MATT KLEIN, MD, FACP
- Nocturnist at Hennepin Healthcare in Minneapolis—and Minnesota State Senator
- MMA member since 2016
- Grew up in St. Paul and graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Madison with a BS in Zoology, Mayo Medical School; resident and then chief resident at Hennepin County Medical Center.
- Married Kristine when he was a third-year medical student. They have five children, each one year apart, now ages 20–15.

Became a physician because …
I was an English major in college until my sophomore year, and was seeking a purposeful career, where I could do good each day I showed up. I had to go to the Emergency Department one day for a cut on my forehead and an internal medicine resident stitched up my wound. He seemed hard-working and low-key, thoughtful and earnest. I became a pre-med the next week.

Greatest challenge facing medicine today …
The life-saving and life-changing power of medicine is such that it has become immoral to allot it based on financial means. This is particularly the case when we reside in the most affluent society in human history. Medical innovators in the device and pharmaceutical industries are rightly incentivized by profit to develop new ideas, but our obligation as a society is to ensure that people of all incomes then have access to those innovations. This is the fundamental tension in modern health care.

Favorite fictional physician …
Dr. Zhivago was my inspiration to become a physician as a college student. These days, television and movie physicians tend to be surgeons or ER doctors—I’m still waiting for the ideal internal medicine character to inspire my children. The character should be smart, compassionate, hard-working, insightful and well-read. Also, hopefully, female and an immigrant.

KATIE SMENTEK, MD, FAAP
- Pediatrician at Mankato Clinic
- MMA member since 2007
- Born and raised in Mankato. University of St. Thomas graduate. Medical School at University of Minnesota, Duluth Campus, then Twin Cities. Residency in pediatrics at Yale-New Haven Children’s Hospital, including an extra year as chief resident.
- Husband Joe Smentek is executive director of Minnesota Soybean Growers. They have three children, ages 13, 11 and 7.

Became a physician because …
I love science, helping people, working as a team and solving puzzles. During medical school I gravitated towards working with children. It’s a little selfish, but seeing kids get sick … and then get better, is very satisfying.

Greatest challenge facing medicine today …
I was interviewed in Minnesota Medicine in 1999 as a medical student. The issues facing medicine 20 years ago are the same issues today: managed care, universal health care, physicians’ rights, patients’ rights. One if the biggest challenges is that we are not making the progress that thousands of smart, dedicated doctors could be making. Something as simple as raising the tobacco purchase age to 21 in Mankato took two years and the work of more than 10 local doctors to get passed.

Favorite fictional physician …
Dr. Gilbert Blythe from the book series Anne of Green Gables. He was my first crush!

If I weren’t a physician …
Over the last three years, I have enjoyed taking four-month breaks from my medical work each spring to serve in the Minnesota Legislature, fulfilling a lifelong dream to be active in politics and government. The two roles complement each other so well that I can’t imagine abandoning one to pursue the other altogether, but I would like to commit more time to a leadership role in the Minnesota Senate in coming years.