

Alberta Doctors' Digest

Shine A Light: Dr. Yetunde Kasumu

Dr. Yetunde Kasumu came to Canada in 2001, a couple years after graduating from medical school, to visit her husband who was studying development economics at Dalhousie University. What began as a temporary stay quickly turned into a longer-term decision. Although both she and her husband had flourishing careers back home, they found themselves drawn to the warmth of the people in Canada and ultimately decided that it was a good place to continue their professional journeys and building their life together.

Early days in practice

“To work in Canada in 2001, international medical graduates had to complete a Canadian residency program,” Dr. Kasumu explains. “But there were limited spots available, and thousands of people were competing for these positions.”

A turning point came when a senior colleague reached out. “He called me one day and said, ‘Yetty, what are you doing in Halifax? Come to the rural areas – Newfoundland and Labrador will take you. You just do a two-day exam, and you’ll be in the system.’”

Encouraged by his advice, Dr. Kasumu completed the Memorial University Clinical Skills Assessment and Training program. “I passed, and I started working in Stephenville in November 2004.”

Her early years were spent in remote Newfoundland and Labrador communities like Stephenville and Happy Valley-Goose Bay, where she provided emergency care – sometimes reaching patients by snowmobile. Eventually, she settled in St. Anthony, working at the Grenfell Hospital for more than two years.



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Westward, with no regrets

In 2008, Dr. Kasumu needed to choose between moving her practice to Ottawa or Calgary. While Ottawa offered a high-potential clinic opportunity, Calgary won her over – thanks to an unseasonably warm January day and her husband’s belief in Alberta’s economic future. “I have had no regrets over choosing Calgary,” she says.

Integrated primary and women’s health care

Now practicing family medicine in Calgary, Dr. Kasumu has a special interest in women’s health. Her time in Newfoundland, working closely with a gynecologist, gave her invaluable experience that she continues to apply today. “My colleagues refer their complicated women’s health cases to me – from hormone replacement to IUDs,” she explains.

Family medicine, for her, is the perfect blend of holistic care, practice variety and work-life balance. “It’s the only specialty that treats all ages, does preventative care and lets you really know your patients,” she says. “We get to do everything, and I love it. But it also gives me the opportunity to have a life outside of my practice. I get to practice family medicine while still being able to have my own family and be there for my kids.”

“My days are filled with so much variety, and it energizes me. There are days where I start with seeing my 92-year-old patient and end it treating a newborn.”

The heart of her practice

What Dr. Kasumu finds most rewarding is the deep connection she builds with her patients. “I’m a people-person, and I enjoy connecting with multiple generations of the same family.”

“There’s something special when a four-year-old knows your name or when a patient returns from a specialist and still wants your opinion,” she says. Her ability to understand the broader context of a patient’s life (family stress, job loss, mental health) enables her to provide truly comprehensive care.

“I can catch things early, which influences not just the patient, but their family and their community. I have great-grandmothers and newborns in my practice. I love that connection; it’s priceless.”

Dr. Kasumu is a strong advocate for the role of family medicine in the health care system: “The best health care systems are those that recognize and fund primary health care well. When you do that right, everything else follows.”

Beyond the clinic

Outside of work, Dr. Kasumu is a lover of dance and a passionate health care advocate. Whether writing letters to government officials or speaking up for change, she’s not afraid to use her voice. “I love advocacy. If something isn’t right, I speak up,” she says.

Despite her busy schedule, she remains energized by her work. “No regrets,” she says with a smile. “I truly love what I do.”

About Shine A Light

The AMA's Shine A Light Program allows individual patients or community members to recognize AMA member physicians for the following:

- Providing exemplary care that made a difference in a patient's life.
- Spearheading projects that improve patient and/or community life.
- Contributing to a high-performing health care system.

Do you know a physician who goes above and beyond to care for his/her patients? You can [nominate them](#) for the Shine A Light program on the AMA website.