



Important News about Dr. Cook's Practice

Welcome New Physicians to the Addison Office

Hello and Seasons Greetings!

As I announced at my special event a year ago when I celebrated 30 years in medicine and my 60th birthday, I have been planning a career transition for some time. I am happy to announce that starting next year I will be expanding my role full-time at Thresholds, one of the oldest and largest providers of mental health and substance use treatment in Illinois.

I am also happy to introduce you to the two trusted colleagues who will be taking over my private practice in 2023. It has been an honor and a privilege to serve as your family doctor and I hope that I have been able to help you or your family over the years. Please join me in welcoming Dr. Joshua Merok and Dr. Michael Kupkowski to the practice. Both of these doctors are passionate about helping people and looking forward to being trusted new partners in your healthcare.

Our amazing office staff will be staying with the practice so you will continue to see the familiar faces of Lupe Arias (Office Manager), Cristina Salazar at reception and Ewar Lizzetti, our phlebotomist. I want to thank each of them for their incredible contributions to our team and providing such amazing care for our patients over the years.



Happy Holidays from the Addison Office: Lupe, Cristina, Dr. Merok, Dr. Cook, Ewar and Dr. Kupkowski.

The three of us regret the late notice but the delay was unavoidable due to a technical issue with the Small Business Association. Please know that your health care needs **WILL NOT** be interrupted. Scheduled appointments will remain in place at the Addison office. They begin January 3.

More information will be coming in the next days.

What Should You Do?

If you have an insurance plan with “Advocate Health Care,” you won’t need to do a thing!

Dr. Merok and Dr. Kupkowski will automatically and transparently be “in network” for all your needs. **The transition at the Addison office will be effective January 3, 2023.**

We’ll have a short welcome video to send you soon. But in the meantime, get

to know Dr. Merok and Dr. Kupkowski a bit with their personal stories and introductions below.

ABOUT OUR NEW DOCTORS

Both Dr. Merok and Dr. Kupkowski are board-certified family physicians in Chicago. They share a demonstrated commitment to the health and well-being of their patients, including the underserved such as the Spanish-speaking and the LGBTQA+ communities.



From Dr. Joshua Merok, M.D.

"I was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and moved around a lot as a young child. Eventually, my family settled in my mother's hometown of Shamokin, PA. Surrounded by her extended family, I benefited from growing up in a small, close-knit town. This was especially important after I lost my father to cancer when I was 16. His illness, along with my mother's loss of vision at a young age, stoked my interest in biology.

"After high school, I studied molecular biology at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and was lucky enough to stay at MIT for a Master's degree in Toxicology. While basic science research was fascinating, my hope was to be able to make a difference in people's health on a more personal, day-to-day basis.

"I attended medical school in San Francisco at UCSF from 2001–2005. There, I found the broad field of Family Medicine particularly rewarding. While it can be a challenge to stay up-to-date with so many different medical topics, the prospect of being a life-long learner is both fun and humbling.

"My wife, Claire, brought me to my adopted hometown: Chicago! After completing residency at the Advocate Illinois Masonic Medical Center in 2008, I've enjoyed sharing my love of science with my patients. My approach to patient care is based on the core beliefs of listening and shared decision making. I try my best to present options for each scenario and work together to move forward in ways to help patients achieve their goals.

"I've lived in the North Center neighborhood since 2009 and love spending time with my family: Claire, along with our children Nora (13), Charlie (13), Henry (8) and Jack (6). I feel blessed to be partners with my long-time friend and colleague, Dr. Mike Kupkowski. Together, we're extraordinarily privileged to have been entrusted with the next chapter of Dr Cook's practice. I very much look forward to meeting everyone at 2001 W. Addison!"



From Dr. Michael Kupkowski, M.D.

"I was born in Joliet, Illinois. I grew up most of my life in Illinois with a brief stint in Phoenix, AZ, third through fifth grade. Among other things, Arizona made me appreciative of the outdoors and I've been an outdoor enthusiast ever since. I go on annual camping trips around the country and I have been an avid long-distance runner since I was 15 years old.

"I attended the University of Illinois Urbana–Champaign (UIUC) where I explored the depth and breadth of a large university. I particularly enjoyed a semester-turned-year abroad in Quito, Ecuador, where I studied Spanish and immersed myself in Ecuadorean culture. After returning, I was always looking for opportunities to use my Spanish, whether it was reading, writing or in conversation. I volunteered for El Centro por Los Trabajadores which was run by a priest. I helped local immigrants access local resources including an initiative where we made ID cards to help folks establish the basics many take for granted, like opening a bank account.

"I also decided to work at a local addictions center to help them open a Spanish-language DUI-counseling program. As such, I stayed at UIUC for a fifth year to run this program and work as teaching assistant in the Chemistry program. I love teaching and plan to continue this at 2001 W Addison.

"At the end of this, I met my now wife Tiffany, who was already moving to the San Francisco Bay area for a high school teaching position. We had an incredible time in the bay area from 2003 to 2010. I was extremely fortunate and privileged to be selected to the Joint Medical Program at Berkeley–UCSF. Among the highlights was doing a thesis in El Salvador looking at an animal gifting program aimed at improved childhood protein-calorie malnutrition. Going to Ecuador was a life-changing event in undergrad, as was medical school. The informal learning I experienced while living in the bay area nearly paralleled the formal learning in medical school.

"We moved back to Chicago, IL, in 2010 so I could do my Family Medicine residency at MacNeal in Berwyn, IL. We've since had two kids, Odette and Kevin, who are 10- and 8-years-old respectively. I enjoy listening to people's stories. For me, the most powerful part of the clinical encounter is the patient narrative. I am entrusted with and acting steward of these people's stories and their lives. While the physical exam and diagnostic work up are paramount aspects of the clinical encounter, I find that the diagnosis is often found in the patient narrative above all else and it is important we give people the time and space to own their narrative."