

You Might Be a Family Physician If:

You want it all: a rewarding, varied practice that will grow and change as you go throughout your career; a good living with enough money and time to enjoy your family and hobbies; the satisfaction of using a wide range of your skills and knowledge; the privilege of being an important person in your patients' and community's lives.

You wonder where all the people will go if family physicians were to disappear.

You believe that what you do with your professional life should be about your most deep and true values.

You believe that every person deserves access to high quality basic health care.

You see value in what your specialty colleagues do and respect their limited, in-depth focus but you would rather work on building a whole house than do dry wall, do wiring or lay carpet day in and day out.

You grieve a little for your classmates who came to medical school because their goal was to make a difference, and now their goal is to make a big salary.

You believe everyone deserves a skilled, trusted primary care physician to help advise, interpret, treat, diagnose and manage the majority of their health problems.

You know that the countries with the best health outcomes and the most rational health care systems have 50% of their physicians who are primary care physician. You also know that family physicians provide very cost effective care.

You believe that health care also has something to do with social justice, advocating for your patients and ending disparities.

You get really ticked off when people who do a very limited scope practice say you are too smart to be in family medicine.

You enjoy being a generalist in your personal life and believe what you do professionally should be the same.

You are excited about being a physician who also contributes to your community.

You look at your schedule in clinic and it is full of people you know and you look forward to seeing them and being able to be of some help to them.

You can't eliminate the possibility of seeing someone as your patient based on their age, or gender or organ system.

You get excited thinking about seeing a 4 month old, a teenager, a 50 year old and an 82 year old all in the same half-day clinic.

You are regularly humbled by the courage and dignity of your patients.

You don't ever want to become bored or feel your practice is the same thing every day.

You want to have maximum flexibility in your career, to live and serve in a variety of places in the US and around the world, to possibly pursue several different careers within medicine, and to know you can offer value anywhere you live.

You are angered by a health care system that lets so many people fall through the cracks.

You care and learn about your patient's family, occupation, spirituality, and health – not just their illness or a diseased organ system.

You recognize how complicated some patients' medical problems can be and understand that these folks especially need a primary care physician to be the primary caregiver and coordinator of care to help avoid fragmentation, unnecessary duplication, and poor communication.

You enjoy teaching and educating your patients as well as diagnosing and treating their acute and chronic problems.

You want to have a rich life in which you are rewarded each day through the lives you touch, the comfort you provide, the trust of your patients, and the knowledge that you are providing excellent health care for your diverse patients and your community.

Being a family physician is clearly not for everyone-
we need wonderful, dedicated physicians in every field,
but if many of these statements sound like you,
you just might be a family physician too.

Dr. Betsy Garrett
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