

dear residents

Valentine's Day and Every Other Day

February 15, 2026

Dear Residents,

Happy Valentine's Day

I recognize that celebrating particular days (and months for that matter) can sometimes feel performative. Still, given how hectic our lives can be, it is worth pausing to acknowledge the importance of love in its many forms: love for a special person, for one another, for our profession, for science, and for our patients.

I also know that gestures only matter when they are backed by consistent actions, especially on the ordinary days that receive no special recognition.

Know that you are individually valued and cared for in this program on all days of the year. Our commitment to you is reflected in our efforts to ensure that you feel appreciated, that your individual goals and paths are supported, and that both big things and small details are attended to.

Residency is a profoundly transformative experience. It is during these years that professional identity takes shape, often quietly and without our full awareness. You are not only learning how to diagnose, test, and treat, but also what it means to be a physician. How to speak with patients and families in moments of fear or uncertainty. How to work through disagreement. How to respond to error. How to hold authority with humility. Much of this learning does not come from lectures or policies, but from watching those around you and absorbing what is modeled as normal, acceptable, and valued.

In that sense, the love language of medical training has changed. The older model of “pimping,” with its attendant shame and anxiety, is increasingly giving way to a culture that emphasizes praise in public and thoughtful critique in private. This evolution has not been linear or uniform, and older love languages of training still surface, sometimes intentionally, sometimes reflexively. Cultural change in medicine is slow and uneven, shaped by the ways we ourselves were taught. Learning a new love language takes time, humility, and practice, especially when the old one once felt synonymous with rigor, belonging, or care.

I am keenly aware of this because of my own training. Long after I forgot specific facts or cases, I remembered how senior residents and faculty supervisors behaved. I remembered who listened carefully, who treated patients with dignity regardless of background, who spoke respectfully about colleagues, and who remained calm and thoughtful under pressure. Those behaviors left a lasting imprint on how I understood professionalism and on the kind of physician I aspired to become. In ways both obvious and subtle, the conduct of our colleagues and teachers leaves its mark.

That is why culture matters so deeply in residency. How you are treated, how differences are respected, how conflict is handled, and how care is shown will influence not only who you become during training, but how you will lead, teach, and care for others in the years that follow.

You care for patients whose backgrounds, beliefs, and life circumstances may differ greatly from your own, and in doing so you are asked again and again to practice humility, curiosity, and respect. You train alongside one another as an exceptionally diverse group of residents, learning how to accept, support, and learn from each other even when perspectives differ. Over time, you also learn to think more broadly: to test wisely, to become thoughtful stewards of limited resources, and to look beyond the care of a single patient toward the systems that shape health and illness. You begin to see how those systems work and sometimes do not, and how physicians can advocate for change within them.

All of this happens quietly, cumulatively, and often without ceremony. But it matters. We are deeply aware that the culture in which you train and how you are treated within it will shape not only who you become as physicians, but how you will treat patients, colleagues, and learners in the future.

I am reminded of a classic and unsettling [experiment](#) in which a young animal, deprived of its mother, chose comfort and connection from a surrogate over food itself. While we do not and should not occupy a parental role, the lesson endures: wellbeing, safety, and connection matter deeply. They are not luxuries. They are foundational.

Your wellbeing is paramount in this program. I hope, in ways both visible and quiet, that you feel supported, respected, and cared for. And yes, loved.

Warmly,

Dino Kazi