
KELLI SCHLESINGER, MD

Legacy Spine and Neurological Specialists

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As a neurologist, Kelli Schlesinger, M.D., offers specialized care in diagnosing, treating and managing disorders of the brain and nervous system with an emphasis on patient comfort and care. After double majoring in math and microbiology at the University of Arkansas-Fayetteville, she earned her medical degree and had her neurology residency at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences.

Neurology is a fast-moving field, full of research, so physicians are continually discovering and learning, says Schlesinger, whose first health care job was as a volunteer at the Washington County Free Health Clinic while she was in college.

“We are learning more about dementia, multiple sclerosis, migraines, ALS, muscle and nerve disease, the list goes on and on. It is a very exciting field to be a part of.”

The field and her practice keep her interested because most diagnoses are not based on any testing, but, instead, require physicians to gather a thorough history, perform very detailed neurologic examinations and make a diagnosis based on clinical findings.

“There is no MRI nor lab test to tell someone you have Parkinson’s disease, or migraine, or a number of neurologic diseases; it is all about the exam,” Schlesinger says. “It makes me a real-life detective every day.”

The nature of her practice makes dealing with government-mandated regulations like electronic health records a bit of a struggle as they make the doctor-patient relationship less personal and more automated, she says.

“I would rather look at a patient in the eyes than check boxes on a computer screen, or be on the phone with an insurance company begging for an MRI or medication approval. I am lucky to be able to surround myself with such amazing staff that is helping me behind the scenes, so I am able to spend my time doing what I love, spending more time with my patients.”

While she has been in practice for six years, it is her patients that make her career so enjoyable.

“I love that I have long-term relationships with my patients and their families,” she says. “I have many patients I have known for 10 years that I initially saw in residency that followed me into private practice.”

With the availability of jobs expected to continue, she encourages young women to pursue health care careers.

“DO IT,” she exclaims. “The opportunities in health care are vast from direct patient care, research, administration, the list goes on and on. Study hard, find a mentor, discover your passion, and live it.”

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