

This summer I was given the opportunity to shadow Dr. Jerone Landstrom of Pacific Hand Surgery Center. Through this experience I learned a great deal not only about conditions related to my mentor's specialty, but also about the medical school journey and the different paths I could take. I observed Dr. Landstrom during his office hours and various surgical procedures. In addition, I was able to see how the operating room staff prepared for surgeries, how to perform and analyze an x-ray, and the process of patient intake and referral. The key takeaway my mentor ensured to instill in my mind are the three A's of being a great doctor: availability, affability, and of course, ability. Dr. Landstrom not only said these words, but also demonstrated them through his daily interactions with his patients and staff.

Availability in this sense is defined as giving each and every patient the time they need without rushing or making them feel like just another appointment time. He guaranteed this by setting up appointments and surgeries with ample time in between, in case of anything that may come up. These may include the need for additional surgical time or just dealing with patients that are talkers. He also takes the time to really explain and help the patients understand the condition they're in, be it through metaphors or providing them with literature. At times, Dr. Landstrom would also accommodate his patients' busy schedules by seeing them during the typical lunch hour. As a doctor, being available and showing that you value the patients' time makes them feel like they are really being cared for.

Affability involves the way a doctor interacts and forms relationships with both patients and colleagues. I really enjoyed observing how Dr. Landstrom communicated with patients of different walks of life. He had served in Chuuk and the Philippines, so when a patient of that ethnicity comes in, he is able to speak in their language. This almost always makes them laugh because he still has an accent, but it noticeably makes them feel more comfortable. Furthermore, retaining good rapport with the staff and colleagues is very important because a doctor can't do everything on his own. In just one surgical procedure, there's a team involving radiology, an anesthesiologist, surgical nurse, pre-op and post-op nurse, not to forget all the support staff who make it possible. Having effective communication and good relations makes the flow of work both easier and enjoyable.

Lastly, ability is just being great at what you do. This involves constantly refreshing one's knowledge, reading up on special cases, and even asking a colleague for their opinions. There is no doubt that Dr. Landstrom has the ability, which is evident during his surgeries and seeing the improvements post-op. He is especially skilled in arthroscopic procedures, which also happens to be the least invasive method. Learning doesn't end when medical school ends. Continuously learning and growing is the only way to improve and provide the best care for one's patients.

Although I took no part in performing the surgeries, it actually felt really wonderful to hear patients say that their pain is gone, or they feel much better. I can't imagine how much better it would feel when I'm the one providing care and performing procedures. This shadowing

experience with Dr. Landstrom gave me a new perspective of the medical field and confirmed my desire in pursuing this career path.