

UPDATE | November 29, 2017

Meet Our Advocates: Dr. Antoinette Nguyen

Where are you from?

I'm originally from Southeast Texas but have lived in Houston, Evanston, Atlanta, Chicago, and currently Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

What's your specialty or area of expertise?

I'm an ob/gyn and currently in my second year of a Family Planning fellowship, which focuses on complex contraception and abortion.

What first inspired you to become a doctor?

Before medical school, I volunteered at the largest free clinic in Illinois as well as a clinic in rural Bolivia. Through those experiences, I realized that inequalities and



inequities are universal, and I pursued medical and public health training. I feel so grateful that I'm able to meld two passions into one career: social justice and direct patient care.

What story about one of your patients most sticks with you?

That's an impossible question to answer. I feel really privileged to be taking care of patients and being a part of what are often very vulnerable and intimate moments of their lives. I could list so many stories about the unnecessary barriers that my patients overcome before they reach my clinic door. Women who cross state lines. Women with children sleeping overnight in the parking lot because they can't afford a hotel room for their two-day procedure. Women who cry on the phone while I read them state-mandated counseling for a highly desired but anomalous pregnancy. But instead, I'll focus on what a patient said to me after her abortion, "Thank you. Thank you so much for taking good care of me. I felt safe here." Because ultimately, that's what matters: compassionate and comprehensive reproductive health care, no matter what.

What current policy issue especially motivates you to be an advocate?

Reproductive justice.

Who is your social justice hero?

I still have a battered copy of Paul Farmer's biography *Mountains Beyond Mountains* with a quote by Rudolf Virchow highlighted and underlined: "Medicine is a social science, and politics is nothing else but medicine on a large scale." That was the first time it dawned on me that medicine meant taking care of the individual patient as well as a community on a larger scale. And it's continued to be the foundation of my career.

Every week, our Meet Our Advocates series showcases the talents and passion of one of our doctors and finds out, in their own words, what inspires them to be physician-advocates. Antoinette Nguyen, MD, MPH is a member of the Leadership Training Academy Class of 2018.

[Read more interviews from the Meet Our Advocates series.](#)

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UPDATE

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What are your gender pronouns? She/her Where are you from? Rock Hill, South Carolina What's your specialty or area of expertise? I am a family [...]

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