

Skeptical

Category: A Turn for the Better

written by Colleen T. Fogarty | August 24, 2024

I was in the process of leaving my first practice after residency, after three years at a rural community health center in western New York.

Saying goodbye to patients is emotional and takes extra time. Most patients expressed gratitude. Some brought small tangible gifts.

The goodbye visit that stands out most was with a middle-aged man, a retired professional who hadn't had a primary doctor for several years before joining our practice. He'd had newly diagnosed hypertension and elevated cholesterol, which we'd managed with both medications and changes in diet and physical activity. He had done well on all counts.

When I was saying goodbye, he said, "You know, I'd never seen a woman doctor before I came here. And I gotta tell you, I was **very** skeptical. And now I've got to say, doc, I'm sorry to see you go. I'll **definitely** look for a woman doctor for my next doc."

I was taken aback; I'd never had an inkling of his skepticism. To the contrary, we'd had a cordial and respectful doctor-patient relationship. And yet, here he was sharing his initial skepticism and his appreciation for my medical care. This experience continues to give me hope that we can all continue to turn for the better!

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