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*Treating Patients and Their Stories: An Investigation of Family and Strengths-Based Pediatrics*

### ABSTRACT

As a social work student interning in a pediatricians' office that values strengths based and whole person approaches to practice, I am interested in how physicians can employ social work ideals in working with their patients. Unlike the social work profession's approaches to helping clients, in general our current medical model does not see patients as whole beings with knowledge, past experiences, values, troubles, and strengths. This is unfortunate because physicians can benefit greatly from adopting strengths-based perspectives in their work with patients and their families. Perhaps if more first-hand accounts of the benefits and challenges of such modes of dealing with patients were available, doctors could better understand why and how to employ strengths-based perspectives with their patients. Consequently, I have conducted in-depth interviews with four of the pediatricians at the practice where I am completing my fieldwork in order to present some detailed accounts of employing social workers and strengths-based viewpoints in medical work with children and their families. I highlight themes that emerge in the interviews, but because my sample is so small, I do not generalize these findings, but instead propose ideas for medical practitioners.