

JENNIFER DENS HIGANO, MPP, BA IN ARCHITECTURE

- Third-year medical student
- Mayo Clinic Alix School of Medicine, Rochester
- MMA member since 2017
- Originally from Brainerd. Graduated from University of Minnesota. After graduation, worked for the federal government doing design and construction management, then for the University of Minnesota as a campus planner. Finished her master's in Public Policy at the Humphrey School before going to medical school.
- Met her husband, Alex, when they were both in the University of Minnesota marching band. He is a percussionist and school counselor. They are expecting their first child this winter.

Became a physician because ...

When I was working in architecture and project management, I had the opportunity to work on several projects in health care, which gave me the chance to hear about the work of medicine from many different people. I liked what I heard about interactions with patients, thinking through medical problems, collaborating with others and the meaning physicians found in their work. At that point I was looking around for the next step in my career. For me, medicine seemed like the right combination of meaningful human connection, intellectual challenge and creativity.

Greatest challenge facing medicine today ...

Change at an unimaginable pace, not only with the actual medical science, but also with technological and AI advances that will change how medicine is practiced, and by whom medicine is practiced. Keeping up within this changing environment, both the actual technology but also the regulatory/policy context, will be a huge shift.

Favorite fictional physician ...

The unnamed doctor in Macbeth. He cares deeply and spends a great deal of time with his patient, the Queen, only to realize that her problems are actually not medical. One of the first instances of social determinants of health and one of the earliest portrayals of



doctors in fiction that set us up for a long and rich history of interesting fictional physicians.

If I weren't a physician ...

If I weren't going to be a physician I would probably have stuck with something in the architecture or design field, perhaps moving more toward health design or something similar.

CHRISTOPHER WEE, MD

- Hematology and medical oncology fellow
- Mayo Clinic, Rochester
- MMA member since 2018
- From Bloomfield Hills, Michigan. Graduated from the University of Michigan and then Wayne State University School of Medicine. Residency at the Cleveland Clinic Foundation.

Became a physician because ...

Initially, I considered a career in government because I felt this was how I could make a difference in the world. Ultimately, though, after shadowing and working with an ophthalmologist over a summer in college, I realized I valued the personal impact of medicine. The physician-patient relationship is what gives me fulfillment and ultimately was the reason I chose to be an oncologist; I want to help guide patients through some of their most challenging times.

Greatest challenge facing medicine today ...

As medical knowledge continues to grow exponentially, we are going to have to work collaboratively more than ever. This will make health care delivery more complex, so we



will need to optimize systems to make sure we do not compromise the physician-patient relationship.

Favorite fictional physician ...

JD from the TV show "Scrubs" is a favorite of mine because we get to see his growth as a physician from day one of his intern year to a career in medical education.

If I weren't a physician ...

I actually have a minor in music and would probably be a music teacher, perhaps a band director. While I do not use my musical skills directly in my career, the valuable lessons I learned from playing an instrument and being part of ensembles continue to guide how I work and live. In fact, I occasionally still play the tuba in the University of Michigan Alumni Band.