Aurora Graduate Medical Education Resident Biographies

Family Medicine Residency ● Second Year Residents

Melissa Baughman, DO

- Hometown: Ames, IA
- Undergraduate Degree: Anthropology, International Studies
- Medical School: Des Moines University

I chose Family Medicine because it included little pieces of so many specialties I enjoyed during rotations, like OBGYN and psychiatry. During my first Family Medicine rotation, I felt so energized that I gave up drinking caffeine for the entire month! The close, long term relationships between the patient and physician are so stimulating and fulfilling, and something I aspire to create with my patients. There’s also the opportunity to practice holistic care in Family Medicine and address the social, mental, and physical aspects of wellness, which are so essential to practicing effective medicine. I chose Aurora because they advocate for resident wellness, practice in the community within the context of social determinants of health and provide the opportunity to learn and practice integrative medicine. The residents and staff made me feel comfortable and welcomed, so I knew it would be a supportive and positive learning environment for my training.

I enjoy spending time with my two small dogs, Chloe and Izzy, working on creative projects, and traveling. I hope to continue to pursue my passion for social justice, advocacy, and global health by working with underserved populations after residency.

Brianna Berti, DO

- Hometown: Rosholt, WI
- Undergraduate Degree: Biology
- Medical School: A.T. Still University-Kirksville College of Osteopathic Medicine

I enjoy the wide age-range and varying pathology family doctors treat, the close relationships they form with their patients, and the flexibility of future practice settings. Primary care also allows me to focus on educating patients about their health and involving them in the healthcare process, which I believe is integral in encouraging healthy lifestyle changes and medication compliance.

I first considered Aurora because I spent 4 years of medical school in 2 different states, and I knew I wanted to move closer to family in Wisconsin for residency. During the interview day at St. Luke’s I was impressed by the positive interactions between residents, staff and students. I was able to laugh with the faculty and residents and felt very at ease, which helped me realize this would be a place I felt comfortable and supported during training. Additionally, the program emphasizes OMT and integrative medicine, both of which I am interested in incorporating in the future.

I am excited to explore everything Milwaukee has to offer, from its buzzing restaurant scene and summer events to the beauty of Lake Michigan. I hope to split my time between an outpatient office setting and community outreach in a free clinic for underserved patients. I would also like to do incorporate OMT into my practice and travel on international medical mission trips.
Katerina Christopherson, MD

- Hometown: Ostrava, Czech Republic
- Medical School: Palacky University, Olomouc, Czech Republic

My passion for family medicine started early during medical school and was my first choice of rotations as a senior medical student. Here I was able to see both chronic and acute conditions of all ages coupled with the opportunity to build a lasting relationship with my patients. I find teamwork and a focus on prevention essential on the path to life-long health.

My beliefs and experience led to the decision to become a family physician. I chose Aurora Health Care because of its unique training in integrative and functional medicine. I strongly believe in approaches that not only bring answers to what diseases we have, but also what led to these conditions and how to reverse them. I also appreciate Aurora’s comprehensive curriculum, focus on residents’ wellness, and all the fun Milwaukee has to offer.

Born in the Czech Republic, experienced with foreign languages, and exposed to frequent travel, I developed a genuine interest in exploring different cultures, lifestyles, and natural habitats. Every year I make sure I get to visit a new place. After residency I plan to pursue my interest in integrative and functional medicine.

Erin Harvey, MD, Junior Chief

- Hometown: Schertz, Texas
- Undergrad degree: Biochemistry and English-Creative Writing from the University of North Texas
- Medical School: University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston

I chose Family Medicine because I love variety and making connections with people. There are so many opportunities to learn and serve in Family Medicine – I know I’ll always find something new to experience with this career.

I chose Milwaukee because as a born and (mostly) raised-Texan, I was excited to explore the rest of the country (and experience some snow)! As a program, Aurora attracted me because of its size (not too big, not too small) and its family-like atmosphere.

Particular practice interests include obstetrics, care for the medically underserved, and hospice/palliative care. I know at Aurora I can explore any of these fields and be prepared to start my career confidently.

In my life outside of the hospital I adore Renaissance Festivals and general craftiness.
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Lawrence Moore, MD, MPH

- Hometown: Freeport, IL
- Undergrad degree: International Studies
- Medical School: University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health

I knew upon entering medical school I wanted to be a family physician. Being in the community is important to me and Family Medicine seemed the best way to ensure a consistent community presence. I value longitudinal patient relationships that involve whole families across their lifespan. As a Family Medicine physician, I would be well positioned to advocate for my patient’s and my community’s wellbeing as they are deeply connected. Most importantly, it would allow me to build a career without sacrificing my family life.

I have had the honor of working on a variety of projects in Milwaukee over the last decade that exposed me to public health in Milwaukee. When not working, I have enjoyed the diverse neighborhoods and events within Milwaukee. I even met my wife in Milwaukee! As a UW School of Medicine and Public Health student I became very familiar with the Aurora system and their Family Medicine program. The Aurora Family Medicine residency program’s community-based curriculum and focus on resident wellbeing coupled with integrative medicine opportunities was very attractive to me. The opportunity to get excellent medical training while simultaneously developing my personal and professional relationships within Milwaukee was perfect.

When I am not working to be a competent, community-minded physician I love to watch movies, run, play with my kids, get trounced by my wife in cribbage, play video games, and travel. After residency, I foresee remaining in Milwaukee, continuing to serve my community via advocacy on a local and state level, and pursuing my interest in integrative medicine.

Madelyn Pickle, DO

- Hometown: Colorado Springs, CO
- Undergraduate Degree: Abilene Christian University, Biology
- Medical School: Rocky Vista University College of Osteopathic Medicine

I had an interest in family medicine before medical school, and my experiences throughout my medical education solidified this selection. I enjoy the variety of patient demographics and problems that are encountered in a primary care setting, as well as the ongoing relationship that can be formed with patients. I like interacting with patients of all ages and cultures and working with them as a team to improve their health and wellness. Additionally, primary care is the perfect setting to be most involved in the community and public health, and it will provide me with many avenues to work in public health education and preventative medicine, which are aspects of medicine that I want to incorporate throughout the rest of my career.

Aurora was a great fit for me because of the opportunities to continue to hone my osteopathic manipulative skills, as well as the integrative medicine curriculum. As a Colorado native, I enjoy any outdoor activities and love to stay active in nature with my dogs, and I am looking forward to exploring Milwaukee! After residency, I plan to work in an outpatient setting with an emphasis on integrative patient care.
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Amanda (Gracie) Sessions, DO

- Hometown: Castle Rock, CO
- Undergraduate Degree: Colorado College, Bachelor of Arts in Anthropology
- Medical School: A. T. Still University School of Osteopathic Medicine in Arizona, Cincinnati, OH campus

Family medicine is the perfect fit for my diverse interests. I genuinely enjoyed all my rotations in medical school and found a true passion for primary care during my family medicine rotations. I was drawn to it because I loved the continuity of care and being able to serve the whole range of ages from newborns to the elderly. As a family physician, I love being able to create lasting relationships with patients and their families and working with them toward better health. The love for families that I see in the family practice discipline resonates with my personal aspirations to be a loving and devoted wife and mother with a well-balanced life as I work to become a competent and honorable physician. My interests include pediatrics, geriatrics, integrative medicine, osteopathic manipulation, and preventive medicine.

I fell in love with the Aurora Family Medicine Residency Program during my interview. I felt that I had truly “found my people” among the optimistic and joyful residents, faculty, and staff that I met there. I immediately felt the love and support of the residents and faculty and could picture myself being extremely happy at a place like Aurora. The dedication to resident wellness, collegiality of residents, and strong osteopathic focus are all wonderful aspects.

My husband is a PM&R resident and we met and got married during medical school. I couldn’t image going on this journey without him and am grateful for all that he does for me! We are excited to see where residency takes us and where our passions further develop. After residency, I would love to be able to serve my patients with a focus on preventive medicine, integrative medicine, and osteopathic manipulation.

Alexandrea Spindler, DO, Junior Chief

- Hometown: Manitowoc, WI
- Undergraduate degree: Bachelor of Science in Health Science from the University of Minnesota- Rochester
- Medical school: Des Moines University

To me, becoming a physician has always meant going into family practice — it encompasses the perfect blend of everything I am rejuvenated by in medicine. I aim to be the kind of clinician each patient needs in any given moment; a supportive ear to listen to mental health concerns, a guide through preventative health measures, and a resource for a variety of medical conditions in all stages of life. I adore building lasting relationships with patients and families. By focusing on their values and priorities, my goal is to work with patients to improve their health outcomes, so they are able to enjoy all that life has to offer.

While on a rotation with Aurora’s Family Medicine Program, I immediately felt at home with the residents, faculty and staff, and I couldn’t picture myself anywhere else. I knew I would be surrounded by others who are as passionate and enthusiastic about family medicine as I am, and that I would have the kind of quality, well-rounded training I desired.

Like any native Wisconsinite, you may often find me eating cheese and cheering on the Packers, Badgers and Brewers. I also enjoy being active outdoors, spending time in the kitchen, and am always searching for a new dog to meet. In my future practice, I plan to focus on outpatient medicine including mental health, osteopathic manipulative treatment, and women’s health.
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Mai Ly Thor, MD

- Hometown: Saint Paul, MN
- Undergrad degree: Biology major and Sociology minor
- Medical School: American University of the Caribbean School of Medicine

I chose Family Medicine, because I am passionate about social determinants of health, alleviating health disparities and improving the lives of patients of all ages. In my past experiences, I saw how family physicians developed close relationships with patients over time and made a difference in the entire communities by advocating for social programs. I felt that I could make the biggest difference in improving my patients lives by being their family doctor.

I chose Aurora Milwaukee because they are committed to the underserved population, advocacy, and quality patient services. During my interview, I felt at home with everyone. They demonstrated how well they worked as a team, how committed they were to excellent patient care, and the underserved.

In my spare time, I love reading, painting, cooking, exploring the outdoors, and local cuisine. After residency, I hope to be practicing outpatient medicine in an urban, underserved community.

Zeeshan Yacoob, MD, MPH

- Hometown: Milwaukee, WI
- Undergrad degree: Neurobiology, Global Health
- Medical School: University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health

The ability to form life-long relationships, to be an advocate for one's patient, to provide high-quality cost-effective care and the broad patient spectrum, is what ultimately led me to family medicine. I decided to come to Aurora for my residency training not only due to its' excellent clinical training and diverse, urban underserved patient population but also the fact that everyone I encountered truly respected the population that they were serving. Furthermore, being born and raised in Milwaukee I wanted to get the chance to serve my own community and I am so grateful that I have gotten this opportunity

When I’m not in the hospital/clinic I enjoy going on day hikes, biking, working out and spending time with my family.

After residency in order to help ensure that others have access to healthcare, my dream is to work in a medically underserved community and advocate for vulnerable populations living within that community.