

Faces of PARAdime



**DR. CHARLENE
DINAKARAN**



Medical School
University of Alberta

Residency
University of Alberta

Specialty
Family Medicine

PGY
2

WHAT ATTRACTED YOU TO MEDICINE?

Initially, what had attracted my 12-year-old self to medicine was my brother having several major complications from a routine tonsillectomy that almost resulted in us losing him. At that time, I never wanted another family to go through what we had gone through. As I matured and grew, that desire to help people, coupled with my fascination with the human body, truly led me towards the path. The lifelong pursuit of knowledge and improving outcomes continues to pique my curiosity.

WHAT ATTRACTED YOU TO YOUR SPECIALTY?

Going through medical school, I realized that I had an interest in multiple areas of medicine. Once I got to my family medicine rotation, I felt like I had found my calling. The variety, relationships and ever-changing/growing nature of family medicine ignited the passion that was absent in my other rotations. I also love being able to effect change in patients early on that helps them live their own version of their best life possible.

WHAT IS THE MOST REWARDING PART OF YOUR RESIDENCY TRAINING?

Teaching others. Constantly during my day I am teaching; be it medical students or patients. Nothing brings me more happiness in residency than passing on pearls of wisdom to a new medical student or getting to see the enchantment on face of the child when I place my stethoscope in their ears so they can hear what their heartbeat sounds like.

WHAT DO YOU FIND THE MOST CHALLENGING IN YOUR RESIDENCY TRAINING?

Balance. It is something that all medical students, resident physicians and staff physicians struggle with at some point in their career. For myself, I find that as a medical student I was unbalanced - wanting to know everything and retain every bit of information, often to the detriment of my own health and activities outside of medicine. As a resident physician, I've been able to find a state of "balanced unbalance" where sometimes my personal life has required more attention than academics and vice-versa. Hopefully as I continue on in my medical journey, I will be able to find the elusive "balance" in medicine and life.

WHAT ENERGIZES YOU OUTSIDE OF RESIDENCY?

Many things energize me outside of residency. Spending time with family and friends is a big one. My husband and I also train together every year for the Alberta Ride to Conquer Cancer. In my quiet time, I also enjoy reading novels and have started to run out of places in my bookshelves for them...

WHY DID YOU WANT TO GET INVOLVED WITH PARADIME?

PARAdime is an amazing way for us as resident physicians to give back to the vulnerable populations we see in our clinics, emergency rooms, ORs and wards. The social determinants of health are the most critical, most crucial ways we can effect change in the health of the populations we see every day. PARAdime is a stepping-stone for that essential change to transform the health of Albertans as a whole.