2021-2022 Golden Stethoscope Nomination

Nominated for: Outstanding Role Model

Name of Nominee Dr. Scott Isbell

Throughout this year I have had the opportunity to work with Dr. Isbell as my preceptor in his family medicine clinic. He has consistently been an incredible role model and shown me not only the medical knowledge and skills necessary to be an effective practicing physician but what to do to truly provide the best patient care possible and build meaningful relationships with your patients —what it means to be an outstanding physician. He has taught me about the important skills that are not necessarily taught in school that helps to make a physician stand out to their patients.

One particular example I have is from a case where an elderly husband and wife came in with concerns for the wife's memory issues/cognitive decline. The patient was partly in denial about the extent of her cognitive decline but also afraid of how much "time she had left" with her family. She was particularly worried that if she accepted she was declining, her daughter would not let her see her grandchildren. The husband and the rest of the family were frustrated with the patient's non-adherence to medication that may help her cognitive decline as well as her increased irritability and repeating phrases. This was a difficult situation for this family and Dr. Isbell not only recognized this but truly went above and beyond to help this patient and her family by providing a space for all sides to discuss their concerns and fears.

This case was not so much about medical knowledge and physical exam skills that are taught in school but rather personal skills of empathy, compassion, building trust, and hearing every side. Dr. Isbell heard the patient's concerns and discovered that she did not want to take her medication due to the side effects. He discussed with both the patient and her husband that her cognitive decline can be both frustrating and scary for the patient and instead of getting frustrated with her understandable irritability or repeating things, the family can maybe work on having some more leniency with the wife and understand things from her perspective. The husband realized how scary this must be for his wife and admitted he could do more to be understanding going forward. Dr. Isbell also helped the husband to make it clear to the wife that her daughter would never prevent her from seeing her grandchildren no matter what happens and that the entire family loves and supports her. This is particularly what the patient needed to hear. She agreed to try a different medication that Dr. Isbell prescribed and both the husband and wife left the office in a much better place, with a renewed sense of hope and optimism that things were going to be alright. Dr. Isbell spent almost 40 minutes in that room, discussing with the patient and her husband and often times just listening and letting the patient talk. He dedicated much more time than he was required to in order to ensure that his patients left his office for the better.

I can think of no better physician role model than Dr. Isbell and the empathy and compassion that he shows towards his patients. He inspired me to strive to be more empathetic and understanding when I am a physician one day as that is ultimately what sets you apart. Often times it is the physician's job to simply sit and listen and offer comfort and reassurance when our patients are experiencing difficult situations.

Written by: Anthony Adducci, CUSOM Class of 2025