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The Next Generation of Family Physicians

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Alavi leads national effort to recruit a new generation of family physicians

By SARAH (ZELLER) JULIAN '07



Mustafa Alavi urges medical students to consider a family medicine ("FM") career.

Medical student Mustafa Alavi '11 encourages students across the country to pursue careers in family medicine. He was recently named national coordinator for the American Academy of Family Physicians' (AAFP) National Family Medicine Interest Group Network.

In this position, Mustafa will work with regional coordinators on medical campuses across the United States to develop and strengthen family medicine interest groups that focus on promoting family medicine as a career. He previously served as a regional coordinator for the organization. Mustafa will also be a member of the AAFP Commission on Education, as well as its subcommittee on National Conference Planning.

The AAFP represents 110,600 physicians and medical students nationwide. It is the only medical society devoted solely to primary care.

"By working with the national network, I hope to increase medical student interest in family medicine and to have them understand what a great field it is," says Mustafa, who majored in biology at IWU and is now a third-year medical student at the University of Illinois at Chicago College of Medicine.

Creating interest among medical students in primary care is more important than ever. According to a 2012 study published in the *Annals of Family Medicine*, the U.S. will require at least 52,000 more family doctors by the year 2025 to keep up with the growing and increasingly older population.

Mustafa says he chose family medicine because of the wide variety of options it offers, including adult care, pediatrics and women's health. "I went through undergrad at IWU with an interest in primary care, knowing the importance of it in our nation. In medical school, I learned about all that a family physician can do.

"I was also intrigued by how family physicians can pursue a fellowship in sports medicine. I ran cross country and track at IWU and would love to work with runners for part of my career."

Mustafa regards his Wesleyan experience as essential in preparing him for his current medical path. "IWU's rigorous biology/pre-med program really prepared me well for medical school," he says. "The classes I took at IWU were the ones I excelled at in medical school. And the classes I struggled through were ones I wish I had

taken at IWU. Working toward my biology major was also a learning opportunity on how to study efficiently, which was invaluable in medical school.”

An Aurora, Ill., native, Mustafa got his first up-close look at medicine as a child when his grandmother moved into his family’s home. As she developed health conditions due to aging, he helped her cope with illness as she navigated the complex and often frustratingly fragmented healthcare system. “I thought, ‘I want to be a better doctor than that,’” he says.

“I want to have a relationship with my patients. I want to be the doctor who knows about the whole patient. And with family medicine, the doctor gets to know the whole patient; the doctor gets to know the patient’s family. We get to watch the family grow and provide their care from birth to death.”

That conviction was reaffirmed during a Family Medicine Interest Group meeting when the speaker — a family physician — dispelled the negative myths about family medicine and pointed out “he was never bored.”

“The family physician has to know so much and has to know everything well,” Mustafa says. “We should have the smartest people going into family medicine.”

To learn more about the Family Medicine Interest Group Network, [click here.](#)