



I turned the corner and I saw two large banners on each side of the hallway. Each banner had an arrow pointing to the open door below it. The blue banner to the left read RESIDENTS and the orange to the right read STUDENTS. I veered right and entered the room, scanning the rows for the sign designating the seats for representatives from Illinois. I took my seat, front and center of the room, hoping that I would be spared of any embarrassing moments as I was arm's reach away from the large stage. When the leaders of the Student and Resident National Congress took the stage to mark the beginning of the Congressional session, I felt my shoulders relax. While professional, they lead the sessions with ease, comedy, and a charm that is unique to Family Medicine. I loved participating in National Congress as the Illinois Delegate to the AAFP NC as it offered me a literal front row seat to sessions where we heard reports from the student members of different AAFP boards and initiatives, voted on new student representatives, and the overall parliamentary procedure. I was emboldened by watching my peers discussing and debating proposed resolutions covering a range of controversial and crucial topics. I thought to myself "These are the people with whom I will be defining the future of family medicine alongside. The shaping of healthcare models, policies, and the culture of primary care starts here in this room."

There is a palpable buzz to National Conference and this year was no different as the Kansas City heat caused people to laugh and sweat through our business attire. National Conference continues to be a summer highlight for me. This year, however, was extra special because I not only attended as the IL student representative and the student representative for the AAFP's Center for Global Health Initiatives but I also attended as a mother. I had a new perspective on the definition of 'Family Medicine,' one that felt more personal now as a parent considering the needs of my child. What would I want his physician to know and care about? What sort of medical landscape do I hope he grows up in? While considering the wide range of sessions to attend, or taking in the Congressional considerations of proposed resolutions, I reveled in the scope of FM and the corresponding passion FM trainees and doctors bring to their communities. Walking down the hallway lined with posters with my son on my hip, I smiled

knowing that National Conference was a special place, somewhere I could fully embrace being a medical trainee and a new mom.