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Graduating to the Front Lines New doctor begins career during pandemic

By Bethany Erickson
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Becoming a doctor during a pandemic was not necessarily what Priyanka Gaur envisioned when she started medical school. Still, as she heads to Johns Hopkins Hospital to begin her residency, she'll be tasked with reassuring and treating frightened patients.

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Priyanka Gaur

“I think it feels almost like you are getting recruited to a war of sorts,” she said. “Usually, match day is a celebration, and

it's a drawn-out thing filled with happiness and excitement. I do feel like there was an undertone of, 'Oh, what's to come?' and fear and anxiety this year.

“But I think all of us take the physician's oath, and we feel it's our moral obligation to help others through medical service.”

If ever there was a doctor up to the task, it's likely Gaur, who was presented with the Ho Din Award at the UT Southwestern Medical School commencement ceremonies on May 2. While at UTSW, Gaur earned her medical degree and a master's degree in public health.

Established in 1943, the Ho Din Award goes to graduates who have exemplified the traits of compassion, human understanding, and medical wisdom.

“I think that tenets of the Ho Din Award - medical wisdom and human understanding - are so important now more than ever, Gaur said. “I want to be sure to always present the facts to patients and



Drs. Priyanka Gaur and Richard Hoffman discuss values in medicine. (COURTESY PHOTO)

practice evidence-based medicine and really understand the science behind what I'm prescribing and what I'm counseling.

“I think we have to understand that we're all in this together,” she added. “We can only get out of this together. Carrying the Ho Din spirit in those ways is really important as a practitioner - but also I think every human should try to consume good science and practice kindness as well.”

Dr. Richard Hoffman, a UTSW grad who has served with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, presented the award.

“She gives me great hope because of her energy and her understanding of medicine and her willingness to, and dedication to, medicine and her patients,” he said. “That's exactly what we need right now - the young doctors who are willing and able to help us through this pandemic.”

Gaur played a pivotal role in creating a new facility for parents in need of daycare while they receive treatment at Parkland Hospital. The center, called Annie's Place, will open this fall.

For more of our conversation with Gaur and Hoffman, see peoplenewspapers.com.