



Dr. Lori Choi founded I'll Have What She's Having (IHWSH) after 14 years in Houston, where her network crossed two areas: the Texas Medical Center and the many acclaimed eateries of the South's culinary capital. Numerous conversations with friends and colleagues working in both industries about alarmingly poor statistics on women's health drove her to act. Full-time employees and small business owners in the restaurant industry find it more and more difficult to access affordable health care. Physicians describe the moral quandary of knowing their patients are deprived of life-saving medications or surgeries due to an inability to pay. IHWSH unites women in medicine and the restaurant industry to draw attention to the need for improved access to affordable health care while creating networking opportunities and community amongst the talented women of Houston's culinary scene.

Dr. Choi grew up as the daughter of immigrants in rural North Carolina. She was deeply affected by her father, the town surgeon who, in her words, "did everything – delivered babies, set broken bones, performed the annual physicals for the high school football team." After graduating from Duke University with a double major in political science and international studies, she worked as a waiter and a restaurant manager. "There's no better training in customer service," states Dr. Choi, who turned to medicine as a field in which she felt she could make a lasting difference. Mentored by the cardiac surgeons at Columbia University, earning a young investigator research award while in the lab of Dr. Mehmet Oz, she was naturally drawn to surgery, and after graduating from State University of New York-Downstate in Brooklyn, Dr. Choi moved to Houston to train at Baylor College of Medicine.

Following 5 years of general surgery, and 2 years of specialized training in vascular surgery, Dr. Choi served as assistant professor at the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston, Texas for 3 years, where she created a vascular surgery training program, earned accolades for teaching and was named a 'Rising Star Super Doc' by Texas Monthly (2013). Recruited by the Cleveland Clinic in Cleveland, Ohio, Dr. Choi then took a position as Staff Surgeon at one of the largest and most prestigious hospitals and vascular surgery departments in the United States. Experiences in rural Ohio reminded her of her small-town roots, and in 2016, Dr. Choi began working as an independent surgeon, focusing on under-served and rural areas of the country. This practice has led her to Pennsylvania, Kentucky, Illinois, Tennessee, West Virginia and Washington, and reinforces her sense of the importance of women as essential caregivers for multiple generations in a single family, and highlighted the need to provide support to the family unit for the success of the individuals in the family and the entire community. Dr. Choi is proud to help connect women with resources to promote their health and their long-term goals.

In her spare time, Dr. Choi enjoys traveling, hiking, exercising and eating with her husband, Chef Ryan Pera.

A photo of Dr. Choi is available by [clicking here](#).