



DR. NAZIA SHARFUDDIN

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GENERAL INTERNAL
MEDICINE

What attracted you to you to medicine?

From a young age, I have always wanted to work at the intersection between science and serving society. As a child of migration, I have lived on many continents and witnessed global consistency when it came to disparities in access: to education, opportunities for economic and social progression and health care. I knew that I wanted to do whatever I could to address that disparity when it came to health care. Though we have universal health care in Canada, there still exists room for improvements in health care access and delivery. As a physician, I find that I can approach this issue from both a micro and macro perspective. By acknowledging and continuously learning about these structural issues, I aim to do my best for patients – both clinically, as well as on a systems level through my research and administrative work.

What attracted you to your specialty?

General Internal Medicine (GIM) was a natural attraction for me. I love the acuity, the complexity of clinical presentations and the dynamic nature of the problems. There is incredible variety and breadth where many times, the same clinical diagnosis presents in vastly different ways. It is recognizing that heterogeneity, connecting the dots is not always apparent and doing it all in a way that is meaningful to the patient, is what I find consistently fulfilling about my subspecialty. GIM truly is the perfect fit for me and the reason I am so excited to go to work every single day.

What do you find the most rewarding in your residency training?

The ability to wake up and go to work every day as a physician has been my lifelong dream and it is an honour to live it daily. What makes it so fulfilling is engaging with patients from all walks of life, working through the rich expanse of pathophysiology to arrive at appropriate management and doing this within a team of dedicated colleagues. The fantastic people I work alongside – resident physicians, medical students, seniors, fellows, mentors, nurses and allied health staff – make the everyday intensity of medicine a pleasure.

What do you find the most challenging in your residency training?

It can be challenging to balance clinical obligations with non-clinical interests such as research and administrative work. I aim to work in research and quality improvement projects that focus on improved access to health care for structurally marginalized populations and reducing health disparities. I also wear a few different administrative hats, such as working on the Executive Board with PARA or serving as Chief Resident for my cohort. While clinical medicine takes the highest priority, making time for these roles is also important and an area that I am working on continuously.

What energizes you outside of residency?

I love storytelling, performing and community building. Whether it was helping write parody songs for my core residency cohort's Christmas rounds or a welcome video for medical students, I have always been energized when I am engaged creatively and helping to build community. One of my most cherished accomplishments is producing a short documentary film with my husband showcasing a very Canadian story of inclusion that demonstrates the power of kindness in creating sustainable communities. Carving out time and space for the people and projects I love is what energizes me.