

Dear Amy Ligocki,

My first exposure to the medical field was an accident - mine, to be exact. In fact, growing up as an accident-prone child, I spent many nights in the emergency room whether it was from accidentally spraying Tilex in my eye as a young child or from the years of participating in sports. Although my first encounters with medicine were from accidents, my calling as a physician is far from that.

While in college at Emory University, I had the opportunity to volunteer as an Emergency Medical Technician with Emory Emergency Medical Service, a student run organization. While the experience was invaluable, too often I would see my patient for just an hour and then the connection ended forever. In the future, I wanted knowing my patient's fate to be the rule, not the exception.

Thinking back, I remember sitting in the Emergency Department in my small hometown listening to Dr. Ben Hogan, a full scope PCP, give advice on medicine as he stitched my mouth back together after a softball incident. He compared emergency medicine to football because of the excitement and speed, but described his own family practice as more like golf, which required steady skills, patience, and awareness of your environment. As my commitment to medicine matured, my focus, in the words of Dr. Hogan, turned from "football" to "golf." Family medicine offers the unique challenge of caring for all ages and all illnesses on a long-term basis. The importance of explaining to someone what is going on with his or her body and what can be done is paramount, and this is not limited to office visits. The beauty of living and working in a small community is that one voice is easily heard. You can be an example just by what you buy at the grocery store.

For my first job out of residency, I found a practice dedicated to providing healthcare beyond just the office with Aspirus. While working in Wisconsin Rapids, I partnered with Medical College of Wisconsin to teach medical students in a longitudinal rural medicine track. As most of medical training is centered in urban environments, I believe that we must provide opportunities for students to experience healthcare in rural communities or the current healthcare shortage will continue. I have also actively advocated for my fellow physicians and plan to continue to do so.

As I have grown in my career, my family has also grown. In a search for the perfect combination of family life and career opportunities, I found Sheridan Memorial Hospital. I am impressed by the commitment to compassionate patient-centered care, its quality reputation within its community, and many national awards. I know I will further these accomplishments with my medical experience and professional leadership.

The responsibility of a family physician goes beyond the clinic doors. As a wife and mother, I understand what it means to be entrusted the lives and well-being of children, spouses, and other loved ones. As a physician, I am excited to continue serve my patients, my colleagues, and, most importantly, my community. I hope to make Sheridan my own, and look forward to hearing back from you.

Sincerely,  
Abigail Lewis MD