee on Public Health, American Medical Association-Resident and Fellow Section (AMA-RFS)
2022	Voting resident member, Georgia Association of Family Physicians (GAFF) Board of Directors
2021	Alternate voting resident member, GAFF Board of Directors
2021	GAFF resident, National Delegate to the AAFP National Conference
2021	Resident host, South Atlantic Region, AAFP National Conference
2018-2020	Member, Dean Student Advisory Committee, Georgia Southern University
2014-2015	President, UNIBEN Medical Students' Association

Community and Public Services

2021	Piedmont Columbus Regional Mobile Clinic
2021	Volunteer physician, Columbus State University Sports Screening
2018-2020	Cross-cultural Friendship Program, Georgia Southern University
2018-2020	Global Ambassadors Program, Georgia Southern University

Personal Statement from Dr. Samuel Nwaobi

I have always been fascinated by the enduring relationship between physicians and their patients, such as the enormous trust patients of all ages place on their doctors. Family physicians remain a focal point in their communities. In the community, they are respected not only for their clinical abilities but also for how much effort they place in charting health policies beneficial to the community. The continuity of care and investment in the holistic well-being of each patient and the community is the true essence of family medicine. Having this dual impact on an individual and community level was my motivation for going into medicine and choosing family medicine. Family medicine provides a unique platform to improve individual health outcomes and advocate for policies beneficial to the community.

Overcoming Obstacles

Deciding to move to the United States to get the best graduate medical education was not an easy one. As an international medical graduate (IMG), the residency application process is one of the most significant barriers. Some of these barriers include demonstrating a good fit for programs, difficulty determining the quality of medical education received abroad, and a lack of understanding of the unique nature of the IMG journey. The AAFP Strolling Through the Match guide was very helpful during my application process. I was so grateful for the wealth of information available, and I decided that if I was successful, I wanted to serve the AAFP and be a voice for IMGs. I understand that the best way to highlight the contributions IMGs bring to the American health care system is by exceeding expectations in my daily activities as a resident physician and leaving a long-lasting impact on my community.

My Unique Journey

Quality patient care has always been the focus of my career. However, during my graduate education in public health epidemiology, I realized individual health was closely linked to policies made at the community and national levels. My newly found interest in policymaking has driven my involvement in the Georgia Association of Family Physicians (GAFFP), the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP), and the American Medical Association (AMA). In the past 15 months, I have been the resident member of the GAFFP Board of Directors and the GAFFP Resident Delegate to the AAFP National Conference. In one of the breakout sessions at the AAFP National Conference, I had IMGs express how happy and inspired they were to see an IMG actively involved as one of the moderators. With my engagements in organized medicine, I am carefully learning the importance of advocacy for the needs of family medicine as a specialty, keeping an eye on maintaining the quality of care we provide to the American public while ensuring that family medicine physicians are appropriately recognized for the vital work we do. Family medicine is a unique specialty because the needs of our members are varied. The very nature of the specialty means that we have family physicians who practice in various clinical settings, and in some cases, family physicians serve as a focal point in public health. During the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, the slow vaccine rollout program revealed the importance of family physicians. Patients needed to discuss this with their family physicians before deciding to take the vaccine.

I recently had the honor of being appointed as a Standing Committee on Public Health member to the AMA Resident and Fellow Section. In this capacity, I will contribute to the AMA's yearly action plan for public health. My focus will be on social determinants of health and substance use disorders.

I have thought hard about why I think I am a worthy recipient of this award. First, I am grateful for the effort made by many family medicine residents who continue to promote the importance of family medicine as a specialty, not just with words but by contributing to their communities and advocacy efforts. I cannot claim my credentials would be better than other applicants. However, as an IMG, I am determined to advocate for a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive health care system through a strong work ethic and a commitment to community service. This award would give me a springboard to continue pushing to expand health care access to underserved populations while emphasizing the impact of social determinants of health on patient outcomes. I believe winning this award would motivate more IMGs and minority family medicine resident physicians like myself to contribute their time and efforts to organized family medicine while maintaining scholarly contributions that improve the health of all Americans. I hope to continue my involvement in the AAFP and, in the near future, provide leadership and expertise in population health and improving health care delivery systems.

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