

A Moment of Wellness



Match Day Matters!

By Amaryllis Sánchez Wohlever, MD

Last month, we had plenty of reasons to celebrate. March was Women's History Month, which always makes me think of my mom, and all she taught me in the 22 years I had her. I've known no leader more dedicated or genuine than Maribel, whose legacy of service, leadership, and love fill me with joy at the mere thought of her beautiful face. Such is the impact of a life well lived.

It was also Match Day on March 19, and I can only imagine how strange and stressful it was attempting to secure a spot in your top residency through virtual interviews! These medical students have my respect and admiration for their adaptability and grit.

Since I work with medical students, I've enjoyed all the messages from those who matched throughout the country. Remember your Match Day? What a joyful time it is. We all rejoice with them! Yet, as a passionate physician advocate,

Match Day also frustrates me since I know that, each year, thousands of qualified students don't match. There are simply not enough spots for every student, as residencies have grown at a slower rate than medical schools.

These students invest significant time and money in an education they may be unable to complete. Each of them deserves our advocacy as well as opportunities and mentorship, which brings me back to my mom, my first and greatest role model.

Having had the support of loving parents, I recognize the blessing of having a strong start in life. These students deserve a strong start in medicine. According to the AAMC, in the year of the pandemic, applications to medical school surged by nearly 20 percent! Isn't that inspiring? In the midst of a global emergency, these students stepped up and said, *count me in!* If this is how they act when things get tough, I want them as my physicians.



As a nation, we must do what it takes to welcome these future doctors into the House of Medicine. Instead, too many are left to scramble for the privilege of completing their education somewhere ... maybe. *We must do better.* As their role models, we, too, can step up to support them. We can encourage them to keep moving forward with hope, and with eyes wide open.

The yearly Match mismatch is an area of medicine where our advocacy is needed now. The good news is this year we finally have momentum, and can build on wise initiatives like the [GME expansion Congress passed](#) in Dec. 2020 ... after stalling on this issue for over two decades! We can help by supporting the [Resident Physician Shortage Reduction Act of 2021](#) the Senate reintroduced last month; as well as the [equivalent House bill](#) that followed. This timely bipartisan legislation would increase the number of Medicare-supported residency slots in teaching hospitals by 14,000 over seven years. One way you can help is by calling members of Congress to urge them to co-sponsor this bill so it will pass this year. Solving this bottleneck disaster is a vital step toward healing our healthcare system.

Mentors Change Lives

On a recent morning, I recorded a presentation for a national physician wellness conference taking place in April. In it, I mentioned the value of not only having mentors but also

mentoring the younger generation of physicians. These relationships are often deeply meaningful for both. I invite each of us to seek opportunities to reach out to a medical student, resident, or young physician in the coming weeks to listen to them, encourage them, and remind them how much they are valued.

Until we optimize this process, Match Day is about all of us. I'm grateful to each of you — my physician colleagues — for choosing the tough road and caring for people with such dedication. And knowing these students have chosen to follow us to our noble profession during a worldwide crisis inspires me to work harder to secure a better future for them.

Your Wellness Moment: Who were your special mentors and role models in med school and residency? Give them a call to reconnect and say thank you, then consider who you may be able to mentor and support.

Resources

[Resident Physician Shortage Reduction Act of 2021](#)

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