

>> Hi, thank you so much for being here today, Dr. K, as a guest on our pharmacy podcast, living the pharm life. Just to get started, could you tell us a little bit about yourself, where did you grow up?

>> Of course, I actually was born in a really small village right opposite to Taiwan, the small island.

And at that time we had no access to books and I remember I had to bike even 2 hours when I was nine years old to even just get like maybe eight or ten books. And when I was twelve, we moved to Hong Kong as a whole family where I learned new languages in a new environment, with a new culture.

And was really a tough time, encountered a lot of adversities and challenges, but at that time also received a lot of help and opportunities from schools, churches, and some of the organizations for students. So I basically have those opportunity with that I would like to give back and serve.

And so I always admire those people who are working for the medical missionaries.

>> That's really interesting, thank you so much for sharing. Could you tell us more about your medical educational background?

>> Sure, I went to medical school in Hong Kong as I mentioned before, I got my MD.

And as soon as I finished my MD degree, I started my internship for one year in Hong Kong. And then I went to ICU for training as a resident, first year resident, actually second year resident. But then was like, well, you have to come and join me, so I quit everything at that time and I came to US in 2007.

I had to study really hard because basically for an IMG like international medical graduate to come to the system, you basically have to get as high score as you could in the USMLE. And so I studied hard, I did it, and I got pre matched at the IM program at Pennsylvania Hospital in Philadelphia at that time, where I met amazing teachers, physicians, mentors, and also friends with my interns or co residents at that time.

Then I went to basically Princeton and then Indianapolis to do my hospitalist job. And I was like, well, I want to do more, I want to advance my studies. So I applied for Johns Hopkins, it's the Bloomberg School of Public Health at Johns Hopkins, to study a master's degree in population health management when I was working full time as a hospitalist.

And so, yeah, that's pretty much what I got after I, well, in the past, basically 15 years.

>> Yeah, that's fantastic, could you tell us more about how you got started in medicine?

>> Well, in medicine, basically, as I mentioned before, I was really compassionate about the diseases and the healing process.

And I think part of me is I want to help, I want to give back. This is one of the way I could do it. And so that's why I went to medical school to get my MD.

>> That's amazing, thank you so much for sharing that.

>> You're welcome.

>> Let's back up just a little bit, you mentioned coming here to join now President Chang, but how did you meet President Chang?

>> My, this is actually one of the most popular questions that people have been asking me, and I'm not sure, I'm not even sure if it's fair for me to or for you to just listen to my version.

Well, we met around about 25 years ago, actually, we just celebrated 25 years of togetherness last month. And at that time, he was going into his sophomore year at Stanford. He went back to Hong Kong for internship. And I was just going into the last two years of my high school, and we met in one of the events organized by a student organization.

And so we kind of, in a more romantic way, started eight and a half years of long distance relationship at that time. And in the old days, the Internet or Wifi was so expensive and we couldn't afford it, and we had to write to each other every week.

And in fact, I should have show you those whole luggage of letters we are still keeping. Actually, I'm keeping, and we call each other once per month, and we basically see each other twice a year only. And that was kind of expensive because we had to fly either to see him or he went back to Hong Kong to see me.

But that worked out magically, mainly probably because we were both so busy as well. And so we got married a year and a half before I came here. And so he said, well, you should come here as soon as possible. And I was like, okay, so, here I am, I joined him in 2007 at Princeton.

>> Probably one of the questions folks are wondering is how long did it take the president to share ice cream with you, since that's his passion?

>> Was that an early date somewhere?

>> My God, well, I honestly don't recall that he loved ice cream when he was younger.

He loved noodles at that time, so that was a big deal, each time we met where you have to go to a noodle place. Yeah, it was fun, but ice cream, yeah, for some reason, I think for the recent 15 years, maybe he just really into ice cream, different kinds of ice cream, it's no longer secret.

And actually, we are able to hold some events based on the ice cream theme here. It's like ice cream salsa, which is really fun and fantastic. Yeah, just to tell you a little bit more about our journey. And I know another popular question is how I end up here or how we end up here.

And I joined him in Princeton when we stayed in Princeton for ten years when he was a faculty at Princeton University. And then he got a calling of becoming a dean of Purdue University six years ago. But we moved to Kamal instead of West Aviat because I got a job in Indy, and I literally make the dean of engineering commute as I had to work as a full time there together with the childcare consideration.

And so he commuted for four to five years. We moved here last August after the announcement. And at that time, I was trying to integrate into our community

because nobody knew us at that time. So I called for the childcare arrangement and also the doctor's appointments, and so that's why I know a lot of the what's going on.

And what's happening in the community. And so that's why we also have a website or some initiatives set up to help our Purdue community thrive. Just based also on my personal experience as well.

>> If you feel comfortable, could you describe your family and its values for us?

>> Sure, happy to. And I think I may be leaking some secrets here for President Chung. So Meng and I are very different. And for some reason, I'm always night out. And he is an early bird. He wakes up really early. He does exercise, and I will be doing exercise at nighttime.

And I'm kinda more impulsive in the way, and he's more strategic. I'm nervous. I get nervous all the time and easily. And he's always so calm and soothing. Last but not least, he loves ice cream and those unhealthy food. Well, he basically eats everything. I'm always be on a more cautious side about the food because I'm a physician, right?

But it's just so unfair. His labs are always looking better than mine. For some reason, we are able to be really complementary and supplementary in a way that we form. I think we form a pretty good team. And I always joke saying we are like one plus one is more than two because there are somehow some synergistic reactions in between us.

And it's just really interesting to see that. Meng always tries his best to come home for dinner if he could. It's just really hard with his schedule. But if he cannot, he would just come home before the dinner, opponent or event and play with the kids, talk to the kids, and then he would go out again.

And one of his favorite activity, which is no longer secret, he loves watching movies with the kids and eat ice cream and popcorns. And in terms of our parenting or our time with kids, we let the kids know that we are not perfect. We are just being really honest.

And one thing I think is really important is we need to let them know that we love them, even if we don't agree with their behavior. Sometimes you can get really upset, right? Sometimes when they're not listening. And this way we can create a space for them to improve and for them to feel accepted no matter what they do.

But they have a chance to come back. Sometimes we get mad at each other, or the siblings get mad each other, which is so realistically, right? We're not trying to beautify the family picture as a first family, but I always make sure that we stop being angry at each other and we need to talk to each other before we go to bed.

So that's a way of we try not to keep the anger inside our heart. In terms of the school, we are both really busy, but we try to squeeze time out to participate in the school events and also to volunteer. In the intermediate school, people see me taking the kids to chess club almost every week, walking the kids across the street.

And I volunteer to be a lunch helper and I would do a few trips, and those are food drive, etc. So just try to be as active, because the kids love to see you, your participation. They like to see your face at school for some reason. They just love to

see it.

And also that sends a signal that we are with them and we understand, we know what's going on at school. And as always, I feel I just cannot take things for granted at this moment. I operate every day basically with a thankful heart and learn to give and share.

And this is a value that we share with the kids as well. We are so limited, every one of us, no matter how good we are trying to do or at what level we are. But every single night, we pray together as a family and ask for wisdom, courage and strength to serve our university and our community, and also to raise our family here.

>> That's great. Let's talk a little bit about your role as first lady. Did you ever think you'd be the first lady of Purdue University?

>> Not at all. Not at all, to be honest. But I knew my husband is a special one. He's a man with mission, vision and passion.

He also is a promise keeper. And so I knew from the beginning he would be taking some important roles or positions. And the problem is that I just have to catch up a big time, honestly. Cuz I'm a pretty regular woman, and I just have to work really hard and learn extremely hard in order to keep up or to be qualified or to support him in whatever role he is taking.

And that's my learning.

>> What are some of the special priorities that you have as first lady for the campus community or the broader West Lafayette community?

>> Yeah, well, good question, because thankfully I have a great team. My team is amazing, and they help from the first lady's office, they help me to organize their website.

And also we are running a lot of initiatives to the point of I can list out some here. Since January, we already went to so many places to visit childcare centers or healthcare centers, mental health facilities, and even in the museums. And one of the initiatives I have is childcare.

Especially we're working with the community to ram this up, especially our Purdue childcare or on campus childcare centers. We want to make sure that it can reach its full capacity as soon as possible. And that's one of the work in progress. The other part is healthcare, and we are really active town.

We are hiring a lot of talents. We have a lot of people joining us as part of our family. And we need to keep up with the need because those people like us, we're bringing the needs, such as health issues. So we need to catch up on the health care.

And I know that we have two hospitals, we have urgent care centers, but that's still not enough. We're starting a affinity group, a new affinity group, and it's called Purdue Alumni Medical Affinity Network. The reason is because as Purdue University, we have fantastic pharmacy college, we have nursing, we have the psychology, we also have biochemistry departments and also the BME.

Those are really wonderful departments which have a lot of clinical and medical

researchers going on. But we just don't have a medical school, we don't have a hospital. And so, I was seeing is that we also have a lot of alumni. Who graduated and went to do a MD, or dentistry, or other degrees, or becoming a physician assistant, but we don't have that on paper.

And they don't come back as, okay, I'm a physician or I'm a physician assistant. They usually come back going to the engineering or other colleges, and I would like to create a space for all our boardmaker alumni. There's a special field or healthcare field to be able to come back and to be identified and so that we can connect, we can learn from each other.

Or we can provide mentorship for the students who may be interested in the healthcare path. And we can also do some more clinical collaborations and researches together. And hopefully, we can attract some of our graduates to be back to this local area to join us to be in the community, and so that's why we're doing this.

And it's coming up, just keep an eye on the advertisements or emails. I also would like to help our students thrive and achieve their goals. And so I've been advocating some of the projects with our push and caps and I'll go to talks as well. The other thing is the faculty staff, I would like to support them as much as possible or the best I could, and I connect them with some of the resources they need.

For example, they have young kids and I will refer them to as simple as a piano teacher, math teacher. And those are some of the basic items that they may be looking for and which I can help. The other part is the community involvement, and I'm trying to be as active as I could in the community to help with, for example, United Way museums, promotions, and some local events, farmers market.

I'm trying to be engaged and involved, take part. For alumni engagement, as well, is also one part of my in the initiatives. I love our alumni, they're just amazing. We just had the homecoming weekend, and it's just so lovely to see them back. They just love to help Purdue in whatever way they could.

Some of them actually came back or helped us as certain organization, or entities, or leader. They're taking the leadership role as well, and some of them became my good friends and maybe advisors as well. And so, yeah, seems to be a lot of stuff I could do here, and I'm just so happy to be able to do those with the help with my amazing team.

>> What excites you the most about your role?

>> Well, I actually realized this role can make a difference in our Purdue community, or even in greater Latvia community by being a connector and a motivator. But at the same time, I also realize people are watching me. And so whatever I say or wherever I go, for example, just very easy example, I cannot be yelling at my kids in a restaurant, right?

So I have to be mindful, I'm passionate about self care as well, and I know doing this job is a lot of stress. And so I always make sure I have my self care time and to leave some space for myself and I also encourage our faculty or our staff to do the same.

>> All right, you kind of touched on this before, but students are arguably the most important part of the Purdue campus. So what do you see your role as first lady? How do you plan to positively impact students with that?

>> We have a lot of students, and this is also part of the reason I love to be living near by the campus.

I think our Purdue student support team is doing a great job from different departments or different colleges in ensuring a supportive learning environment, a safe place to stay and shop, right? We do have diversified restaurants and stores for the students, and we're also building more student dorms for them to stay and to catch up with all the expending needs.

I care about the student life, and some of them are only two years older than my older one, honestly. And I always want to hear that they are doing well and they are being taken good care of. And I mentioned about cap and push before, which is the student counseling and psychological services and also the student health centers.

And I joined the initiatives, for example, recently, I had the popcorn with the students with caps. And I basically want to advocate for preventive care and even the proactive care in students because they're so young. And I would like them to stay as healthy as possible and also focus on their well-being.

I probably will start to have some talks to the pre-med students, and I can connect them to the mentors through the network, the new network, which is Purdue alumni medical network. And recently, I just gave a talk to St. Thomas, the church inside the campus, and I realized there were a handful, actually a dozen of students in the talk.

And I always would love to encourage the students to also participate in being tutors for enrichment programs or even outside the community or in our own community. I feel they are great teachers with talents. Wherever I go, I hear great things about them. For example, I went to the museum and they love our students.

They have great things to say about students, and they're just great teachers for Spanish, math, or piano, they have just so many talents. And I'm planning to do more outreach activities or just a cookie station during the exam weeks and who doesn't like cookie, right?

>> I know, I know.

Right, and just kind of give them or show them that, hey, we are here to help and we care about you, and which is a really important way of connecting with the students. One of the students I remember came to the cookie station and he was really curious.

He was curious who I was, and I was like, well, my husband is Meng Chung. And then he said, okay, now I know who you are, but where's your husband? So it took me a moment to think where he was at that time, because he was basically flying everywhere, very busy.

So that was one of the fun part to be able to connect with the students through those activities. Some of the student activities, actually, for example, the student arts are coming back. We are going to resume it next year, Covid put a pause, but it's coming back. And we're also trying to have those student musician sessions to invite them to Westwood for special events, and so.

So those are the items or the activities that I try to engage with the students in the campus.

>> Yeah, I'm very excited to see some of these things in action, especially the musicians one. I play in the band on campus so I get very excited anytime I see a musical art sort of outlet that's fantastic.

>> You guys are the best.

>> We've talked about your role as first lady. You've also mentioned that you are a practicing physician. Let's talk a little bit more about that role and share with our listeners how you've fit that into your very busy schedule.

>> Yes, it is hard but I'm trying my best and just a little bit background about my medical career.

I went to Pennsylvania Hospital for residency training. I did a year of chief medical residence. I went to Princeton to become academic hospitalist to work with the residents for five to six years before I moved here, I was a chief hospitalist at that time. I joined St. Vincent Indianapolis and I've been working with the residents for the past five years.

And I always love to do something about patient safety. And so, I was in charge of the MNM conferences. I established a patient and safety track curriculum, I established projects posters. So right now, I cannot do it because I'm doing more of the outpatients. I joined in March, and I've been in the family medicine clinic and working with the residents.

I also do some physician advisor consultation online but all of them can just be as needed. Nature, just because it'll be easier to fit in my schedule. At the same time, I also started teaching the clinical sessions at IU School of Medicine in the west Latvia campus, in our campus.

And I'm always looking for more opportunities to collaborate with local health department or even the hospitals. As you know, I have a master's degree of population health management. So I'm always hoping to do something about preventive and proactive health care, well being, early intervention, and chronic disease management as a local population level.

So we're looking into the opportunity after my discussion, you probably see a pattern. I started as an ICU trainee in Hong Kong and then when I came here, I became an internist. And now it's gearing more towards the population health management. So in general, I want to do more preventive care and just to promote proactive health care.

I want people to live healthier, happier and feel better from the population level.

>> Yeah, I think that's so important to have just in healthcare in general. I know one of the things the College of pharmacy talks about a lot is kind of that interactive healthcare team, pharmacists working with physicians.

As a physician, you must have seen that a lot. Could you describe some of your interactions with pharmacists for us?

>> Yes sure. I'm a big believer of teamwork, makes dream work. I interact with our pharmacists in many ways, and I absolutely love our pharmacists, as I was telling Eric the first day I met him.

>> And I was so glad.

>> You love pharmacists.

>> I do.

>> You're part of our family.

>> I do and we actually are great partners. I work inpatient and outpatient, right? Let me tell you some of the fun experience I had. I love to have them in my AM in the Morning runs because they're just so knowledgeable.

Wow, whatever medication they will be easily telling you what are the potential side effects, what you have to watch for, what are their functions and it's just a lot of fun to work with them and they help us a lot. For example, the medication reconciliation, which is a big part of our admission process.

And together with the medication compliance and to avoid polypharmacy or adverse drug interaction. And those are the critical work that our pharmacists have been doing for us behind the scene. And the other thing is for the outpatients, they are really extremely helpful in patient medication education and consultation.

Which I think I almost to the point of like, I just can't live without them I can't function without them. So we are really close partnership relationship, yeah. Some of other personal examples that I can tell you is I think we learn from each other when we partner and we do see gifts and potentials for improving or improvement in the current healthcare system in terms of patient care.

And when I was back in St. Vincent, we were the best partners in my mortality and mobility conferences. During the multidisciplinary team, we were able to generate projects. After each conferences, we have usually put out at least two to three projects, and we can work on to improve the medication safety, to increase the compliance, and to reduce adverse medical errors or incidents.

And so, they're just so caring and they can pick up all those details that we may forget or as a physician we just don't pay attention to.

>> I know it's one of the big things that the College of Pharmacy just emphasizes, so it's fantastic to see that it is applicable outside of classes.

Cuz I know there's been a couple of times where I'm like, I don't know if this physician's gonna wanna work with me, but it's very good to hear that people do like to collaborate.

>> Trust me, we love you

>> We do.

>> So what advice would you give to a pharmacy student who's just getting ready to enter maybe a rotation or take their first job in a healthcare system?

>> Yeah, well, I always say no matter what kind of job you're taking do it as a mission because you're gonna find a lot more than it's just a job. Particularly for people like us we are working for the healthcare field. It's so important to treat it as a mission because whatever we're doing is impacting the patient's health and their lives directly.



Now, the training could be really tough and long, just like the medical training. And it's okay and it's really normal to cry or feel frustrated at times but you need to know how to when you need to get help when you need to, okay? But it's so normal to just cry out and stand up again and be good again and be resilient because it's not always smooth.

It could be Be pretty bumpy, and do not give up easily. I would advise joining some committees, such as the QI team, which is a really good start. We always love our pharmacists or nursing, colleagues to join us, if you have time. That can help improve the system, and it's really fascinating, and you kind of get those sense of satisfaction.

That okay, I'm doing something to help improve the system, not just sitting back or I'm frustrated, right? And always do your best. Try not to make those unfair comparison, because everyone's best is just so different. Not everyone can receive awards. I mean, some people just get multiple funds, some just like me.

I almost never get any awards, which I'm okay, I'm happy with that. And you know that you're doing your best, and that's what you can do. And that's really wonderful, because there's always somebody benefiting from your hard work, and always somebody appreciate it. And knowing that everybody in the hospital actually appreciates our pharmacy team.

You may not receive those compliments or conversations directly, because you're always working behind the scene, but I can tell you, I can be a witness. We just appreciate so much and so, just want to give some of the motivation and encouragement that whatever you're doing is highly valued.

>> Yeah, I really love that. I very much appreciate the sentiment. I know a lot of college students face impostor syndrome a lot, but that was very well worded, and I greatly appreciate that. But so, we talked about healthcare, we talked about your advice for students, kind of in that same forward looking kind of idea.

What impact do you think Covid-19 and that whole pandemic, has on the future of health care?

>> Yes, well good question, but the answer could be really long. I'm just gonna highlight one point, which is the telemedicine. So interestingly, the healthcare field has been trying to push for the telemedicine, but it was really slow.

But once the COVID hit, the pandemic hit, and it moved so fast. And, at some point in our clinic back in India, we're like 100% virtual. And virtual is fantastic because you can bridge the gaps instead of not seeing the doctors for a while, but you can still see them and we can kind of chat just to make sure nothing major is happening.

And so this is one of the big progress, and I hope we can keep the momentum, but not replacing seeing doctors, keeping this for the needs in the, for example rural areas, rural community. Which we don't have enough supply for the providers yet, but hopefully we can implement telemedicine in those areas, to help us to bridge the gap.

>> We've talked a lot about your career, and we know the president's schedule is very busy. You are a physician, you're a mother, and you're serving as first lady. How do you manage all of these different hats?

>> Well, it's hard, Eric, I have to admit. It's hard, and it can be a struggle.

And, it's not just me. And I believe many supporting spouses or partners, are facing maybe similar question or condition. I just don't want to beautify the situation, I have to be honest here. I'm basically almost like on call 24/7 for my kids, right? Because men need to be 100% available to serve Purdue university in his role.

And, to be honest I gave up many opportunities, to be in the leadership level in the healthcare entity throughout the years. But I always ask a question, what is my goal? What is my original passion, and what I can wait and I cannot wait. And, always think positive as a detour, because anything can be a learning opportunity.

For example, if I'm doing the housework, I'm taking care of my kids, I learn something too. And it can be really fun, but always prepare for unexpected situation changes. For example Covid, once Covid hit when he also was in the State Department, I was basically solo in the house, and I had to change from even a part time position to as needed.

And I had to take some pause, and I had to stop my projects. And so in this role, I kinda had to do some adjustments, in addition to the challenges. But I always feel like there are some creative ways we can get the tough job done, to go more innovative.

For example, instead of doing a full time or part time job, I'll be doing a PRN, which is as needed, just to fill in the gaps. So I pick my own schedule, right? For the kids enrichment program, it's not possible for me to drive them or three of them to different places.

They have so many after school events, right? And so I would be like, talking to the teachers, and I'm really blessed because they're willing to come to our house to teach them. So at one time, the same hour, we can have three teachers in the house, teaching three of them different things, like violin, piano or something like that together, which is helping me a lot by doing that.

And, I always joke that, well, I'm not a director of the healthcare organization or somewhere else, but I'm a director of my family, which men always call me the real boss. And I think I can interpret it that way. And by raising the kids and parenting the kids, I think, in some extent for all or for many moms, we already earn a PhD degree in childcare, right?

And just as a reminder for our very successful faculty, employees or members here, and I think your partners or spouse need to take 50% of their credit, which I'm taking Mung's credit as well.

>> So let's circle back and talk a little bit about students and what advice you might give to them for managing the stressors of their daily life.

Cuz there are a lot of demands on students across the Purdue campus.

>> Certainly I think the key is to do something that you truly like. Just keep it up, no matter what happens, try not to stop them or give up. For example, Mung loves doing morning exercise, and I can tell you that every morning he would spare 20,25 minutes to do it, no matter how busy he is.

And I'm trying to keep up as well. I love biking, and by the end of the day, I try to

spend maybe like 20 minutes or 15 minutes at least. The time is called like a self care time, that we have a leave a space and time for ourselves, just kind of to recoup everything from the daytime and also to think forward, really important.

And I understand sometimes when it gets too busy, you may have really limited social life, that you may not be able to go out with friends. But if you need to incorporate some of those time in your life, just do it as a schedule, maybe once a week, once a month, or call your friends.

And knowing that the support system is always here. And as I mentioned, I think keeping your own something that you truly like is the key. I think that's really important to relieve the stress.

>> Yeah, all right, well, I think this has been so fantastic. I have one last question for you.

What has been a recent giant leap for you?

>> Well, great question, and it could be kind of personal to talk about. Well, I am, as I mentioned before, completely opposite to Mung, and he just is so great in public speaking, video recording, taking pictures, right? He's always ready, but I'm completely the opposite.

I have a severe stage fright, and I just cannot speak in front of the public. And I had to work really hard. And even this video recording is my first time. And I think it's a giant leap for me. And I think in the past ten months we've done a lot, but multiple small steps.

But I think the biggest initiatives that we put out is the Purdue alumni medical network, which we are making a big progress. And I'm so looking forward to seeing our alumni who works in the healthcare field to come back in this campus, and together we can do so much more.

>> Yeah, thank you so much for being here today on our pharmacy podcast, living the arm life. It's been so great talking to you today, Dr. K.

>> You're so welcome, my pleasure.