

NARRATOR:

The Disability & Philanthropy Forum presents Dr. Zoie Sheets, Internal Medicine/Pediatrics Resident at the University of Chicago.

DR. ZOIE SHEETS:

Listen, listen, listen to your patients. But not just listen to hear, listen to truly seek understanding beyond the surface of what is being said, to ask followup questions. And I think that part of why that's so challenging in medicine is, medicine promotes a culture of perfection and of unwillingness to fail or to be wrong. And especially in something new like this, you have to be humble. Sometimes you won't know and sometimes you will be wrong. But I also think it's important for us to remember that as healthcare leaders and activists and funders, patients not being heard and not receiving the diagnosis and care they need is not always, is not often because of just a bad doctor.

It's because we have a failing healthcare system. And so when I tell someone that the solution is to listen, that would absolutely be transformative and is only possible if we didn't have 15 minute or less appointment times, if we didn't have overflowing hospitals, if we didn't have folks who were delaying care for extensive periods of time because of cost or confusing infrastructure or lack of access. So for listening to your patient and hearing their story to be the answer, there first has to be the setup for that to be able to be possible. And that's where we call on things like making sure that everyone has access to the insurance that they need.

Gabriel was just talking about his transition and as they were talking, I was like, I had the exact same experience. I shifted it to Medicaid and everything, too. So the insurance system, making sure that medical education itself is accessible and people can engage with it who are from the communities most impacted, who are from lower income areas or have disabilities or are living with HIV or maybe have long COVID or whatever it may be. All of those structural things have to be in place for doctors to be able to do what they hopefully want to do to do right by their patients.

NARRATOR:

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