

Alberta Doctors' Digest

Med students focus on personal health and wellness

As president of the 2019 Alberta Medical Students' Conference and Retreat (AMSCAR), planning over the last year has taken an immense amount of time, energy and collaboration. With my incredibly passionate team, I was honored to bring together over 250 medical students on the weekend of January 18-20 in beautiful Banff, Alberta, for the 15th annual AMSCAR. We also hosted over 30 sponsor organizations, including the AMA, without whom the event would not be possible.

Each year AMSCAR provides a great opportunity for medical students to meet and mingle with their future colleagues from across the province. AMSCAR 2019 participants engaged in a number of sessions centered on clinical skills, artistic activities, financial management, and personal and professional development. These sessions are designed to promote skills necessary to lead healthier lives as medical professionals and provide education addressing unique challenges faced as future physicians. The event was an informative and memorable experience and even included time for hikes through beautiful Banff and the surrounding area.



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The AMA is a proud sponsor of AMSCAR. AMA President, Dr. Alison Clarke, gave the lunchtime keynote address at the conference and spoke to attendees about the importance of relationships in medicine. While much of Dr. Clarke's address focused on developing and nurturing strong patient-physician relationships, she also pointed out that there are many other relationships in medical school, residency, and practice that are equally as important. Dr. Melanie Lewis, Associate Dean for Learner Advocacy &

Wellness and Professor of Pediatrics at the University of Alberta, spoke at the gala dinner about the importance of work-life integration and the barriers against wellness and resilience that exist within the medical culture and system.



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In our busy schedules, we often forget to take time to care for ourselves. Many students fall through the cracks because suffering from a mental illness in medicine and admitting to it is still seen as a weakness. To best serve our patients and communities, we need to be the best version of ourselves and I hope the skills and attitudes developed at AMSCAR will help reduce burnout and suicide in the next generation of physicians.

Though my involvement with AMSCAR and other initiatives, I hope to find resilience for myself and others, while openly discussing the hardships ahead of us all. In this way, we can try to fight the moral regression that has been documented in students during medical training, thus improving wellness in trainees and future physicians. I am determined to improve trainee wellness and hope to inspire my peers, preceptors and community to push for change in our flawed system as well.