DM: I’m Dave Marcovitz and I’m here with Roger Weiss who is Professor of Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School and our fellowship director at Partners and Harvard Medical School. And I just wanted to ask a few questions as part of our fellowship spotlight, so thank you for speaking with me Roger.

RW: Happy to do it.

DM: So, what do you like about being a fellowship director?

RW: First I think it’s important to note that this is really, probably the most fun part of my job. I’ve loved being a fellowship director, and really it’s working with the fellows. I like teaching. I like having people who are enthusiastic, bright, engaged people coming into the field. And having had a lot of experience working in addiction psychiatry and introducing the field and watching people grow and become really spectacular additions to the field.

DM: Thank you, we value it a lot too. What would you say to residents who are leaning towards or thinking about doing an addiction psychiatry fellowship, maybe they’re on the fence?

RW: I think addiction psychiatry is a very exciting field. It allows you to use all the skills that you learned during residency: pharmacotherapy, psychotherapy (CBT, psychodynamics), learning about 12-step treatments, work with families, systems work, policy work. There’s so much to do, and it’s such an interesting population and ... patients in my experience ... people often say how can you work with that population? They’re so difficult. And what I say is that ‘These are folks that, when they get better, they get more better than almost anybody you’ve ever worked with.’

DM: Has being a fellowship director changed at all with so much attention in the media to the opioid crisis?

RW: I think what’s changed is: 1. the number people that are applying. I think that it wasn’t so long ago that addiction psychiatry was not seen as a particularly glamorous or interesting field, and I think that’s really changed. I think that people really see the importance of it, and so I think we’re getting more very high-quality applicants than we ever have before.

DM: Last question, sort of on a more personal note, what are your hobbies outside of psychiatry and addiction psychiatry?

RW: Outside of that, music--I play the violin. I play in a string quartet every month or so. And exercise. And spending a lot of time with my grandchildren.

DM: Thank you so much for talking with me, Roger, and we’ll go from there.

RW: Okay thank you.