

Bonus Short: Interview with Dr Shobhina Chheda, Chair of the Alliance

at #AIMW23

Bonus Episode!



ALLIANCE
for ACADEMIC INTERNAL MEDICINE

ACADEMIC INTERNAL
MEDICINE WEEK 2023

**Interview with
Dr Shobhina
Chheda**

Chair of the Alliance

**THE CURB
SIDERS
TEACH**

[disclaimer]

Molly: Hi, I'm Dr. Molly Heublein here with my cohost.

Era: Dr. Era Kryzhanovskaya.

Molly: We are here at The Curbsiders Teach are so excited to be sitting down at the Alliance for Academic Internal Medicine-

Era: -in Austin. We are sitting down with one of the most amazing members of the Alliance, Dr. Shobhina Chheda, who's the Board Chair for the second year in a row, and we have a fantastic conversation with her.

Molly: Yeah. So, I hope you enjoy and I hope we can see you at a future AIM meeting.

Well, Dr. Chheda, thank you so much for joining us this morning. We're really excited to sit down here in person at the Alliance of Academic Internal Medicine for the Academic Internal Medicine Week 2023.

Unison: Ooh. Yeah. [crosstalk]

Dr. Shobhina: [crosstalk] In Austin, Texas. Yeah.

Molly: Well, we were hoping to get to know you a little bit better.

Dr. Shobhina: Sure.

Molly: Can you share a bit about yourself and your role at AIM, or I should say at the Alliance of Academic Internal Medicine?

Dr. Shobhina: Yeah, absolutely. So, for this past year, I have been the Chair of the Board of Directors for the Alliance. I am going to be completing my first year, and I just got reelected to my second year.

Molly: Yay.

Era: Congratulations.

Dr. Shobhina: Of course, I'm super excited about that. So, that's my formal role here. Yeah.

Molly: Amazing.

Dr. Shobhina: Yeah.

Molly: What about your role outside of AIM and just a little bit about yourself outside of medicine?

Dr. Shobhina: Yeah, absolutely. So, I have been at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health for 21 years. I have no idea how long that goes by so quickly. My professional role there now is Associate Dean for Medical Education. So, I oversee curriculum in assessment for our medical students. I am a practicing general internist. So, I have had a panel of patients for 21 years.

Molly: Yay, primary care.

Dr. Shobhina: An amazing, amazing career.

Era: Well, we were just talking about that before the recording about how it sounds like sustaining and fulfilling primary care is though I don't want to put those words in your mouth.

Shobhina, maybe you can share about how you've managed to stay in that world for 21 years, and then, of course, we'll pivot back to the Alliance.

Dr. Shobhina: Yeah, it's actually interesting because in different ways, it's connected. I actually did a combined medicine in pediatrics residency, and then as an early career faculty, the first place I went was Saint. Louis University. That was when I started to really practice primary care. After five years, I fell in love, got married, moved to Madison, Wisconsin, and then that's where I've been ever since then. I just really loved the ability to care for patients while also pursuing my passion, which is education, and being able to develop a career in education.

Molly: Amazing. What's been your favorite part of attending the conference so far?

Dr. Shobhina: Yeah, I just feel like coming to Academic Internal Medicine Week is just an amazing recharge for me and to be able to meet people across the country that share so many of my passions and values about how do we make departments of internal medicine in the academic mission there, just stronger, and more sustainable, and reenergize around our education passion, our research passion, our administration passion, and be the best we can by learning from each other.

Era: I love that. I feel like that just got me a recharge for today.

[giggles]

Era: Can you tell us how you got involved with AIM?

Dr. Shobhina: Yeah, it's a crazy story. So, as I mentioned, I went to Saint. Louis University. When I was there as an early career, a faculty person had this idea about, "Oh, we should build this course for fourth year students." Dr. Doug Walden was the Clerkship Director there at the time and he's like, "Sure, do it. Try something." So, we built this fourth-year course and then we submitted it as a poster. That was back in 1997 to the Clerkship Directors of Internal Medicine, CDIM group, and that was the first time I came to a national meeting for that, and I was just completely wowed.

Then over the years, many of the clerkship director group, the program director group, the group of professors, the group of administrators have now come together under the umbrella of the Alliance. And so, now we're Academic Internal Medicine Week really being able to bring together people from all areas of Academic Internal Medicine.

Era: Amazing.

Molly: Yeah.

Era: Yeah. What keeps you involved, Shobhi? What's really about this week or maybe the Alliance in general that is keeping you coming back year after year for your second stint as the Board Chair?

Dr. Shobhina: Yeah, it's interesting. For me, it's a lot of that creative energy part, like, that idea of, "Wow, we're doing things like this, what can we work together to do better?" I feel like when people work together across the country to put on workshops, to disseminate their work, it's high-quality. It's excellent. There is a lot of amazing, amazing work that happens here and then just moves on to, not only scholarship widely, but really this whole idea of, like, how do we all learn from each other, so that we're not reinventing the wheel. I think that to me is one of the things I'm super passionate about is like, "Life's too short. We can't all sit in our own little cubbies and do the same thing. We need to move it forward. So, let's share

what we're doing and move it forward together." I think it's that energy and passion and that commitment to excellence and making things better that to me is a core driver.

Era: Absolutely.

Dr. Shobhina: Plus, just the awesome, fun people.

[laughter]

[crosstalk]

Molly: Era and I did a workshop yesterday with two people from Yale and that was just really fun to collaborate. And then also just the energy in the room, and how much the participants shared, and just bouncing ideas off each other, and pushing us to think in new ways. So, absolutely, it's a great experience.

Dr. Shobhina: It is amazing. I think one of the things about this year's meeting compared to-- I've been coming for a long time. It's been super interesting to me to see just how much more, and I'm going to use this word like cross pollination. You go to these workshops and sure, you're going to have a clerkship director person, but you're going to have a program director person, an administrator person, and an educational administrator person. I'm meeting more people from different roles in the workshops that we're going to than I've ever seen before. So, I think that's pretty exciting, because I think that's a great way to exchange ideas overall.

I think the other thing that's super cool is really starting to see just a lot more action happening around the diversity, equity, and inclusion space. Like, we're really moving in its slow steps, but towards the what can we do different and better to close so many of the gaps that exist. I'm seeing a lot of that come out in the posters that are being presented and workshops. So, to me, those are kind of the highlights and super exciting things about this year.

Molly: Amazing.

Era: I also love what you just said, Shobhi, about the putting things into action, but also in terms of people sharing different roles. It's this interprofessional, and we'll call it interdisciplinary meeting in action, where you go to these workshops and you're seeing different perspectives amplifying the content,-

Dr. Shobhina: Absolutely.

Era: -like, a workshop that may have had just one perspective now has four or five different ones. You can approach just back to what you said, like, instead of things in silos, approach things from different perspectives altogether, maybe even across the country, people sharing the same perspective. So, it's nice to really have that diversity of career and role coming out in the workshops.

Dr. Shobhina: Yeah, absolutely. I know we're all generalists. It's that same construct, that ability of how do you bring together these different things. We do it often for our patients and try to connect things to move them forward. I feel like in so many ways, it's that exact same thing as how do we bring pieces together.

Molly: Yeah.

Era: Yeah. I'm glad you brought up diversity, equity, and inclusion, and the plenary was a really wonderful.

Dr. Shobhina: Thank you.

Era: Focus on that yesterday, is that kind of one of AIM's biggest focuses right now or are there other things that you're really exciting [crosstalk] moving forward?

Dr. Shobhina: Yeah, so, we had developed a strategic plan and it got launched. We put it together and it was starting in 2021, and obviously, lots of other things going on around that time period, around that. So, the diversity, equity, and inclusion is really foundational to two core ends of our strategic plan. One other major focus is really thinking about this continuum from UME to GME, and what the Alliance can do, because we're perfectly positioned to do that. We just talked about all the people we have in the room together at one conference. Many groups have their own clerkship director conference, or their own program director conference, or their own fellowship one. But we're really perfectly positioned to work across that continuum. So, over the last two years, a lot of our task force work has really been about that continuum and how to make things more sane, for lack of a better way of putting it in that transition for our learners across that. So, that's one of the other major areas that we're working on with that.

Then also a lot of work around professional development, that focus on the faculty and staff that are doing all this work at their home institutions and what skill sets do we need to do it well. So, we've been doing more work around the business of medicine, around really understanding that kind of professional development that we need, faculty development, etc.

Era: I feel like I'm, again, jazzed, to be at this meeting and hearing all the planning behind it and the visioning for it. Is there something particular at this meeting, Shobhi, that's been really inspiring to you or even really surprising to you that you want to highlight?

Dr. Shobhina: Yeah. One of the things we know, this issue around burnout, burnout about people in their professional roles, etc, is something that's real. What I'm finding at many of these sessions are people really are starting to talk about things not using "the burnout framework," but much more that idea of what energizes us, what leads us to flourish, how do we find passion in our work. Regardless of that content area that the different workshops are covering, I feel like that's such a core piece of what people are trying to bring out around that. I think that's just so important for our community.

Molly: Wonderful. In the DEI space, including, you mentioned bringing in posters and speakers and [crosstalk] the plenary, are there other things that are moving forward around that?

Dr. Shobhina: Yeah, so, this year, the board just approved the formation of a 12-person Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Advisory Group. And really what the board charged this group with is to look at everything the Alliance does. Our policies, our educational materials, what we are putting on at our conferences, the whole thing, and look at it using a diversity, equity, and inclusion lens and saying like, "Okay, this is what I'm seeing here. These are the gaps that we recommend the organization fixes. These are the things that it's happening this way. It's really going to be far more inclusive if it happens that way." So, they're doing an overlook of everything from this advisory group, and then we'll bring information back to the board recommendations to say, "Okay, what has to happen here?" So, that's been some exciting work that we have been doing over this past year.

The other thing that's been very exciting is that we're participating in a national group, under the term, Equity Matters. There's 30 organizations that have come together and said, "Okay, what are the important kinds of professional development that need to happen for our community around DEI, around equity?" Let's not all build our own. Remember we just--

[crosstalk] short. But how do we actually use everybody's talents and skills to build this type of learning that can happen at a national level and be across multiple different national groups?

So, we've been a major contributor as the Alliance to that work. Then we have a team from the Alliance that's working with that group nationally. Then the fun thing is, once you participate in that, those materials will be available to us as the Alliance and we will be able to implement them within our own organization.

Era: Is that national group, is that medical groups or is that more kind of crossing spheres and domains?

Dr. Shobhina: Yeah, it is medical groups, but not just Internal Medicine groups. So, it's outside of the Internal Medicine group world, but still with this still professional organizations focused on medicine.

Molly: Yeah.

Era: I love that. And realizing that probably, if you're having this question or thinking about these kind of strategic visions, maybe there are other folks having that same vision and just like you said, "Let's capitalize on doing this together as opposed to in silos." I wonder, thinking about yourself maybe 15 years ago-

Dr. Shobhina: Oh, my God.

Era: -or 20 years ago, or 21 years ago, how would you mentor an early version of Shobhi to experience this conference or maybe even navigate the professional society like AIM? How would you ask that person to get involved?

Dr. Shobhina: Yeah, actually, it's interesting you asked me this question earlier a little bit and I realized. But what I didn't say, so now I get to say it, is this whole thing about just that opportunity to meet people that are passionate about the same thing you're passionate about from across the country? That to me is an amazing opportunity. So, when you talk about being an early career person and being new at a meeting, I will say, for me, personally, big is a little intimidating. So, I want to acknowledge that there's a lot of people here. So, then it becomes how do you make it a little bit smaller for yourself when you think through like, "What am I passionate about?"

If I'm going to go to posters and I'm really excited about somebody who's making that transition, for example, from the fourth-year of medical school to an early intern, how do I meet people that are doing posters on that and go up and say hi to them and just putting yourself out there and making that connection. It's so fun, because it doesn't take too long to do that. People are wanting to make those connections. I would say just try to make those connections early on about what you're passionate about. It just grows from there, which is exciting.

In terms of the organization within our hall downstairs, there's a whole meeting center, super friendly staff that will like, if you say, "I want to get more involved in dah, dah, dah," they will tell you, "Oh, volunteer for this or volunteer for that." There's so many different volunteer opportunities. We would need like a whole other 20 minutes together for me to list them, but there's a lot of ways to just put your name out there. You may not get picked the first time that you put your name in. And so, I really encourage people to don't take that as anything, except an opportunity to put your name in the second time because through wanting to volunteer and get engaged. That's the way it worked for me. In the organization, I think it can work for a lot of people that are passionate.

Molly: Yeah. Well, thank you so much for sitting down and chatting with us. This has just been really fun to hear a little bit more about the Alliance and hear your perspectives on the conference, and we're just so happy to be here this week.

Dr. Shobhina: Yeah. Thank you both.

Era: So many take homes.

Dr. Shobhina: Yay.

Molly: Yes.

Dr. Shobhina: Thanks. Have a great rest of your day.

Era: Thank you.

Molly: This has been another episode of our Curbsiders miniseries, The Curbsiders Teach. Get your show notes at thecurbsiders.com/teach. A special thanks to Dr. Matt Watto and Dr. Paul Williams for their support in this project. Thanks to Dr. Stuart Brigham for composing our theme music and to the Pod Paste team for editing our audio. Thanks to our social media team. Andrew Andrew DeLaat on Instagram and John Ong on Twitter. Until next time, I've been Dr. Molly Heublein.

Era: We're committed to providing you with high value, practice changing knowledge. And to do that, we need your feedback. So, please subscribe, rate, and review the show on Apple Podcasts or contact us at thecurbsidersteach@gmail.com. And a reminder that most episodes, but not this one, because we wanted to have a quick turnaround, are available for free CME Credit for all healthcare professionals at curbsiders.vcuhealth.org. All you have to do is create an account. I'm Dr. Era Kryzhanovskaya. Thank you so much for joining us today and letting us bring you a little nugget of medical edutainment. Yay.

Molly: Ooh.

[Transcript provided by [SpeechDocs Podcast Transcription](#)]