



VOICES OF FAMILY MEDICINE

2021-2023



Healing Through Humanities



UCI Department of
Family Medicine



UCI Illuminations

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A Letter from the Project Leads

In 1948, Life magazine published W. Eugene Smith's iconic photo essay titled, "Country Doctor." The series depicts the challenges and rewards of a rural physician who now would be called a family doctor. Following in the footsteps of this pioneering photojournalism, a group of UCI undergraduate students of the club Healing Through Humanities (HtH), in partnership with the UCI Department of Family Medicine and the Family Health Center of Santa Ana (FHC-SA), conducted a two year photo narrative project, "Voices of Family Medicine" at the FHC-SA. The goal of this project is to showcase the multiplicity of roles of the present-day family doctor; to represent the unique relationship family doctors have with their patients; and to highlight the values and principles of family medicine that lead its practitioners to lives of service in under-resourced communities.

The original idea of the Voices of Family Medicine project was first introduced to us by one of our advisors, Dr. Baotran Vo. She approached us with her vision of spreading awareness about the wide spectrum of care provided by family medicine. Inspired by a past joint project between HtH and UCI FHC-SA called Humans of Santa Ana, our undergraduate student team developed this photo-narrative project, Voices of Family Medicine, collaborating with the UCI Department of Family Medicine.

Having previously worked with UCI Department of Family Medicine and personally knowing some of the faculty and physicians there, we knew the immense warmth that the staff brought during their care and to those around them. We wanted to fill the corners of the center with that same warmth; this is what drove this project.

Over the course of several months, family physicians and undergraduate student volunteers sharing the same vision as us joined this project. With their contributions in time and effort, the team was able to collect day-to-day patient-physician interactions through the forms of interviews and photographs- all culminating in this photo-narrative booklet. Here, you will find not only patients' healthcare journeys, but also the physician's stories of their side of the care.

Through this project, we hoped to not only display the wide array of care offered by UCI FHC Department of Family Medicine, but also the compassion and patience that went into that care. When reading this booklet, we hope that you will experience the same warmth that we witnessed, and that these stories give you the courage to seek care when you need it.

We hope our readers enjoy the reading these stories as much as we enjoyed documenting them.

Sincerely,
Nancy Dang, Tina Soroudi & Vanessa Lau
Voices of FM Project Leads

Team & Acknowledgements

This project was organized by Healing Through Humanities, a medical humanities undergraduate organization at UCI meant to cultivate compassion and empathy in future healthcare professionals. That being said, the work of the medical humanities extends beyond mere analysis and discussion. The heart of our club is centered around community-based work and learning from diverse communities. Inspired by patient narratives, we wanted to use photo-narratives as a medium of storytelling in attempts to humanize medical experience.

Project Leads: Nancy Dang, Vanessa Lau, and Tina Soroudi

Project Advisors: Dr. Juliet McMullin, Dr. Tan Nguyen, and Dr. Baotran Vo

Physician Volunteers: Dr. Lynette Anderson, Dr. Shane Jones, and Dr. Anthony Nguyen

Student Volunteers: Hanna Atif, Nancy Dang, Tina Hendi, Mariah Hernandez, Vanessa Lau, Allyson Lee, Tina Soroudi, and Melody Yang

Photography: Jacob Cravens-Meza and Alyssa Deocampo

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Providing Care Through a Lifetime

Written By Tina Soroudi

In the bustling and fast-paced precepting room, Dr. Lynette Anderson radiated a calm confidence. Upon meeting her, it was clear that she possesses a thoughtful and kind demeanor, alluding to the type of physician and educator she is.

Early in her career, Dr. Anderson worked at UCI Family Health Center in Anaheim for seven years. For the next three years she participated in locums, where she would travel around the country, practicing in areas that needed doctors ranging from Healdsburg, California, to Denver, Colorado, up to Seattle, Washington. Now Dr. Anderson serves as a core faculty preceptor, providing guidance to resident physicians at the



UCI Family Health Center in Santa Ana. She performs many tasks including teaching residents procedures like biopsies, placing birth control devices for women, and teaching ultrasound to assist in diagnosis of medical conditions.

A key feature of family medicine is that it enables physicians to get to know their patients and develop relationships over an

extended period of time. This can help with diagnosing a patient more quickly. Dr. Anderson says knowing patients so well often makes it easier to pick up on subtle things that might indicate something is wrong even if the patient does not look that sick.

Dr. Anderson shared that “family medicine is all about your relationship with the patient over time” and that the care is “through an entire lifetime, not just a span of time.” While in residency, Dr. Anderson delivered 63 babies, many of whom she continued to care for with well child and urgent care visits. She states, “It was really awesome to follow a mom through her entire pregnancy, deliver the baby, take care of that baby, and then take care of mom’s next baby. It is incredibly special when the child grows up and is not scared of coming in for appointments since they have known their doctor since the day they were born.”

A major component of Dr. Anderson’s job is working with the resident physicians. She recounts moments in her own education when information professors taught her stuck with her to this day. Remembering this keeps her honest, because she never knows what somebody will remember from her teaching and the lessons that she





provides. She takes great care in preparing lectures because it is crucial to her that people learn and the information sticks when she teaches. She says it is an amazing feeling “when you see somebody absorb something that you tried to teach them,” and that is a major reason she works at UCI FHC. For example, she remembers teaching about cataracts and the next day

her resident had a patient with cataracts, and he was able to see it and identify it. Additionally, many residents have shown her medical conditions she has never heard of or seen before, which helps in keeping her sharp and continuing to grow.

Some of her most memorable moments occurred when residents were learning procedures. One resident started a fire with the cautery. Another resident clipped a patient's toenail without covering it and the toenail hit her in the neck, causing her to have a rash for 11 days. “We all get a good laugh out of moments like these. On the other hand, residency is such a unique 3 years in a doctor's career. It is



amazing to watch a brand new doctor absorb all this knowledge over three years and accomplish so much in such a short time. It's a privilege to get to be a part of that and it never gets old."

Dr. Anderson takes a lot of pride in being a family physician and being able to treat a wide breadth of medical conditions. The family physicians at UCI FHC practice obstetrics,



pediatrics, urgent care, outpatient continuity care as well as inpatient care at the hospital and perform many procedures. Oftentimes, their roles may be misunderstood. For instance, if a patient has a rash they do not need to go directly to a dermatologist, as a family physician can biopsy, diagnose, and



treat it, often saving many trips and copays. She states that a "well trained family physician is well rounded, knowledgeable about many conditions, and has a lot to offer anybody and everybody."

It Takes a Village to Care for a Family

Written By Tina Hendi

Dr. Shane Jones is a physician at the UCI Family Health Center in Santa Ana. Dr. Jones spent most of his life growing up in Santa Ana before earning his M.D. at the Michigan State University College of Human Medicine, and he wishes to continue practicing medicine at the UCI FHC in hopes of giving back to his community. A typical day at the clinic is generally busy for Dr. Jones. In order to ensure patients have what they need, he has to coordinate his time with his colleagues. Dr. Jones believes that there is a positive dynamic at play at the clinic:

the patients truly appreciate the care provided by the doctors, and likewise healthcare providers are appreciative of the insight given by the patients into the needs of the community. He describes the clinic as “a big assembly line of people that work together to make sure that the patients that come get the care that they need and deserve, and they leave having everything they need to have control over their health.”



Dr. Jones recalls one of his most memorable cases: a young female patient visiting with abdominal pain associated with pregnancy. Dr. Jones had the chance to follow this patient throughout her entire pregnancy as her support system and her family decided to continue with the pregnancy. Throughout this process, not only did Dr. Jones learn to help the patient care for herself and her growing family, she was also learning what pregnancy was like and how to care for her baby. Dr. Jones realized his passion for family medicine when he delivered her baby and felt he had formed a special bond with the patient, her partner, and their son.



Growing up in Santa Ana, Dr. Jones noticed there wasn't much focus on accessible primary or preventative care in his community; limited emphasis was placed on regular checkups or even keeping track of immunizations. It took two or three buses to get to the closest Kaiser hospital when he and his family were really sick. Often, they would rely on home remedies if they were mildly sick. Additionally, he and his sisters would try their best to translate from English to Tagalog for their mother as translators were not as accessible as they are now in the clinic.

When Dr. Jones' younger sister was born, his family went through the journey of her being diagnosed with autism and seeking proper care for her. This personal experience compelled him to become a family doctor and sparked his desire to contribute positively to other families in a similar manner. Dr. Jones described the process of his sister's autism diagnosis as one of great confusion and learning during his youth.



He recalled, “There's no amount of Vicks VapoRub or soups that can cure or help something like autism.” His mother was at a loss for how she could take care of her daughter as autism was not a subject she had much knowledge on. Nevertheless, she sought help in the form of a family doctor— who later became Dr. Jones' sister's primary physician. The physician described what it was like to have autism, what it meant for their family, and what kind of resources were available for her. In the midst of it all, Dr. Jones was “really intrigued that one doctor could connect [his] family to all of these resources and take care of [his] sister and explain what to expect as she grew up.”

Navigating Motherhood: Starting a Family With Family Medicine

Written By Nancy Dang

With her knees bent down and a warm smile spanning across her face, Rosemary reaches her hand out to soothe her infant son, Cesar, whose eyes pan back and forth whilst her husband cradles him. Dr. Jones had just wrapped up Cesar's check-up visit, which concluded with some vaccinations that Cesar bravely handled and promptly fell asleep after. Ever since the day Dr. Jones helped deliver Cesar, Dr. Jones has been there to care for Cesar up to now for his five month check-up.

Rosemary's dedication and care for Cesar is evident even before his birth. When she first learned of her pregnancy, she had not been to UCI Family Health Center (FHC) in a while. She first came to UCI FHC five years ago, but with her busy work schedule, it was difficult to visit regularly.



However, that changed once she became pregnant with Cesar; she was flagged as a high risk pregnancy due to her diabetes. This led to more frequent clinic visits, as she “wanted to make sure [her] sugar levels were under control.” Rosemary admits, “Honestly if it wasn’t for him, I wouldn’t have taken care of myself because I am diabetic. Before I knew I was pregnant [with] him, I wasn’t checking my medicine or doing anything. Now, I make sure I’m okay because if not, I cannot take care of my son, you know?”



Before seeking care from UCI FHC, Rosemary went to Children’s Health of Orange County, who “took really good care of [her] and were always on [her] about [her] diabetes,” but once she came to UCI FHC, she realized the importance of taking initiative to care for her health, as “you have to make your own decisions, you’re your own adult, which made sense.” Overall, her transition to UCI FHC “helped [her] become more responsible when it comes to [her] health and diabetes.” Yet, she was not surprised by the diverse care offered by family medicine at UCI FHC since most of her family have received

care from family physicians here, including her grandmother who had arthritis. When asked about her experience with the family medicine department, she states, after a sigh of relief, “They made it easier for me, going through my pregnancy.” After having Cesar, she continues to bring him and herself to the family department, where both her and her son can receive care.

Being a first time mother, Rosemary has been navigating and learning about pregnancy and motherhood for the first time alongside her husband. There are moments when she questions her parenting skills, “Am I doing it correctly? Am I being the mom I’m supposed to be?” As someone who works 10 hour shifts, she describes the difficulty of being a working parent, “it’s hard to be at home, like at work and away from him, especially so young. You wish you could be there and make sure they’re getting what they need.” She admits it is hard to manage, but despite her busy work, “I try to make do, especially for him.” Rosemary reflects on a memorable experience with a doctor at UCI FHC, “When I took Cesar in for his two months...,” she pauses, taking in a deep breath as she recalls an emotional moment, as her accumulating tears accentuate her shiny brown eyes. She glances over at Cesar from behind, who is still being cradled by her husband, and smiles. Then she continues, “The first three months with him were hard. Then to have her [the doctor] recognize that I was doing good with him...knowing that someone recognizes what I was doing and taking care of my son.” Simple acts such as words of validation can be tremendously healing and comforting, as this did for Rosemary.

Throughout the interview, Rosemary constantly checks back on Cesar. As Cesar slept peacefully on the side, Rosemary smiles and recalls his favorite treat: rice krispy. At the sound of the

words, a cry can be heard from Cesar, his eyes wandering around, in search of the treat. Laughter filled the space, and the vulnerable, yet heartfelt moment dissipated into humorous affirmations of mutual love for this treat.

From watching Rosemary's tender care for Cesar illuminate the room, Rosemary's dedication to being a great mother to Cesar is obvious. Her dedication to being the best mother she can be to Cesar revolves around taking care of his and her own health. From maintaining her own health throughout pregnancy and maternity, to bringing Cesar for his monthly check-ups at UCI FHC, family doctors like Dr. Jones have been here to help her throughout the way. "When I came here, I knew I was going to be taken care of. To this day, they stay true to their part."



In Good Hands

Written By Melody Yang

When Alice was told her newborn baby needed care in the NICU, her heart dropped. She recounts, “At first, when they took her into the NICU, [I was] freaking out, and after arriving at the NICU and seeing all the wires, I was actually in shock.”

But despite the difficult turn of events, she knew she was in good hands from the way all the doctors and nurses cared for her child, especially Dr. Jones. Throughout the five days that her baby was in the NICU, Dr. Jones called Alice every morning to update her, making sure she was informed every step of the way about her child’s care. Alice recalls that it was a very stressful time for her and her husband, but they weren’t worried because of how reassuring and caring Dr. Jones was.



Being brand new to the American healthcare system, Alice had only been seeing Dr. Jones for around nine months, but she felt incredibly lucky to call him her family physician. “Throughout the pregnancy, Dr. Jones has been amazing. He was always very reassuring, informative, and personable,” she remembers. “Every visit was stellar in itself.”

Alice initially thought that Dr. Jones only specialized in OB-GYN. However, after learning that he could care for such a wide range of patients as a family doctor, she immediately transferred all of her kids to him as well. “I tell anyone I know with health issues to go to UCI,” she says, “the quality of care is amazing.”

In an entirely new country where things were unfamiliar, Dr. Jones gave Alice the assurance and care she needed to safely deliver her child. She describes feeling truly “blessed that he was the one to care for her and her baby the whole way.”

Finding Solace in Family Medicine: An Experience of Trust and Compassion

Written By Vanessa Lau



Underneath the sterile lights, there was an air of calm peacefulness. The room was only one of several identical spaces lined up along the hallway, but what gave its unique warmth was the two people conversing in it.

Sarah has been seeing Dr. Jones as her family physician for about a year now. While her cyst was the reason for her visit this time around, she frequents the center whenever a concern comes up. She describes feeling well taken care of under Dr. Jones' care, something she has come to count on during her visits.

"I feel like he's good at explaining things to me and ... [he's] like let's get this tested, let's figure this out," Sarah explains. The comfort she experiences can be witnessed during her visit. While explaining her concerns about her cyst and recent trip to urgent care, the two exchanged thoughts about the upcoming Christmas holiday, and laughed as they remembered each other's birthdays falling close to one another.



This relationship was not instant however, as Sarah explained her apprehension when it came to visiting male physicians. Until meeting Dr. Jones, she had always preferred female physicians. It was only a random assignment of Dr. Jones as her physician during her visit to UCI FHC the year prior that made her change her primary care physician to a male physician. In fact, she has been so satisfied with her care, that when asked if she would recommend Dr. Jones, she happily said, "Yes actually! I told my mom to move my sister down here because the care was good and all."

Sarah remains a current patient of Dr. Jones and continuously sees him for not only cysts, but physicals, lab work, and other health concerns. While it was only a singular visit, the way the two interacted made it clear that Sarah had full faith in Dr. Jones. When asked about the root of her faith in Dr. Jones, she just paused, then said, “I don’t know... I just trust him.”



A Trip to UCI FHC: A Conversation with Dr. Anthony Nguyen

Written By Hanna Atif

Upon arriving at the clinic, Dr. Nguyen likes to catch up with his colleagues, asking them how they are doing. He might also check his patient notes on the computer. Dr. Anthony Nguyen is a resident doctor at UCI FHC in Santa Ana. Although his day was full of appointments with patients, he was able to sit down and explain his motivation for working in family medicine, describing what makes the department so unique.



Patients visit UCI FHC for different reasons. Dr. Nguyen explained how some patients visit for their annual checkups and physicals, while others come in because they have specific health concerns. Due to the versatility of the center, many patients receive care from the beginning of their problems to the long-term check-ups ensuring that they are in good health. Many patients are people who have recently been discharged from the hospital, as Dr. Nguyen stated, “most patients are pretty overwhelmed after being discharged and not sure where to go, so we try to coordinate that care and make sure that they have everything they need.” The clinic also provides prenatal care, both before delivery and after.



What puts Dr. Nguyen in a special position is his specialty; just like how UCI FHC serves a diverse community, it also offers a variety of services. While some patients come in to be seen individually, many families come to appointments to be seen together. Dr. Nguyen expressed that it is “really gratifying,” when describing what it is like to help a whole family. “I had a patient who came in and when she first came in, she was 30 weeks pregnant.

I saw her throughout her pregnancy, I was at her delivery, and was able to take care of her son once he was born,” Dr. Nguyen explained. These experiences are hallmarks of the family medicine specialty, a specialty which Dr. Nguyen emphasized as being dependent on maintaining a close, trusting relationship between the patient and the doctor.

Indeed, the staff at UCI FHC do their best to make sure that each patient's needs are being met. When asked about the challenges that come with serving an underserved community, Dr. Nguyen admitted that there are definitely some roadblocks, but the whole clinic's staff works together to combat these challenges, as he described, "We have a lot of patients who have all kinds of barriers to their health, and I think that what makes this clinic special to me is that everyone is aware of that and actively seeks to help out others."



There are several different factors that may present as barriers to healthcare for patients. Dr. Nguyen recalled, "Just yesterday I had a patient who, it was supposed to be her first visit, she didn't have a family to help schedule her visits and she didn't have a ride. One thing I feel like we don't make as well known is the fact that we are very involved in that, in trying to make sure that the patient gets all the care that they need, not just the medical part but also the social stuff, too." This is an objective that is supported by the close relationships that the physicians forge with their patients— building trust so that patients never feel awkward asking for the help that they need.

Dr. Nguyen went on to describe how in many scenarios, the biggest barrier to healthcare is financial, as many patients do not have insurance. Sometimes, patients need referrals to specialists or expensive medications, but they simply can not afford it. On this challenge, Dr. Nguyen said, “I think sometimes we are trying to be creative in how we can help them the best we can. Sometimes we end up taking a lot of that work, trying to fill in the gaps as well. Lots of charity is involved, we try to see if we can send them to a free clinic or a pro-bono specialist.”



Financial barriers are not the only barriers to healthcare. UCI FHC serves a multicultural community, and part of what comes with that requires the staff to be culturally competent, something they are excellent at. Dr. Nguyen explained that most of the staff speaks Spanish, and he and some others speak Vietnamese, which helps the clinic cater to a large number of people.

When the doctor does not speak the same language as the patient, an interpreter is used. The main goal is communication, as Dr. Nguyen thoughtfully stated, “We still want to provide that same level of care while also being empathetic. We want to make sure that everything is being communicated well.”

Additionally, sometimes the challenges might be more cultural rather than language-based. For example, sometimes patients were raised overseas, and this is their first time being prescribed medications. They may have used cultural healing methods in the past, so they might feel hesitant. Regardless, the physicians try to find a common ground with their patients, as Dr. Nguyen explained that they “try to meet patients where they are”, as the goal is to provide the best level of care for patients.



Jamie's Care

Written By Mariah Hernandez

Though the beginning of the winter season brought frigid temperatures to Santa Ana, the inviting atmosphere of the UCI Family Health Center provided a warm welcoming to all visitors. As physicians tended to their clinics, winter chills began to fade with each patient cared for.

Among these patients was Jaime, an older gentleman awaiting a follow-up visit with Dr. Anthony Nguyen, a family physician. A few months ago, Jaime awoke to find his ankle swollen to the size of his knee. His edema made standing painful, and caused him to fear for his health as a transplant patient. Without hesitation, Jaime knew he could rely on Dr. Nguyen for help.



Five years ago, Jaime was first introduced to the UCI Family Health center. Prior to visiting the clinic, he was unable to receive routine medical care. Thus, his initial visits with Dr. Olivia Hayostek marked the beginning of his healthcare journey. Subsequently, he was inspired to bring his late wife and daughter, as the family medicine services offered catered towards his family's needs. Over time, he found a strong team of family physicians and nurses who

have been able to encourage Jaime to take charge of his health. Jaime echoes his positive experiences with the clinic over the years, as this center remains his top choice for his medical needs.

"I say my experience with the clinic is good. This is the only clinic I see. When they send me to check my heart, I have to go [to a different location], but otherwise I always come here."



After his wife's passing, he worried about continuing his healthcare journey, but the team reassured him they could help take care of him. By scheduling appointments in advance, being diligent about reminders, and attending to his fears they have helped Jaime remain committed to his own healthcare regimen.

Jaime had faith in Dr. Nguyen and his team to help him combat his peripheral edema. Through the course of a few months, Dr. Nguyen adjusted his medications and taught Jaime to track his blood pressure from home. Jaime watched as his ankle returned to normal. Currently, he is able to stand and walk without pain.



Overall, Jaime has been incredibly satisfied with his experience at the clinic and expresses extreme gratitude for Dr. Nguyen and his medical team. The unwavering support and care they have provided for him has allowed him to take back control of his health. He will continue his care with the Family Health Center and recommends the center to friends and family of all ages.



The Difference That an Empathetic Doctor Makes

Written By Allyson Lee

Cesar had just finished his appointment with Dr. Nguyen, and although the use of an interpreter slightly buffered communication between the two, the care with which Dr. Nguyen performed the ultrasound and conversed with Cesar was unmistakable.

This level of genuine care was in contrast with Cesar's previous experiences. Before coming to the UCI Family Health Center (FHC), he went to other physicians that were indifferent to his needs, promoting medication as a simple solution to his health problems without providing an explanation



As a result, Cesar's health issues would persist, but he wouldn't know why. Sometimes, he canceled appointments because he felt like he "didn't need them because of the behavior from the doctors."

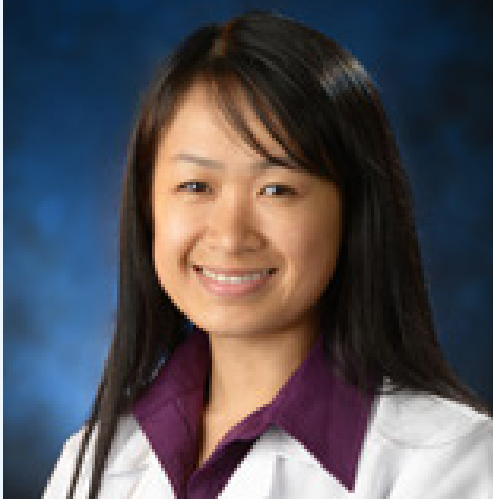
On the other hand, when asked about his experience at UCI FHC, Cesar continuously mentions the quality of service and attention that he receives from the family doctors. Although Cesar thinks another 5 minutes to further talk about his health concerns with Dr. Nguyen would be ideal, he prefers the service here over the doctors at other places that “just tell you what pill you have to take” and “don’t take the time to explain what you need.” Indeed, Cesar’s wife also receives services from UCI FHC, and his son will soon do the same. In general, once a patient has found a family physician they are satisfied with, it is not uncommon for the rest of the family to be placed under that same physician’s care.



As a construction worker, Cesar describes the difficulty in managing his health due to balancing a multitude of commitments. He admits, “It’s a bit hard [to take care of myself] because of work, but I try to eat as healthy as I can, go for a walk, and have a bit of exercise... [but I also have to] make time for [my] family and for [myself].”

On top of juggling his responsibilities, he is aware that his rising age also comes with a higher risk of health problems. While it is hard keeping these things in mind, he knows that getting regular check ups and seeing lab results at UCI FHC gives him an “impulse to be more healthy... and help ensure that nothing develops and [he] can be as healthy as possible.”

Advisors



Dr. Baotran Vo

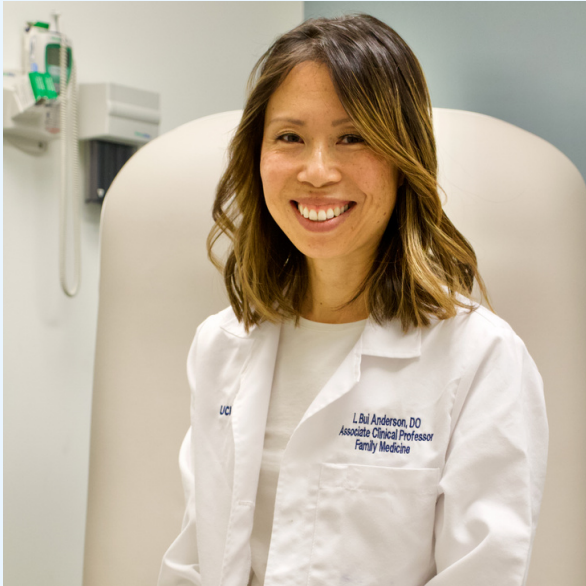


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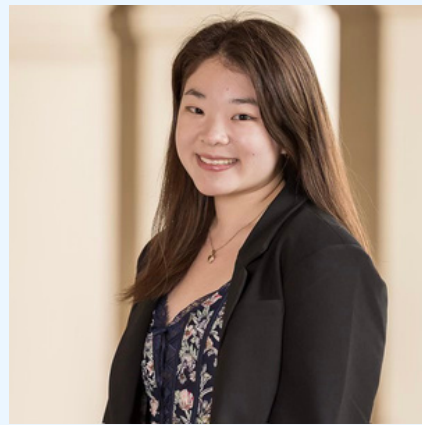
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