



Hometown: Clifton Park, NY

Undergraduate: University at Buffalo

Medical School: University at Buffalo, PhD at Roswell Park Cancer Center

Residency: Duke University Hospital

What are your career goals?

I am passionate about medical education, so I plan to pursue a career in academics that includes teaching and working with learners. Specifically, my goal is to ultimately become the PD of a graduate medical program, either at the internal medicine or oncology fellowship level. I also love patient care and solid tumor biology, and I intend to have a heavy clinical focus.

Why did you choose MD Anderson?

I chose Anderson because there is so much support to develop the career that I want, not the career that others may want for me. Because I have a basic science PhD, many programs assumed that I would want to remain heavily involved in bench research. Anderson did not assume anything about my career, but instead read my personal statement and then interviewed me with faculty who also had a passion for medical education. To me, that spoke volumes about their commitment to their trainees. They just want us to be the best at whatever we decide to pursue!

Additionally, the experience at LBJ of having my own patient panel to manage, counsel, and care for has been invaluable to my development as an oncologist. These are truly my patients, and being able to care for an underserved population has been a joy and a privilege.

How has MD Anderson helped you in achieving your goals?

The program leadership have been very open about supporting us in whatever we want to do. Within the first few months after starting, I met with Dr. Bhadkamkar, who is one of the APDs. He spent nearly ninety minutes with me, creating and outlining a three-year plan for my fellowship, with a focus on medical education. We now meet at least quarterly to ensure that my career plans are on track. Since that time, I have been able to complete a physician education certificate program with the support of the fellowship. They wrote a letter of nomination which was critical to achieving a position in the Health Educator Fellowship Program – typically a program reserved for faculty only. They have supported my trips to conferences, both for oncologic and educational pursuits. The leadership has introduced me to opportunities to act as a mentor to college and medical students, both locally and nationally. Additionally, they have placed me in education leadership positions, first as the chief fellow for UT resident education as a second year and now as the chief fellow for Fellowship education as a third year. Every move in my career path has been towards education with the explicit support of the fellowship leaders – whether it is protected time, letters of recommendation, leadership positions, or financial support for conferences. I have never been pressured to pursue basic or clinical research projects, or the YIA. They truly respect my path as an educator.

What do you like best about MD Anderson's fellowship program?

I love my co-fellows! The program did a great job picking a class of people that is so smart, driven, and fun to be around. I love the focus on education; every Tuesday we have a protected half-day of didactic lectures. The focus in this program truly is education over service. I like that there are resources to pursue whatever interests you, and the program will support you in that. Finally, I really appreciate the program leadership; they are really invested in us as individuals.

What do you like about living in Houston?

Where to start? I love the food and bar scene in Houston – I have been to over 100 bars and restaurants in the past 2 years and have found so much to enjoy in that scene. I love the diversity of Houston – this is the most diverse city in the US and we are genuinely better off for it. The cost of living here is the cheapest in the nation for what you get – size, weather, culture, music, food, and location. There is always something to do, a show to see, a festival to attend, a museum exhibit to check out. I'm not from Houston, but this feels like home to me.