

Recognizing Outstanding Service Excellence



Eric Simpson
Dermatology

A patient submitted the following nomination...

I suffer from chronic acute atopic dermatitis, which in itself is not so bad - but I also have a very rare auto-immune disorder called Common Variable Immuno-Deficiency, which exacerbates my symptoms and complicates my treatment options. Dr. Simpson, as an expert in the field of atopic dermatitis, took me on as a patient in 2005 and has been the most dedicated, compassionate, sympathetic, and determined physician I have ever known. He has worked closely with my doctors in hematology and with my palliative care doctor, Dr. Fromme (who also deserves recognition), to ensure that I received the best possible care under the difficult and unusual circumstances.

When I came to him, my body was wracked with red, blistering, scaly skin from head to toe. My skin was so painful that it was hard to wear clothes, take a shower, sleep. I was in horrible pain, bad enough to put me in the ER on a few occasions. Prior to seeing Dr. Simpson, I had been on dangerously high levels of prednisone (a temporary fix given to me by a general practitioner), which he recognized as a threat to my liver and kidneys and immediately began looking into and trying new therapies for my skin.

Many of the treatments were unsuccessful as my body had adverse reactions that we both agreed were affected by my immune disorder. But the important thing, the big thing, is that Dr. Simpson never gave up, never lost his patience, and never got tired of trying to find a new cure. I don't know of many doctors who would spend years - nearly six in all - trying to solve a patient's problem the way he did.

The fact that my body sometimes reacted in ways that baffled him (I spent two days in the hospital when my body over-reacted to UV-B light treatments at the lowest dose possible & for the shortest exposure length possible), he didn't get mad, he didn't get flustered, he didn't give up.

And as a teacher, he used every opportunity, with my complete support, to show his students that there are patients out there who will not fit with the textbooks, will not respond in the way they might expect, and that an open mind was paramount to success.

(cont. below)

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He celebrated the small victories with me, and he was there for me when I got down. He called me at home to check on how I was doing. He always responded to my inquiries via MyChart. He spoke to my other doctors on a regular basis to ensure that they were all on the same page.

Though we had recently hit upon a treatment that was successful in managing my symptoms, I could not stay on it for a long period of time, but because I had exhausted all other treatment options over the course of the past few years, he went to bat for me this last month by getting approval for a (very expensive) drug - Interferon Gamma (Actimmune) - that is being used in trials for a small number of dermatology patients.

He made sure the insurance companies understood why we had arrived at this point, and fought to get me this new regimen - which I am happy to report, is working very well. It was the culmination of a concerted effort to make me feel better. He fought tooth and nail to rid me of pain, to calm my skin, and to give me a better life. Without him, I would simply not be able to function.

After being with Dr. Simpson for the past six years, it is going to be very hard to be without him in my life. My wife and I are moving to Canada in the next few weeks. Though a wonderful opportunity for us, I am most reluctant to part ways with Dr. Simpson. He really is the single greatest doctor I have ever had in all my 40 years on this earth. He has an incredible heart, genuine warmth, and a commitment to the well being of his patients that all doctors should have. He sets the standard that all doctors should follow.

I sincerely beg of you to honor this good man as he most assuredly deserves to be recognized for his incredible service. OHSU is very lucky, indeed, to have him. And I am even luckier for having had him in my life.

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