

Ian Thomas, MD

RESIDENCY

McLaren St. Luke's Family Medicine Residency, Perrysburg, OH

MEDICAL SCHOOL

University of Toledo College of Medicine and Life Sciences, Toledo, OH

Dr. Thomas counts receiving the AAFP Foundation Family Medicine Leads (FML) Emerging Leader Award, receiving the AAFP Award for Excellence in Graduate Medical Education, co-authoring the chapter on gymnastics in the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) Sports Medicine Comprehensive Review, writing a \$50,000 grant to build a musculoskeletal ultrasound curriculum at his residency program, and leading an ultrasound workshop at the Ohio Academy of Family Physicians (OAFP) through the Emerging Leader Institute as his top professional accomplishments. Professionally, his interests include evidence-based sports medicine with an emphasis on dedicated facilities for gymnastics to build training regimens and provide preventive care models to reduce injury and increase longevity in sports. Following residency, Thomas plans to pursue a sports medicine fellowship. In his free time, he coaches and is the program director of the Sunrise Gymnastics Academy; composes and plays classical guitar, violin, and piano; and travels abroad learning new languages, including conversational Portuguese, Japanese, Russian, and Nepali.

Awards and Recognition

2022	AAFP Foundation Emerging Leader Institute Scholarship
2019	University of Toledo Dean's Scholarship Award

Offices and Appointments

2022-Present	Scholar, AAFP Foundation Emerging Leader Institute
2019-Present	Program director, Sunrise Gymnastics Academy
2016-2017	Preceptor, Medical Education/Anatomy
2015-2019	Team clinician, Ohio Men's Gymnastics State
2015-2016	Tutor, University of Toledo Academic Enrichment Center
2014-2019	Head coach, Exceleation Gymnastics Center
2012-2014	Tutor, University of Michigan Science Learning Center (SLC)

Community and Public Services

2019-2022	Mom's House Exercise and Nutrition in Pregnancy and Post-Partum
2022	Musculoskeletal Considerations for the Pediatric Population
2021	Medical representative, Springfield High School Board Meeting
2021	McLaren St. Luke's Hospital representative, V-Project News Conference
2021	Blue Devil Radio interview about the benefits of staying active for all ages
2021	MobileMeals Food Delivery
2016-2018	Tilganga Eye Institute mission trip to Kathmandu, Nepal

Personal Statement from Dr. Ian Thomas

As a childhood cancer survivor, which both sparked my interest in medicine and informs the kind of physician I am striving to become, I place a strong emphasis on patient education and employ an analytic approach to address my patient's needs. I often joke with my patients that if I take care of them long enough, they will be able to sit for the medical boards. I've always been passionate about education and tutored through high school, college, and medical school. This passion for teaching also manifested itself in the form of coaching. As a program director and head coach of a local gymnastics academy, I have continued to improve my ability to develop and employ systems-based practice, creating a positive learning culture and using practical methods to identify and solve problems to help my gymnasts reach their goals. I have adapted these skills to patient care.

Studying medicine has allowed me to apply my passion for teaching in innumerable ways which positively influence the lives of my athletes, patients, and community, as well as future family physicians. In applying for a family medicine residency, I always had the goal to build upon the program I was accepted. What began as a self-study project to create a lecture series to educate me on musculoskeletal ultrasound evolved into the first grant I had ever written for \$50,000 to build a musculoskeletal ultrasound curriculum at my residency. The McLaren Executive Leadership Board recently accepted this for full funding to be implemented into our residency didactics curriculum and taught by me this upcoming academic year.

Family physicians have the unique advantage of playing a lifelong role in the lives of our patients and their families as educators, advocates, and healers, which makes it unique among other specialties and uniquely suited to the physician I strive to be. A research study from the University of Pennsylvania, where 1,700 adults were surveyed in June of 2021, demonstrated that 83% of adults trust health care information provided by their primary care physician. In a time when misinformation is commonplace and further exacerbates health inequities, this study underscores the strength of trust we allow as family physicians and the importance of patient education. This reassures me that I have chosen the field not only best suited to my interests and abilities but also best situated to address the issues of the times.

Overcoming Obstacles

Like many, the road that led to where I am today has had its share of adversities. Pursuing the field of medicine is not only a significant commitment of time but a monetary one, as well. My education has been delayed twice due to financial constraints, which continues to serve as an obstacle for many underrepresented minorities pursuing a career in medicine. Being an underrepresented minority, as an African American, informs my decision making and puts particular importance on addressing equal access to care, social determinants of health (SDoH), and bridging the gap in medical literacy for all my patients. There is a subtle irony to being both the recipient of the effect of social inequities and being able to help address it, all at the same time. This has led me to pursue research to elucidate whether the common

practice of community resource referrals adequately meets the needs of patients with SDoH concerns in the hopes of identifying barriers to be addressed to improve patient care in our practice and health in our community.

My Unique Journey

In reviewing the accomplishments of past recipients of this prestigious award recommended by my program director, Dr. Zona, I couldn't help but feel a sense of impostorism. For many underrepresented minorities, not being able to see oneself reflected in the institutions in which we aspire directly influences our ability to envision ourselves in positions of those institutions. Dr. Zona often refers to me as the "resident pioneer" for my impetus to stumble into uncharted territories for the residency program. When faced with my reluctance to apply for the award, he replied, "If not you, then who nothing ventured, nothing gained." In reflecting on his words and as an advocate for diversity, I believe family medicine should model the ideals it espouses. In that way, I, too, must be the diversity I wish to see reflected in the broader medical community I want to serve. I believe my attitude of questioning that which is taken for granted and searching for unique solutions to problems led me to be the first resident in my program to moonlight, write my first grant to build an ultrasound curriculum at my residency, be involved in my first publication in a medical textbook, and be the first resident to represent my program at a national level is what separates me from other candidates. I believe I have the qualifications to be a candidate for the Award for Excellence in Graduate Medical Education because my commitment to education is not simply a part of who I am as a physician but who I am as a person and is reflected in every aspect of my life from coaching gymnastics and serving my community to caring for my patients and shaping the education of future family physicians.

[END FILE]