Physician Brothers Share a passion for Helping the Underserved

de Leon Brother, MD

Left:In Mapoteng, Lesotho, Africa, Dr. Andre de Leon checks a patient at Maluti Adventist Hospital. Right: Dr Tate de Leon attends a patient in a shanty village on the outskirts of Le Ceibe, Honduras.

Tate de Leon, MD and André de Leon, MD share much more than the same last name. The two brothers' lives have followed similar paths as far back as they can remember. Growing up in the mountain community of Lake Arrowhead, they are second-generation University of California, Los Angeles graduates. Tate, who is four years older than André, earned a master's degree from California State University, San Bernardino while his younger brother was completing his undergraduate degree.

The brothers then attended Ross University School of Medicine in the Commonwealth of Dominica where they first experienced the challenges and rewards of practicing health care in impoverished and underserved regions. Additionally, providing health services to the local population of native Carib Indians introduced them to the unique aspects of caring for indigenous peoples.

After graduating from medical school, the brothers completed their residencies in Urban Family Medicine at The Ohio State University Medical Center Department of Family Medicine in Columbus, Ohio. Tate went on to become Chief Resident there in 2010.

During his residency, Tate spent a month in Honduras providing health care to the poverty-stricken populations of Roatan and Le Ceibe. Andre's residency included a one-month rotation at Maluti Adventist Hospital in Lesotho, Africa. This work helped the doctors hone their diagnostic skills and field procedures, and introduced them to treating a wide array of conditions rarely seen in the United States.

Because of these experiences, the doctors are staunch advocates for the underserved around the world whose very existence is threatened by severely limited access to adequate medical care and the challenges of sustaining even the most basic wellness regimens. "We are very fortunate living in the United States," says Dr. Tate de Leon, adding that Americans often do not appreciate the high quality of health care available in the United States, services unfathomable in many other parts of the world.

The joy of helping people so grateful for any kind of health care, and who appreciate something as simple as having a doctor show genuine interest in them — perhaps for the first time in their lives — reminds Tate and André of why they entered the medical profession in the first place. "Seeing what a difference you can make just by making a connection and caring is extremely gratifying," notes Dr. André de Leon.

André joined the Eisenhower Family Medicine staff in September 2010 followed by Tate in August 2011. They were drawn to Eisenhower because of its world-class reputation and state-of-the-art facilities; its commitment to providing patients with the highest quality health care and personal attention; and its focus on prevention. Tate sees patients at the Eisenhower Health Center in Rancho Mirage. He is certified in advanced cardiac life support, advanced traumatic life support, fundamentals of critical care support, wound healing and advanced life support in obstetrics.

"Family Medicine physicians are in the unique position to form a partnership with their patients, from newborns to geriatrics," he says. "This in-depth continuity allows us to deliver specialized medicine to each individual. As a primary care physician, it's very gratifying to know I can make a positive difference in a patient's life."

André, who works in the Eisenhower George and Julia Argyros Health Center in La Quinta, is Board Certified in Family Medicine, specializing in Urban Family Medicine with an interest in Sports Medicine.

"As a primary care physician, I wear many different hats, but my one commonality is the patient," he says. "My ultimate goal is to improve my patients' quality of life and give them the means to take ownership of their own health."

The doctors will serve as Family Medicine faculty members in Eisenhower's newly accredited School of Graduate Medical Education, which will begin welcoming residents in Family Medicine and Internal Medicine in 2013.

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