



Sandy Kimmer, MD, MPH, Finds Joy in Lifelong Learning and Teaching Residents



Every physician is dedicated to serving their patients and community but, even by that measure, Dr. Sandy Kimmer's career has been exemplary.

After 20 years of service in the United States Navy, including three deployments to Iraq, Southeast Asia, and Guantanamo Bay, and achieving the rank of Commander, Dr. Kimmer retired in 2019. In 2012, when she

moved from active service to the Navy Reserves, Dr. Kimmer was brought on as faculty in the National Capital Consortium Family Medicine Residency Program at Fort Belvoir Community Hospital in Virginia. Here she maintains a thriving full scope practice while educating and mentoring medical students and active-duty Navy, Air Force, and Army resident physicians.

"We train 15 residents each year, so there are 45 residents in our program at any given time," explained Dr. Kimmer, who remains a renaissance woman at the hospital day-in and day-out. On any given day she can be found teaching residents, delivering babies, caring for her own patients, or running the geriatric clinic.

The excitement she describes in doing this work has led to opportunities for Dr. Kimmer to connect with ABFM. For example, in 2019 she took part in the Family Medicine Certification Longitudinal Assessment (FMCLA) pilot which tested the viability of an alternative to the one-day examination. Dr. Kimmer had a great experience with the pilot program, saying, "When I was up for recertification, I actively participated in the pilot of the 25 questions per quarter exam. I loved it. That model is wonderful."

Recently, Dr. Kimmer reached out to ABFM to ask for help with her Performance Improvement (PI) activity. She had started to complete the activity in her MyABFM Portfolio but found her submission not exactly fitting the parameters of ABFM's traditional PI activities. She reached out to ABFM and quickly worked with PI Program Manager Ann Williamson to find a simple solution.

"Ann said, 'Oh by the way, there's a Self-Directed PI module for you to customize the project you wish to submit.' I never knew! She gave me all the tools I needed. It was very easy and seamless," said Dr. Kimmer. "I was able to appropriately and quickly communicate what I'd done in my practice."

That communication of how she approaches lifelong learning and continually works to improve her practice is essential for Dr. Kimmer's day-to-day teaching activities as well. "I try to instill in them that you can never know it all. You must be comfortable with your lack of knowledge. You must be humble because you're not going to be perfect. But, you can be curious, excited by medical mysteries, and ready to ask more questions. Lifelong learning should be something that every physician values," Dr. Kimmer said.

Dr. Kimmer's drive to educate and learn from others continues at the Uniformed Services Academy of Family Physicians (USAFP) conference in Orlando, March 30-April 4. She will facilitate the discussion - "Preventing Empathy Fatigue Equals Finding Balance" to help her colleagues maintain joy in their practice. We encourage any physicians attending to stop and say hi to this remarkable physician.

Thank you Dr. Kimmer for the years of service you have given to our country, your patients, and the next generation of family physicians.

