

Nicole Woodson-DeFauw, MD

RESIDENCY

University of Iowa Health Center Residency, Iowa City, IA

MEDICAL SCHOOL

Meharry Medical College, Nashville, IA

Dr. Woodson-DeFauw counts receiving the AAFP Award for Excellence in Graduate Medical Education, receiving the 2022 University of Iowa Hospital Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Leadership Award, and being selected as an American Psychiatric Association (APA) Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) minority fellow in substance use disorders as her top professional accomplishments.

Professionally, her areas of interest include addiction medicine and maternal mental health, health care disparities and social determinants of health (SDoH), and mentoring underrepresented medical students. Following residency, she plans to complete her addiction medicine fellowship at the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics, practice family medicine, psychiatry, and addiction medicine in an outpatient setting, and continue mentoring students at all medical education levels. In her free time, she enjoys spending time with her husband, daughter, and two dogs; playing sand volleyball with family medicine colleagues, performing violin cover songs and creating music on Instagram, and role-playing Dungeons and Dragons games.

Awards and Recognition

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| 2020-Present | Minority fellow in substance abuse disorders, American Psychiatric Association (APA) Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) |
| 2022 | 1 st place, Clinical Scholars Day, University of Iowa Health Center (UIHC) Department of Family Medicine |
| 2022 | 12 th Annual Resident Quality Improvement and Research Symposium |
| 2020 | AAFP Advocacy Summit Award |
| 2018-2021 | Recognition for Medical Student Teaching |
| 2018 | Outstanding Medical Student in Family Medicine, Meharry Medical College |
| 2017 | Gold Humanism Honor Society |

Offices and Appointments

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| 2021-Present | Chief resident, Family Medicine-Psychiatry |
| 2021-Present | Graduate Medical Education (GME) Diversity Council, University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics |
| 2021-Present | Family Medicine Professional Education Committee |
| 2021 | Chief Resident Immersion Training Program in Addiction Medicine |
| 2020-Present | APA Council on Addiction Psychiatry |
| 2019-Present | Family Medicine Resident Wellness Committee |
| 2019-Present | Department of Psychiatry Diversity Committee |

Community and Public Services

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| 2021 | Panelist, Navigating Challenges on the Path to Medicine |
| 2021 | Medical Literacy and Advocacy: How to Navigate the Medical System |
| 2020 | Speaker, COVID-19 and Its Impact on the Black Community |
| 2019 | High School Success Strategies and Career Planning |
| 2018 | Careers in Science, College Preparation Skills |

Personal Statement from Dr. Nicole Woodson-DeFauw

Stigma is an aspect that takes away from one's character or reputation. Reflecting on this word, I think about how it has affected my life, family, and patients. I often wonder if stigma played a role in the medical errors that caused the death of my 20-year-old brother, who was obese and diagnosed with bipolar disorder. This intertwining of feeling the need to educate and combat the stigma led me into medicine. I did not want others to suffer a similar loss as my family. Through my experiences within medicine, I have witnessed my patients' stigma regarding seeking care for their mental health or substance use disorder. As a family physician, I have empowered patients to overcome the stigma of mental health and addiction care and created an environment where they feel safe discussing their personal experiences. My family's tragedy has fueled my lifelong passion for pursuing combined family medicine-psychiatry training to reduce the stigma that cultivates health disparities in underserved communities and improve the care for patients with mental health and substance use disorders.

Upon entering medical school, my initial interest was in family medicine due to the opportunity to serve various patients with a variety of medical conditions. I enjoyed working with patients of all ages and the versatility of medicine I could practice as a family medicine physician. As I completed each clerkship, my decision to practice family medicine became clearer. I found fulfillment in building my patients' trust through continuity of care, prevention, and aiding my patients in their navigation of our complex health care system. After completing my psychiatry clerkship, I sought to learn more about combined training. I learned about the vast opportunities I could have and how combined training strengthened my family medicine skills and knowledge. My dual training in family medicine and psychiatry adds to my interactions with my patients with the ability to connect mental and physical health to chronic diseases. I saw family medicine-psychiatry as the best path to address the social determinants of health (SDoH) and health disparities within medicine.

Overcoming Obstacles

The obstacles I have overcome and my tenacity to continue advocating for those impacted by inequity and stigma separate me from the other candidates. Throughout my residency program, I have made mentorship one of my primary focuses. I have mentored students at different levels of education, from high school to junior residents. I have sought out opportunities to connect with individuals ranging from group webinars for high school students interested in medicine to one-on-one mentoring as a chief resident. I was a recipient of an American Psychological Association (APA) Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) grant for underrepresented psychiatry residents. As part of my grant, I created a mentorship

program for underrepresented in medicine (URiM) physicians with one of my mentees interested in combined family medicine-psychiatry training through my mentorship. In addition to my mentorship, my passion for teaching about health equity can be seen at multiple levels throughout my residency. I have worked with high school students to discuss health competency and navigating the health system. I created a mental health equity grand round series that brought many national speakers to Iowa to strengthen mental health awareness within our communities. My passion for addiction medicine in primary care led me to teach substance use disorders in primary care to residents, create a quality improvement curriculum for teaching addiction medicine, and work with family medicine mentors to revise the National Family Medicine Curriculum Guideline for Substance Use Disorders. Teaching, advocacy, and mentorship are the way to address health inequities, and I plan to continue to develop these skills throughout my career.

My Unique Journey

As an African American from Iowa, I found it hard to visualize myself as a physician, given the lack of African American representation in health care. Due to that lack of representation, finding mentors in medicine who shared my background was challenging. Thankfully, my community kept me focused and driven in other ways. I was raised in a black church with a strong sense of connectedness and unity. When my congregation learned that I was interested in medicine, they made it their mission to support my journey. After receiving such warm-hearted support from them for so long, I became determined to give back somehow. But without a proper mentor, my road to medicine was difficult. My home state medical school rejected me twice, primarily due to my Medical College Admission Test (MCAT) scores. However, my chance came when I was accepted at Meharry Medical College, a historically black college. It was here where I finally found the mentorship within medicine I had been seeking. At Meharry, I found much more than my pathway to medicine. I discovered my vocation to serve those who are underserved.

It will be an amazing honor to receive the AAFP Award for Excellence in Graduate Medical Education. I have worked hard during my residency to advocate for change within the health care system to create more equity and to provide the best care for my patients. I believe creating an environment where all patients can feel they have a partner in their care and equal opportunity is important in family medicine. I continue to strive to reduce the stigma of mental health and addiction, eliminate health disparities, and develop mentorship for URiM through leadership and advocacy within my community and nationally. The influence of this prestigious award would mean the work I have done at my institution, in my local community, and nationally is important and should continue to be supported.

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