



## Dr. Kim Yu Finds ‘Reason for Being’ in Family Medicine Advocacy



Dr. Kim Yu

Ikigai (ee-key-guy) is a Japanese concept meaning your ‘reason for being.’ For Dr. Kim Yu, board-certified family physician, defining her Ikigai meant finding a career path within family medicine that matched her work/life balance goals.

“Ikigai is the reason for being, the reason why you get out of bed every day,” said Dr. Yu, who practiced family medicine for over

18 years alongside her career in advocacy, which started in residency.

“Being a mother of two children, getting involved in leadership development, and being in practice simultaneously was difficult to balance. Once I got involved with advocacy, however, I realized how much I loved it and how it allowed me to advocate for causes I believed in, to live my calling, and join forces with others passionate about caring for patients and our specialty, family medicine. I saw a real need to share that with other physicians, as I have seen how being in advocacy also helps to beat burnout and improve wellbeing, both individually and collectively, as we share with others and seek the best for patients and our communities.”

Today, Dr. Yu serves as the National Director for Clinical and Community Partnerships at Aledade, highlighting value-based care solutions for family physicians and those in primary care. She is also Chair of the World Organization of Family Doctors’ (WONCA’s) Special Interest Group in Health Equity, Vice Speaker for the California Academy of Family Physicians, and a veteran speaker for the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) on topics such as physician health and wellbeing, health equity, population health, and more.

“I do the work I do because I’m passionate about helping independent primary care physicians thrive, so they too can balance their calling, their family, and advocating for the causes that are most important to them,” she said. “All family physicians wish to take care of patients and make things better for our communities. You don’t have to feel burned out or alone.”

Dr. Yu has dedicated herself fully to being the best mom and physician advocate she can be. Throughout the year, she travels across the country and even overseas to speak on health equity and the improvement of practice settings.



*“Ensuring that one’s work and career blend well is both a blessing and sometimes may be difficult to maintain. Having others to share in your journey makes it so much easier.”*

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Dr. Yu has also developed a significant online presence through the creation and moderation of numerous Facebook groups focusing on different aspects of family medicine. The most popular is ‘Physician Moms in Family Medicine,’ which has over 3,300 active members.

“It’s a joy to have a safe space where we can share the struggles and blessings of being a parent or a woman in medicine and how we can support each other,” Dr. Yu said, who also began popular Facebook groups for physicians interested in urgent care, family medicine, health equity, global health, physician moms with children interested in medicine, photography, and even a group for family physicians around the world interested in cooking, called the “Global Family Doctors Cooking Show.”

“We’re able to gather around topics that mean a lot to us such as opening or closing a practice, losing a family member or a patient who was dear to you, or how to improve wellbeing. Speaking openly makes you feel like you are not alone, that together we can inspire, create, and lead change,” she said.



This network of physicians has affected external change as well. Most notably, after Hurricane Maria caused devastation in Puerto Rico, the group and other colleagues Dr. Yu worked with were able to raise more than \$120,000 for the purchase of 66 generators that would allow physicians on the island to continue to practice medicine through ongoing power outages.

“I have family physician friends in Puerto Rico that I have known through AAFP for many years. When Hurricane Maria hit Puerto Rico, I reached out to them and asked whether there was anything they needed. They said they needed power. I wrote a Facebook post asking, ‘Who would like to buy a generator for our family physician friends in Puerto Rico?’ Before I knew it, we raised more than \$50,000 that very first weekend,” Dr. Yu said proudly.

“We coordinated with the Indiana Academy of Family Physicians who volunteered to assist by accepting the monetary donations. It was a multi-pronged grassroots approach which took months and the coordination of many different groups both here and in Puerto Rico like the Puerto Rico Academy of Family Physicians, Baton Rouge Emergency Aid Coalition, the AMA Foundation, and others.”

Together, these groups have also supported communities overcoming natural disasters in the Bahamas, Florida, and New Orleans, just to name a few. However, these great initiatives are secondary to the ability of these physicians to come together and form a community where they are understood, respected, supported, and loved by peers.

“You realize the joy of human connection and friendship,” she said. “Ensuring that one’s work and career blend well is both a blessing and sometimes difficult to maintain. Having others to share in your journey makes it so much easier.”

Interested physicians can find these groups through Facebook or start their own to create new safe areas for physicians to congregate and come together as one. Thank you, Dr. Yu, for sharing the story of your Ikigai and for all you do to support women and families in medicine.



Dr. Yu, center, with members of the Aledade team.



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