

WELCOME HOME:

A familiar name joins WMH staff

There are few things more heartwarming than the “hometown boy makes good” story and the sense of local pride that comes with it. Spend a few minutes talking with Dr. Vishnu Chander and it becomes clear why.

Chander, a Sault Ste. Marie High School graduate, has returned to Sault Ste. Marie, this time with a whole lot of training under his belt and a commitment to helping hospital inpatients get the care and resources they need. He has joined the WMH staff as a hospitalist – the doctor who cares for patients while they are in the hospital before turning them over to their personal physician upon discharge.



Vishnu Chander, M.D.

Chander began his role as hospitalist at the end of August, shortly after concluding his internal medicine residency at the University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics in Madison. Prior to that, he graduated summa cum laude from Lake Superior State University with a Bachelor of Science in Biology and earned his Doctor of Medicine from Michigan State University College of Human Medicine.

“I always knew I wanted to come back to the U.P.,” he explained. “I thought the best way to do that was to go to a larger academic center to get more experience and that led me to Madison,” he said.

Beyond his extensive education and training, it is Chander’s philosophy that defines him.

“I always remind myself to not let a disease or condition solely define the patients I am taking care of. I want to look at the individual as a whole,”

he explains. “For example, instead of framing a person as a 78-year-old with hypertension admitted with pneumonia, I would want to know about what gives them meaning in their lives, and what challenges they face outside the hospital so I can assist with treatment options and decisions regarding their care.”

Chander knew from a young age that he wanted to be a physician and had a first-hand look at the life of a doctor as the son of Dr. Thilak Chander.

“I actually started at War Memorial pretty early on. I shadowed with Dr. McCullough in high school and would follow along with my father on rounds. I also gained some valuable experiences volunteering at Long Term Care during high school,” he said.

During the final months of residency at the University of Wisconsin Hospital in Madison, Chander cared for patients with COVID-19.

“As a big university hospital, we cared for quite a few COVID patients and I did get some hands-on ICU experience in the months of April and May. I was amazed at the breakneck pace of innovation that was taking place around me. For example, we utilized the room telephone to communicate frequently and communicate with non-ICU patients to help preserve PPE (personal protective equipment) and moved the ventilator consoles and IV pumps outside of the rooms for easier access. We also learned the value of telehealth in primary care.”

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As he describes it, a hospitalist “coordinates with a whole team of individuals who care for the patient while they are in the hospital, but also with those who can help them get better outside of the hospital and get the resources they need so the risk of them coming back for the same problem is reduced.” Physical therapists, nurses, pharmacists, social workers, occupational therapists, and others are all part of that team approach.