



John E. Jenrette
MD, CEO, Sharp
Community Medical
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by Sherry Nooravi, PsyD

The following interview is part four of an eight-part leadership series, with interviews conducted by organizational psychologist Dr. Sherry Nooravi. See the January issue for an interview with Dr. Paul Bernstein, medical director and chief of staff at Kaiser Permanente San Diego, the February issue for an interview with Dr. Wendy Buchi, CEO of IGO Medical Group, and the March issue for an interview with Dr. Steven Green, CMO of Sharp Rees-Stealy Medical Group. Dr. John Jenrette can be reached at (858) 499-4540 or at john.jenrette@sharp.com.

DR. JENRETTE — 12-year member of SDCMS-CMA — is board certified in family medicine and geriatric medicine, and CEO of Sharp Community Medical Group (SCMG), a network that includes more than 200 primary care physicians and 600 specialists, and provides care to more than 155,000 members through eight health plan HMO and ACO contracts.

Question: What is your leadership philosophy?

Answer: Leadership is all about collaboration. The leader is the coach and the driver of that effort. I'm a collaborator because you can do so much more in an organization when you work together. It is also about integrity — it is in the words that you say, how you treat people, your promises and your follow-up. If you lose integrity, you lose the game. As a leader it is important to bring people along to understand the journey, how you make a decision and how you got there. If you start at the end and people have not been part of the journey, you lose them. It's about vision and inspiring people on that journey. A good leader also needs to guide his or her team toward effective execution and overall accountability. Otherwise, the "plane never lands" and the organization stays at 30,000 feet. I find it hard to work with leaders who are full of themselves and autocratic. They send a message that says, "It's my way, my decision, and I don't respect others' opinions." People really tend to disengage from that type of leader.

Question: What should physicians do to prepare for the future of healthcare?

Answer: Ideally, physicians need to push themselves outside of their comfort zone that, usually and appropriately, centers around the clinical practice of medicine. Our clinical training and seeing the patient is ingrained in us. We focus on the diagnosis and the treatment plan as any good physician would. The key here is to get involved, become educated about what is going on in healthcare, and, in general, broaden your horizon and scope of knowledge outside of your clinical practice. In doing so, one usually will be more open to and react more favorably to change or challenges.

The future also predicts that medicine is no longer a solo sport. It is a team sport, and you eventually need to be a part of something bigger. Currently, and even more so in the future, there is far too much to know about the business of medicine, the evolving political landscape (including regulatory and compliance requirements), and the changing methods of reimbursement. It is virtually impossible for any one physician or office to understand or succeed on his or her own.

Question: What advice do you have for young/incoming physician leaders?

Answer: Over the past 10 years, I've seen young physicians rejecting the 80-hour physician workweek in favor of a balance in clinical time and lifestyle. Recently, however, I'm seeing a resurgence in young physicians' interests and openness to new ideas and changes. They are in the big technology world, and they are really excited about what's new and different, and the challenges, technology, and politics of medicine. For these physicians it is again about getting involved, putting oneself out there, and becoming educated about the world beyond clinical practice.

Question: What does organizational culture mean to you and how do you drive it?

Answer: It is all about the people and not about me, as the leader. As a leader you try to mold the culture to produce the kind of outcomes and environment you are seeking to create. It goes back to my leadership philosophy about integrity, collaboration, and inspiring people toward the journey you want to take. In creating a successful culture, it is also important to be humble and to have a sense of humor as a part of that culture.

Real success is accomplished through the empowerment of your people. Many leaders fall short by micromanaging and restricting people's growth and initiative. If I were hiring a tennis coach, I'd want feedback. In leadership, it's also about feedback. When we get into business, people are afraid to give feedback and they also don't usually like to receive it. It's hard for people to get a mid-course correction, and they sometimes feel like they are a bad person because of it.

Culture change also requires time and effort. I once worked with a medical group during a time of growth in its history when we were combining the cultures of two different medical practices, a kind of melding of the cultures. To accomplish this, we constantly went back to the common vision, the greater good, and gave permission to think

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and speak differently at the table together. It definitely takes time, effort, relationship building, and a healthy dose of collaboration to change a culture. If you try to change culture by issuing marching orders, you may feel successful in the short term, but I guarantee when you revisit it, this perceived cultural change will be undermined and not a reality.

Question: What has worked for engaging your staff that CEOs and leaders in other industries can learn from?

Answer: Create wins and reward and recognize those efforts that you want to perpetuate in the organization. It is easy and it is contagious. You also have to constantly seek input from others. Yes, listen. A good physician listens in an exceptional manner with patients. Listening is so powerful and it works in all settings. **SDP**



Dr. Nooravi is an organizational psychologist and CEO of Strategy Meets Performance, a leadership consulting firm that focuses on helping CEOs of fast-growth companies shape engaging, innovative, and customer-driven cultures through executive coaching and senior team facilitation. She has been named “Trailblazer of the Year” for her research on the best practices of CEOs of high performing organizations. She can be reached at sherry@strategymeetsperformance.com or at (312) 286-0325.

Points to Consider

1.

Share the Journey: When you make changes, do you bring the team along, share the vision, and inspire them, or do you mandate change?

2.

What's Going on in Healthcare? Are you clear about upcoming changes in healthcare, and are you collaborating with other physicians and staff members to drive positive change in your system?

3.

Let It Go: Are you empowering your people and coaching them — versus micromanaging or completely letting go and not helping?