



AAFP National Conference for Medical Students and Residents

NYSAFP offers \$500 scholarships to students and residents to attend the AAFP National Conference every summer. Some recipients of the scholarship reflected on their experience at NC. If you are a student or resident interested in applying for a scholarship, check out the NYSAFP website in March.

Recipient 1

Student, New York Medical College, MS4

I just arrived back home in Brooklyn from the conference, and I am so happy I attended. As a MS4 who decided a bit late to pursue Family Medicine, I did not know what to expect going to this conference, and had signed up to go alone in order to become more informed (later I learned there were other NYMC students going too). I had been thinking about going into Internal Medicine with an eventual specialty where I could pursue women's health, but did not make the connection until this past winter/spring that Family Medicine fit me and my interests much better. Attending the conference reaffirmed my decision. From the first lecture onwards, I loved the focus on social justice in healthcare, societal factors that contribute to health, and the duty of family physicians to advocate and care for the underserved and forgotten populations. In studying for shelf and board exams it is easy to get discouraged, and hearing from such passionate physicians reminded me of why I am sleep deprived and studying so hard in the middle of summer. There were so many lectures I almost wished that they were shorter so I could attend more! I was surprised by the variety in topics, and learned the most from attending a talk on providing care to Trans patients, since we did not learn about this in medical school and I think it will be important part of my future practice.

At the Expo, I felt so inspired and excited by talking directly to the NY programs. I felt that their women's health curriculums lined up directly with my career goals and it was so reaffirming to hear about how they practice urban family medicine, especially because my colleagues who went into family medicine have left NYC. While it was intimidating to talk to programs with interview season fast approaching, I left the expo feeling more relaxed, and extra excited for the possibility of interviewing at some of the NY programs. I also saw some of the NY program directors and faculty at the Papaya workshop on reproductive health and really enjoyed that workshop. I had not yet participated in a papaya demo at my medical school. I was so happy that this workshop was a part of the conference!

Overall, I am grateful for the program-specific information that I gained at the expo, the connections with residents and faculty I made before interview season, and the huge number of passionate physicians who gave talks this weekend. It would have been difficult for me to attend without the scholarship aid provided by NYSAFP, and I am very grateful for the opportunity!

Thank you and hope to meet you at a future conference!

Recipient 2

Brendan P., University of Rochester, MS4

It took until my fourth year of medical school, but I finally made it to the National Conference (with the help of the NYS AFP). And I really picked a good time to go. Not only was I able to meet and mingle with a myriad of residencies, I also had a wealth of educational opportunities to attend. It is rare that my biggest problem at a conference is figuring out what session to go to, but that happened every day for me. That illustrates my favorite aspect of the conference - the incredible amount of opportunities for us; be it workshops, the keynote panels, didactic lectures, or meeting one of hundreds of residencies. Though I had no doubts about becoming a family physician, I often found myself struggling to answer the dreaded "So, why family medicine?" question. Well, I won't struggle with that any longer thanks to the amazing amount of content I absorbed at the conference.

Recipient 3

Megan C, SUNY Upstate, MS3

Attending national conference helped me feel confident in my decision to pursue family medicine as a specialty. I was able to attend a number of lectures that spoke to my passions in medicine. I particularly enjoyed hearing residents talk about programs they created to partner with underserved patients in their community. In addition, there were a series of lectures tailored for medical students; from managing loan debt to tackling residency interviews. I left the conference feeling more confident in my financial future and feeling that my passion for working with underserved communities was restored.

I was also able to speak the residency programs I am considering. I was able to ask residents about the environment they work in and ask residency directors about the goals of their programs. After these conversations, I feel like I have enough information to apply to residency programs that will be a good fit for me.

Recipient 4

Student, SUNY Buffalo, MS4

Attending the National Conference was an excellent opportunity to further my interest in Family Medicine. The opening keynote addresses were very inspiring because it demonstrated the vast amount of opportunities and settings I can work in my desired specialty. As someone wanting to work with underserved populations in my practice, it helped give me confidence that I will be able to accomplish this financially despite the large amount of debt that I will be graduating with. I was particularly impressed with the LGBTQ forum to learn about the challenges and difficulties other medical students are facing across the country with these issues because, as someone who comes from a fairly liberal city, our policies and obstacles to provide care are very different. It was a great venue to share ideas and suggestions. I feel honored to be a part of a national organization that is fighting every day for these equal rights across the country.

The conference was also a great way for me to network with residency programs as I begin the application process in September. Instead of having to read a website and base my decisions to apply off of what they exhibit there, it was a pleasure being able to interact directly with residents to get a better feel for the program. Overall, it helped me to narrow my list of programs I intend to apply to, thus saving me time and money in the application process. I certainly hope to continue to be able to attend this conference again in the future as a resident to share my enthusiasm for the specialty.

Thank you, NYSAFP, for providing this generous scholarship. This conference was very valuable for my future career.

Recipient 5

Andrew B., *SUNY Buffalo, MS4*

The AAFP national conference for students and residents was a great opportunity to see the trajectory of the specialty. When choosing what to specialize in, I have to consider what fundamental skillset that specialty is offering and where will that fit into the constantly changing healthcare system 30 years into my career. Initially, the broadness of Family Medicine made it difficult for me to define what exactly that fundamental skillset is, since the careers of FM physicians have so much variety. The vision of family medicine laid out at the national level answered many of my questions and gave me a clear picture of what to expect regardless of what specific career path I choose within it.

The AAFP utilized the mainstage to lay out their vision for Family Medicine, describing the specialty as “specializing in understanding the role between the individual, the community, and their health”. Family physicians that embodied this role shared their stories and highlighted the varied forms this role can take depending on the community’s needs. The sessions built on this theme, discussing health disparities and population health. Many of the subsequent discussions challenged the students to consider the financial, emotional, and social ramifications of the medical decisions physicians make every day. The tone of the conference set the expectation that the future family medicine physicians should play an active role in addressing the larger systemic issues facing the communities in which they serve.

Although I have not heard it articulated in the same way before, this is consistent with the stories I have heard from other physicians in the field and why they love their specialty. The adaptability provided by the broad training allowed them to fill whatever niche they saw unfilled in their communities. Having a clear understanding of the specialty has made me more confident that Family Medicine is a good choice for learning a flexible skillset that can address unforeseen challenges faced by my future patients as well as the broader healthcare system.

NYSAFP Leadership, thank you for the opportunity to be a part of the New York Family Medicine community and guiding my career path. Please let me know if there is anyway I can help the NYSAFP in the future.

Recipient 6

Alex P., *SUNY Upstate, MS3*

By attending the National Conference I intend to improve my knowledge of family medicine at the national level. As a medical student I have been active in the New York State Academy for the past four years. Now transitioning into the next phase of my career as a resident; I intend to use the National Conference to direct the path of my future career. At the National Conference I will use part of my time to interact with different residency programs. Meeting with residents and faculty face to face will give me an insight into the culture of each program. I will probably discover programs that I wouldn’t not have considered without meeting them in person. Also I will use my time to learn how to stay active in the national organization. I have seen through my interaction with the state academy the importance of maintaining strong physician organizations. To best advocate for the my profession and patients; as a resident and attending physician, I intend to stay active in the state and national Academy. By going to the Kansas City this summer I will participate in leadership and organizational development programs and seminars. I will also participate in the national congress of students where we will pass resolutions guiding Academy Policy and operations.