

THOMAS R. MOORE, MD, CEO, UC SAN DIEGO FACULTY PRACTICE

by Sherry Nooravi, PsyD



The following interview is part six 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; the March issue for an interview with Dr. Steven Green, CMO, Sharp Rees-Stealy Medical Group; the May issue for an interview with Dr. John Jenrette, CEO of Sharp Community Medical Group; and the June issue for an interview with Dr. James E. LaBelle, CMO of Scripps Health.

Dr. Thomas Moore, a 20-year member of SDCMS-CMA, is board-certified in obstetrics and gynecology, as well as maternal-fetal medicine, and is CEO of UC San Diego Faculty Practice. The UC San Diego Health network includes 117 primary care physicians and 741 specialists, and provides care to more than 50,000 patients. Dr. Moore can be reached at (619) 543-8300 or at trmoore@ucsd.edu.

Question: What is your leadership philosophy?

Answer: I see the leader as servant, and it's a two-part thing. First, having the ability to see what key changes are on the health horizon (economic, scientific, and clinical) and having an understanding of where we would like to go and must go. It is also about understanding the healthcare market's pros and cons and our own strengths. The second is asking, "What about us? What do we want to become as a player in the Southern California healthcare region?" The leadership role involves taking that perception of the evolving horizon, understanding our unique strengths and value, and helping us get to the new place. However, in the end, it is not about just leaders; it is about all of us — clinicians, staff, and healthcare consumers — working together to define "best health" that fits our needs.

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

Answer: The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) is changing our health landscape. As the major single payer for health services in the United States, CMS is evolving new health-outcome

Points to Consider

1.

Keep Up to Date:

What are you doing to stay current with medical science in your field? Do you attend CME conferences and remain connected to your journals?

guidelines emphasizing efficiency, cost, and population health rather than paying for doctors to “treat patients.” For example, we are pretty good about treating diabetes today, but what about preventing diabetes in the first place? In order to succeed in this new health delivery paradigm, we have to stay very current with medical science and attend our CME conferences and remain connected to our journals.

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

Answer: Start with setting a great example – in the treatment room, at the bedside, on the telephone and in the electronic medical record. Practice medicine in a way that involves getting to know your patient’s specific needs. Don’t be “transactional,” be personal. Don’t rush to the most common diagnosis by looking it up in two minutes. When you do this, you are putting your patient in a box and taking away his or her important individual context, which may critically affect the outcome. It’s not easy – the patient herself can go online and say, “What I really need is X.” Something gets lost in the transaction, and that is not going to create the next era of healthcare.

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

Answer: It is about walking the talk and having a willingness to speak up if something is not right. When we have our M&M conferences to determine what went wrong and what could have been prevented, physicians often do not want to call out colleagues’ errors or oversights, especially among those who refer to them. An example is if a physician’s performance is adversely affected by his or her own health – perhaps a tremor, a substance abuse issue, or a mood disorder – it needs to be identified out of respect for the physician and the patients. We need to have the courage to identify shortcomings in outcomes in a respectful but honest way, and that includes our own performance.

2.

The Courage to Speak Up:

When things go wrong, do you have the courage to identify your own and others’ shortcomings in a respectful but honest way so that patient care is optimized and comes first?

3.

The Patient Always Comes First:

What types of behaviors and practices do you reward so your team drives a culture where the patient’s needs come first?

“Success is being the best you can be. Win on excellence, don’t try to win on margin. Striving for advantage in cost of healthcare will make you a victor for a week or month but you won’t have won anything of lasting value.”

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

Answer: Staff engagement in the enterprise vision is critical to success. Great cultures are respectful of each other and manage change horizontally rather than vertically. Communicating mutual caring among staff – all staff, not just physicians – is an essential part of delivering superb healthcare to patients and families. Creating an environment in which we can say “patient first, policy second” is a great goal and an opportunity to transfer good health practices to our wider society. Win on excellence, don’t try to win on margin. Striving for advantage in cost of healthcare will make you a victor for a week or a month, but you won’t have won anything of lasting value. Business fashions go up and down, styles and emphases change with time. It is important to maintain the quality reserves – human and financial – to keep producing excellence. **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.