

PRESIDENTS Corner



Marie Schaefer, MD

2024-2025 AMCNO President

Tell us about yourself and your practice

I am a proud Family Medicine and Sports Medicine physician from Cleveland. I left the area for my education at Ohio Wesleyan University and the Yale School of Medicine. I completed a Family Medicine residency at The Ohio State University and a Sports Medicine fellowship at Nationwide Children's Hospital. My wonderful husband had completed his PhD in Special Education at the same time and his professorship at Cleveland State University got us back to Cleveland. I joined the Cleveland Clinic with dual appointments in Family Medicine and Orthopedics. Since then, my career has transitioned, and I now work full time in Sports and Exercise Medicine through Orthopedics. I am also a member of our school based health practice and hope to continue to expand that aspect of my career.

Additionally, I am the head team physician and NCAA healthcare administrator at Cleveland State University as well as the head team physician for Lakewood High School (where I live) and the Ohio Contemporary Ballet. I am an assistant team physician for the Cleveland Cavaliers as well.

As a team physician, I use my family medicine and sports medicine training to take care of all facets of my athletes' health from injuries to illnesses to their mental health and preventative care. I love to see active individuals (especially adolescents) for injuries including concussions and I have an interest in caring for female athletes as well as screening and prevention of injury in youth sport. I want to encourage all my patients to live active and healthy lives!

How did you become interested in medicine?

My interest in medicine developed throughout my undergraduate studies and was not a straight path. When I was a politics and government major in my first semester of college, I was in a small group seminar class called "Politics in American Healthcare." From that class, I was hooked. I was fascinated by the winding story of the American healthcare system and it was around the time when the human genome project and genetics was front and center in politics. So, I became a genetics major as well. I really enjoyed the gray area between science and the healthcare system. Eventually, I interned on Capitol Hill in the U.S. House of Representatives with a junior Congressman, who had a very small staff and I was often ghostwriting for him on the topics of healthcare. That is when I realized that if I really wanted to make a difference in the healthcare system that I wanted to become a part of it.

What accomplishments are you most proud of?

In my professional career, I am most proud of the work that I have done for women in sports. I was the Chief Medical Officer for the Premier Hockey Federation (PHF) for the last three years. Until 6 months ago, the PHF was the only professional women's hockey league. I developed and implemented the health and safety standards of the league as well as navigated through the COVID pandemic. Through the success of the PHF, a new league has formed that will allow women to get paid a fairer salary to play hockey. Representation is so vitally important in sports, and I view my role as a leader in that community to continue to prioritize women's unique health needs.

What are your hobbies and interests?

Right now, my hobbies revolve around my kids. I have 3 children (ages 7, 5, and 1) and really enjoy participating in their hobbies. There are, not surprisingly, a lot of sports involved. I am active in coaching soccer and baseball for my kids. I think it is incredibly important for moms to be out there representing women being involved in sports. Especially as a physician in the community, we need to be out there being positive, encouraging, and providing a counterforce to the negative stereotypes of coaching.

What are your goals and priorities for the AMCNO this year?

The Academy is celebrating 200 years of existence this year! It truly is a monumental moment. Modern medicine itself was in its infancy in 1824 when this group was founded. As our predecessors recognized, the art and practice of medicine is so much more beyond understanding physiology and anatomy. Medicine is influenced by the society in which it exists. That includes the rules, regulations, biases, prejudices, politics, and economy. The Academy exists to help its practitioners navigate and unite in helping our patients the best that we can.

With the notoriety of this special year, it is my goal as President to continue to strengthen our advocacy efforts and visibility across the region. The Academy excels at advocating, and I would like to provide leadership to our membership on how to get more involved. This includes working with our Future Leaders Council to develop that skillset. On a more local level, I would like to focus the Academy to actively pursue projects or funding for projects that improve the health equity of our community. Though our AMCNO Board is diverse, we want to understand the needs of all our members as we continue to expand across the region. Let us know what is important to you!

What are your concerns about the future of health care?

As a primary care physician, I am concerned about the primary care workforce. I applaud the efforts of many organizations in our region that continue to make pipeline programs from medical school to residency to primary care positions that directly provide care to this region. I am increasingly alarmed by political overreach into the patient-physician relationship. This comes in many forms from encroachment on reproductive rights to dictating the healthcare decisions of the transgender youth community. Medical care is too complex and individualized for that line to be crossed.

How would you ask physicians to support the Academy?

Be aware of what the Academy can do. The Academy advocates on behalf of issues that actually affect physicians. Now more than ever, the current political climate has amplified disinformation and has subsequently decided on issues that should remain in the sanctity of the patient-physician relationship. If there is something that affects your practice of medicine in our community, this is where the Academy can help!

