

FACES OF AMR PROFILE STORIES



Diyanna Couet

“Most of us within our small [CF] community have been mentally prepared for COVID-19 because we’ve been told our whole lives to disinfect, mask up and keep your distance.”

For Diyanna, and others in the cystic fibrosis community, COVID-19 precautions weren’t something that started during the pandemic. She’s heeded the advice her entire life to stay healthy and to avoid infections that could prove life-threatening.

Diyanna has cystic fibrosis, a chronic disease that impacts multiple organs and carries a lifelong risk of infections. Mucus builds up in the lungs, clogging airways and trapping bacteria, which can lead to infections, inflammation and other complications.

Diagnosed at only three months old, Diyanna considers herself fortunate that her diagnosis came early so that doctors knew what they were treating. Over the years, she received a rotation of different antibiotics, primarily designed to decrease hospitalizations and keep her stable longer. But the treatment road hasn’t been without bumps. Over the years it got harder to pick the right antibiotic that wouldn’t present other side effects. Some adverse reactions have included temporary yet persistent hearing loss, equilibrium issues and nausea.

Not one to allow setbacks to stand in her way, Diyanna faced her CF head on and didn’t allow it to define her or her life choices. Today she is a respiratory therapist who works in the outpatient department of a pulmonary rehabilitation center. There are risks, though. When she was in school, she wasn’t allowed to participate in clinicals in the ER or in the ICU. At work, these restrictions continue. For example, she isn’t able to work with other CF patients who need respiratory care and is limited in the number of days she can work in order to take extra precautions to protect herself.

Even with her unique situation, there are things she can do, including working with patients with emphysema, lung cancer, bronchitis and other conditions. She teaches breathing maneuvers and exercises. Most important, she uses her experience to educate others on ways they can continue living their best lives. It’s worth it, she says, because she knows how it feels to spend time as a patient and it’s important to be an advocate for others.

While there has been a lot of progress around developments of new treatments and therapies, for Diyanna and even others who may not have chronic conditions, it’s important to continue raising awareness of the challenges of antibiotic resistance.

