Making a Choice
Geriatric Fellow: Allison Turner, DO

Why did I choose geriatrics? It’s a complicated answer. While working in a family practice residency, I became frustrated by the number of patients that I would need to see and often found that I barely had 15 minutes to see a patient. For the average cough, cold, sore throat, or ear infection 15 minutes was enough. However, for the more complex older adult 15 minutes was barely enough time to determine the diagnosis—let alone enough time to perform a proper full review of medications before determining if the treatment for the new diagnosis would interact with any of their other medications. I also found that the older adult patients were much more interesting. They would present with more atypical presentations of disease. They were much more interesting to talk to and would frequently tell me stories about their lives. I enjoyed getting to know and understand these patients. In keeping with the osteopathic philosophy, I found that it is important, especially with older adults, to treat the entire person: To understand that they may not be taking their diuretic daily because they don’t want to have to run to the bathroom during their weekly card game or granddaughter’s dance recital, or that they may not be checking their blood sugars as directed due to the cost of diabetic testing supplies. Additionally, I found that the older patients tend to respond very well to quick soft tissue OMT. To make a long story short, I chose geriatrics mainly because I enjoy spending time (>15 minutes) with more interesting patients and I enjoy solving the complex puzzles with which these patients present.

Dr. Allison Turner is the first geriatric fellow in the newly created Family Medicine Osteopathic Geriatric Fellowship at Lakeland HealthCare in St. Joseph, MI under the leadership of Keith Van Oosterhout, Program Director. Dr. Turner is a 2008 MSUCOM graduate and is a board certified family physician in Wyoming, MI.