

Alberta Doctors' Digest

Shine A Light: Dr. Setorme Tsikata

Finding fulfillment in treating the whole patient: A family physician applies life experiences to her career

A grateful patient nominated Dr. Setorme Tsikata, a family physician practicing in Edmonton's Wolf Willow Medical Clinic, for recognition by the AMA's Shine A Light program.

In her nomination, Dr. Tsikata's patient expressed gratitude for her doctor's actions, which she described as going "above and beyond" in many ways, including staying in close phone contact – even while Dr. Tsikata was abroad and off duty – to ensure that the patient complied with recommendations for further medical care to avoid a potentially catastrophic outcome.

Dr. Tsikata's patient describes a dedicated physician who recommended all the necessary lab tests to help determine the cause of her illness and followed up on the tests with close analysis of the results. Even while away from the office in Chicago, Dr. Tsikata monitored the progress of her patient and contacted her regarding deteriorating test results. With the knowledge that her patient had imminent overseas travel plans, Dr. Tsikata worked within a tight timeline to arrange a long-distance referral to the ER and recommended that her patient not proceed with her travel plans.

After additional tests, the attending ER physicians confirmed Dr. Tsikata's concerns. The patient was relieved that she had acted upon Dr. Tsikata's advice and cancelled her trip abroad, potentially averting a health care situation nobody wants to contemplate.

Subsequently, the patient has settled into a course of continuing care for her condition and is grateful to Dr. Tsikata "for her persistence, her caring and her phenomenal work attending to my health care." She adds, "I believe she has saved my last few years in a form where I can enjoy time with my husband of 46 years, my son and grandchildren."



In her nomination, Dr. Setorme Tsikata's patient expressed gratitude for her doctor's actions, which she described as going "above and beyond" in many ways (photo credit: Marvin Polis)

Introducing Dr. Setorme Tsikata

Beyond her medical practice, Dr. Tsikata is an Assistant Clinical Professor at the Department of Family Medicine, University of Alberta. She mentors several medical students and resident physicians. Her scholarly contributions include authoring the third chapter on cultural barriers within medicine in the recently published book, "[*Female Doctors in Canada: Experience and Culture*](#)," edited by Drs. Waugh, Ross and Schipper (January 2019).

Years in practice

15

Why medicine?

"My choice of medicine as a career hinged on several experiences growing up. My mother's midwifery practice catered for women and children residing at Nima, an impoverished community in Accra, Ghana.

As a teenager helping with simple tasks at the practice, I observed correlations between gender, educational status, socioeconomic status, ethnicity and other social determinants of health with patients' health outcomes. It stirred up the desire to work toward a world where everyone is healthy, [and] free of disease, pain and suffering, irrespective of physical or social attributes.

Becoming a physician has allowed me to advocate effectively for the best health care possible for my patients, beginning with educating them in prevention and risk reduction. Every patient encounter involves a holistic approach to the person, not just focusing on their physical ailment but also on the psychological and social aspects of their lives, which invariably impacts their health. This is what makes family medicine very fulfilling!"

Mantra/philosophy of life

Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest (Ecclesiastes 9:10 KJV).