

Beyond the Classroom: How We All Serve as Teachers

By Chirag Patel, MD



April is here, and Spring break is right around the corner! My cousin has been planning a beach trip with his school-aged children; the kids are ready to have some fun in the sun and get a chance to explore the sand dunes at the Outer Banks. I recently saw them, and they talked about how much they loved their teachers (cute, right?). As I write this letter, I thought a lot about the various teachers I've had in life and how they've motivated me to be where I am today.

Teachers come in all forms. For some, it may be a traditional teacher from the classroom. For others, it could be a soccer coach, a pastor, or even a coworker. No matter where you are in life, various people will serve as teachers and mold you to become the person you are. As a physician / PA, you often fall into this role not only with students and mentees but also with patients!

We spend a LOT of time with patients about their health issues; outside of treating a patient's medical problem, our role also extends to educating a patient on exactly how their disease will affect their lives.

Educating patients can be challenging. Today, we face issues of misinformation that have run rampant on social media platforms, casting doubt and fear among the patients we wish to serve. Sadly, many companies/influencers want to monetize on these emotions. Patients want to feel like they're in control of their health, and sometimes the science of medicine can be too complex for them to digest. As clinicians, we must take the time to educate patients on the "why" behind what we do to better control the narrative. Taking the extra 3-5 minutes to explain our rationale to patients can mitigate their fears and empower them to make the best decisions for their care.

I reflect on my time during school (and wow was it a long time!), and I am thankful for teachers who spent time going over the "why" with me. Seeing so many examples of great teachers has always motivated me to do the same for my patients, my medical students, my co-workers, and so many more. By taking the time to explain our "why" to each other, we can grow as educators and do what we can to make healthcare stronger and better for patients.

SAVE THE DATES

Retired Physicians -Welton Society Luncheon - April 10

White Coat Wednesday - April 30

MCMS Social - May 15

Safe Alliance Walk a Mile - May 17

Gala - Friday, October 3

