

WENDY M. BUCHI, MD

by Sherry Nooravi, PsyD



Dr. Buchi, CEO, IGO Medical Group

The following interview is part two of an eight-part leadership series, with interviews conducted by organizational psychologist Dr. Sherry Nooravi. See the January 2016 issue for an interview with Dr. Paul E. Bernstein, medical director and chief of staff at Kaiser Permanente San Diego.

DR. BUCHI, 22-year member of SDCMS-CMA and board-certified in obstetrics and gynecology, is CEO of IGO Medical Group, which has a team of 10 physicians, one nurse practitioner, and 40 client care staff, and provides comprehensive gynecological and obstetric care to women of all ages. Dr. Buchi can be reached at (858) 455-7520 or at [wbuchi@gmail.com](mailto:wbuch@gmail.com).

Question: What is your leadership philosophy?

Answer: The physicians in our practice are all equal owners and want to be involved in decision-making. For this reason, we

have a very democratic style of leadership at the board level. Sometimes it takes a little longer to get things accomplished, but everyone takes ownership of our decisions, and I believe this method improves our job satisfaction and has allowed us to remain independent and to personalize the style of healthcare we deliver.

As far as leading the staff, my philosophy is to lead by example and to make sure that I am always fair. If the staff is not happy with a decision, it's important that they at least understand that it's fair. I strive to be sure that everyone realizes they are a valuable member of the team and that I value their input. I believe that happy employees are a huge asset to our practice. We have a low turnover rate and a stable staff. I also have help from the physicians in our practice, and we have a great administrator, Sheila Hendry, who was the SDCMS practice administrator of the year last year.

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

Answer: Since we don't really know what is evolving and because there are so many moving parts, it's important for us to be open to what's changing and to be willing to shift if we think we've gone down the wrong path. What is most important is that no matter what happens in the future, our primary responsibility is to provide high-quality healthcare.

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

Answer: Remember why you went into medicine, and don't get caught up in any negativity. It's easy to get discouraged by red tape and politics. You can tailor the way you practice medicine to have a nice work-life balance by exploring your options. There is a perception that you can't have it all, and that's probably true, but you can figure out a way to have a lot — to have a rewarding career and time with your family.

My advice for female physicians is to set your long-term goals and then look for

a practice setting or model that will help you achieve these goals. There is a way to balance being a good physician, mother, and wife, but you are going to have to make some sacrifices in all three arenas. Everybody has their own personal way of achieving balance. Talk to other women and see how they are doing it.

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

Answer: Organizational culture means the values that we have established in our practice that determine how we behave and how we treat each other and our patients. I want everyone in the organization to want to come to work and to know that we value them, their opinions, and their input into the practice. The key is a team approach, and everyone's voice counts, and we are all in this together. I won't ask an employee to do something I won't do myself. I have no problem scrubbing exam tables or spot-cleaning the carpet if that is what needs to be done. "There is no 'they.' 'They' is us."

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

Answer: I am constantly trying to come up with ways to engage the staff, and borrowing ideas from other companies — Google, Pirch, and Apple, for example — that have done it well. We created an employee appreciation day, which has included, among other things, physicians making ice cream sundaes for the staff. We provide and pay for education for the staff; paying for education is always a good thing. There is a program in place where a staff member can be recommended that a colleague receive a certificate for a free lunch if she sees that colleague going above and beyond her job

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description. Every Friday, the staff can wear Padres or Chargers shirts to show their San Diego spirit. We have theme lunches several times a year, which include trivia games and prizes. We put together and sponsored a team of our staff for the SDCMS Foundation's 5K run for the past two years. I want the staff to know they are part of our team and there is more to the job than just punching the time clock. **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@strategymeetperformance.com or at (312) 286-0325.

Points to Consider

1

Role-model What You Want

Do you lead by example and "walk the talk?" Do you know it's one of the most motivating actions you can take to engage your teams?

2

Learn Resilience

What are you doing to prevent burnout and negativity in your fast-paced evolving healthcare system? Have you identified activities that relax and recharge you like spending time with family, hobbies, exercise, meditation, etc.? Do you have a plan to regularly engage these activities?

3

I Hear You

Do you seek input from your staff so they have a sense of ownership and participation in your practice?



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