

Overview:

On 12/29/22, I was able to shadow Dr. Jill Faatz, a family care specialist, at the Heber Valley Clinic. This is the second time I shadowed Dr. Faatz, and the first experience's summary can be found [here](#). We spent **9.75 hours** (8:00 - 5:45) together, and we saw 14 patients together.

The patients today came with a wider range of symptoms than when I last shadowed her. We had diabetic and women's health patients, but we also saw a couple of geriatric patients with complex issues that I am not sure are applicable to many other people in the world. Lastly, though there were some newer patients today, the number of patients that Dr. Faatz has had a long standing relationship that was impressive to me and something that stood out through the clinic today.

What I Liked: Profession

Today gave me a different insight into family care than I had the last time I shadowed her. First, one thing that stood out to me today was the long standing relationships that can come from being in family practice. Because of the variety of the symptoms that Dr. Faatz has come through her door, people will come to her for years and years. For example, I have been seeing Dr. Faatz for almost 10 years myself. Because of the longevity of the relationships, Dr. Faatz truly has made friends with these people. She cares about them and their families, and they care about her, too. I think it is a beautiful example of what a doctor-patient relationship should look like, and I know that Dr. Faatz is a better doctor because of it. That is one part of this profession that I know I would love.

Another part of the profession that I think I would love is spending time with such a diverse group of patients, especially across ages. The fact that any patient walking through the door could be 1 or could be 100 is so cool to me. It requires a lot of knowledge, and that is one of the things that amazes me about Dr. Faatz. No matter what comes through the door, it seems like she is prepared for any of it. I love spending time with children, but I also love spending time with the older people. In the same vein, spending all of my time with children would be trying for me, and spending all of my time with older people would be trying for me. Therefore, I think finding a profession where I can have such a diverse group of ages come through the door would be beneficial for me.

Lastly, though it makes me nervous currently, I think that actually being able to put my hands on the patient and help them that way is something that I value in medicine. This might just be my "over-ambitious, pie-in-the-sky, pre-med self" talking, but it is so exciting to me. There were a couple of times today where Dr. Faatz let me hear a heartbeat or see healing sores in a mouth, and though these experiences were super simple, they helped me feel like what a doctor is typically viewed as. Overall, I think the opportunity to actually go hands-on with some of the patient injuries and symptoms is something that I would really enjoy.

What I Liked: Physician

First off, like I mentioned before, there were a lot of patients that came in today who were going through some really difficult and dire experiences. Seeing how Dr. Faatz handled the caring for them but not taking over care for them was eye opening. I chronically make other people's problems my own to the point that it is unhealthy for me, but I took some good notes from Dr. Faatz today. She faced people going through hardships, showed she cared, and did everything in her scope as a doctor to fix what they were going through. This is a trait Dr. Faatz has perfected, and it is something that I want to incorporate into my future as a physician-scientist.

Next, I love how Dr. Faatz sees each person as a whole, not just parts of a whole. In my notes, I mention the idea of an older patient not having the best A1C. Dr. Faatz explained how that was okay. I think that this shows the kind of person that Dr. Faatz is. Each patient that comes through the door is a whole, and their lifestyles and quality of life is something that is vital for patient success. Even though things might be better if a 80-something year old has an A1C 7, is the potential of hypoglycemia in one that has a hard time remembering things the best idea? Questions like these show that Dr. Faatz is a person, not a robot. This is something about her that I admire.

Finally, there were a couple of times, whether with a patient or just with me, where I saw a joy come across Dr. Faatz's face. I could tell that she genuinely loves what she does. She loves helping people, and it is extremely obvious that the science and pathophysiology behind the medicine excites her. I don't have much more to say here; I just hope and pray that students that shadow me in the future can see the same with me.

What was difficult to be excited about: Profession

Simply, the only thing that occurred throughout the experience today was something that will happen in all specialties, I am afraid. I felt like there was not enough time for each patient. Again, this is probably something that I need to get used to, but I felt bad that some patients might not have had enough time to have all of their concerns taken care of. Dr. Faatz does a great job at keeping on a schedule, and she keeps people on track in the kindest way. This will be really difficult for me to get used to, but it is something that I know I can accomplish. At the end of the day, each clinic will have a certain number of patients that need to be treated per day, and I need to learn how to best keep track of time with patients.

What I Learned:

- Relationships with patients is something that is a plus or a negative of the job. As Dr. Faatz has been practicing medicine in the valley for 15 years, there are a lot of people that she has seen for years that have now passed away. This is something worth considering when choosing a specialty.
 - Dr. Faatz sees working with those with dementia as a privilege. Also, she sees death as a part of life, and she feels like this is a knowledge that has come through her time practicing.

- Quality of life was a big focus today. We had a lot of patients that were older, and Dr. Faatz and I had a lot of discussions about how “so-and-so” has a higher A1C than normal, but that is okay, as they are 80. Their lifestyle is different now, and it is okay that they have higher blood sugar, for example.
- There was a patient today that had a mechanical heart valve. Hearing that compared to a traditional heart was very interesting, as Dr. Faatz says that he is the only patient she has ever seen with this.
- There was a discussion on pain medication. Some patients who take them long term eventually are unable to see a difference in the pain when they are on versus off the pills. Therefore, it is good to take them off when they hit this point, as they do not need the side effects if the medication is not specifically helping.
- Relationships with patients can lead them to trust you regarding their care. There was one woman who had diabetes that explicitly trusted everything Dr. Faatz said (wanting everything written down step-by-step). Because of the rapport that Dr. Faatz has with that patient, she was willing to do whatever Dr. Faatz told her regarding her care.
- I need to improve on my memory of patients. I feel like I do very well in the room with the patient and remembering specific parts of each visit, but I struggle going back and having every detail needed for charting after an hour or two. This is a skill I hope to develop.
- There is a fine line between a caring doctor and someone who gives more than they are able. Dr. Faatz is a great example of this. There were a couple of people that came in today that had such a hard life I wanted to take all of the money out of my pocket and give it to them. I am sure Dr. Faatz has felt the same way, but if she did that for every patient, she would be broke, be carrying a lot of their burdens, and have unhealthy relationships with the patients. That is something that I need to get over in order to be a great doctor one day.