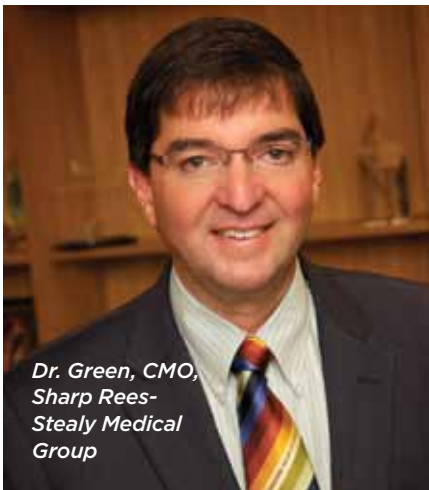


STEVEN A. GREEN, MD, ABFP, FAAFP

by Sherry Nooravi, PsyD



The following interview is part three 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 Bernstein, medical director and chief of staff at Kaiser Permanente San Diego, and the February 2016 issue for an interview with Dr. Wendy Buchi, CEO of IGO Medical Group.

DR. GREEN, 28-year member of SDCMS-CMA, is board certified in family medicine, and is CMO of Sharp Rees-Stealy Medical Group, which includes more than 200 primary care physicians and 300 specialists, and provides care to more than 258,000 members. Dr. Green can be reached at (619) 446-1530 or at steven.green@sharp.com.

Question: What is your leadership philosophy?

Answer: To motivate our physicians and to describe a vision where I think we need to be going. It's much more effective if people have an idea of what they are a part of. Be transparent, resources will be thinner and revenue per patient will be going down. It's important that physicians aren't insulated from these facts. I try to be fair and consis-

tent. I make sure people know what they can and cannot do. People are willing to do something difficult if they know everyone is treated the same.

Working as a float physician really helps me. I can better see what is going on in the group when I am seeing patients — and there is no substitute for that. I believe it is important to listen to what physicians and staff have to say. We listen to patient complaints. They are working for us by telling us. The truth can sometimes hurt, but we learn from it.

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

Answer: One of the givens of the future is that in order to be successful, you will have to be patient-focused. It is easy to say and hard to do. Set your schedule around what will be the easiest thing for the patient. Does the patient need to see me versus email or call me? Over 100,000 of our patients are using our email portal, and this can be a

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great way to provide care. With email, you see what is going on in the patient's own words. Be efficient and ask yourself if you really need a particular test. You have to be ready to look at new innovation. It will no longer be, “Do it like last year because it's comfortable.” You must be willing to look at new ways for people to get their care. Do some reading about accountable care organizations and managed care.

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

Answer: Be careful with technology as a leader. You are working with people, and the relationships are very important. People aren't going to take a lead from someone who is not communicating well. Texting and email are easy and quick; however, if you have to have a conversation that is difficult or around a sensitive issue, do it in person or, the next best thing, on the phone.

Be respectful: Keep an even keel with colleagues, staff, and patients. It is never OK to yell. Set clear expectations, and be specific when you are giving feedback. If you want people to change, make the case for it. Leadership has a lot of parallels to sales. You are trying to explain what's in it for them. Find a mentor, or more than one. Find someone who has been in the organization for a while and is well respected, and discuss your challenges. You can learn a lot from people who have been there.

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

Answer: The two doctors who started this group, Drs. Rees and Stealy, believed in putting the patient first, and we still do our best to live it. That's why this group has grown. When you are making decisions, the first question must be, “Is this the right thing to do for our patient?” Our culture is to provide efficient, high-quality, convenient care, and we are proud of our state and national quality awards. Our monthly staff meeting with 300 people is a chance for us all to be in the same room, see our colleagues, and chat with them. We also have a yearly CME retreat in Indian Wells for physicians across specialties.

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

Answer: Having annual educational retreats and dinner events as well as non-medical events. These are useful for helping people feel that they are more a part of something. Educating and motivating people for why we need to make a change and be better. If you can, stay in the trenches. If you are

actually there side by side working with your colleagues, it educates and brings credibility. It also allows you to go to different offices and get ideas on what is and isn't working. Sharp HealthCare has an all-physician assembly with videos of patient stories, speakers, and discussion of what's up and coming. It reminds people why they are here when we share stories of successes that have changed people's lives. **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

Why Are They Complaining?

Do you consistently seek feedback from your customers? Do you take complaints seriously and see it as a big opportunity for improvement?

2

Tough Conversations

Do you gravitate toward email and text when you have a tough conversation (or avoid the whole thing altogether?), or do you push yourself out of your comfort zone to drive these important conversations?

3

Why Change?

Do you make the case for change and get input from your team, or do you mandate it and hope it will stick?

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