

How Learning About Leadership Helped Me and My Practice

Written by Jennifer J. Mastruserio, MD



Primary Care Matters is a guest column written for MedStat by a local pediatrician or primary care provider.

Dr. Mastruserio is in private practice at Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine, Inc. She attended the University of Michigan for her undergraduate studies and The University of Cincinnati College of Medicine. Jen completed her residency and chief residency at National Children's Hospital in Washington, DC. She lives in Upper Arlington with her husband, Neal and is a proud mom to three boys. In her spare time she enjoys running and cheering on that team Up North!! Go Blue!!

I'm not certain what made me do it. Perhaps it was just wanting to inject something new into the veins after 20+ years in private practice. Maybe it was wanting to learn more about my leadership style. Maybe it was just pure whimsy. But, the decision

to join Nationwide Children's year-long Medical Leadership Program led to an experience that will help guide me as I continue to grow as a doctor committed to the Columbus health care community.

This class was a commitment. We met roughly every other week for a year, with a bit of a hiatus during the summer months. I was the only private practice pediatrician in the group. Initially, I was intimidated and wondered if the material would be applicable to private practice. In the end, I found that every meeting I gained information that I could take back to my practice. Along with learning some facets of business, I learned a lot about my own communication style as well as my personal strengths and weaknesses. I had a chance to connect to the hospital and some of the sub-specialists to whom I refer patients. Perhaps most importantly, I renewed my energy and enthusiasm for medicine.

For twenty-two years I've practiced in Columbus, yet I've always felt a bit disconnected from Nationwide Children's as one of the few private practice pediatricians who didn't train here. The Medical Leadership Program allowed me to get to know sub-specialists at Nationwide Children's from across the medical spectrum in addition to many hospital administrators. The chance to connect and get to know both physicians and administrators was indispensable and inspiring. It was hard not to fall in love with Dr. Allen's visions of what and where he would like to see Nationwide Children's go. After the final class, I approached a neurosurgeon in the group to inquire how a surgery had gone on a mutual patient of ours the day before.



NATIONWIDE CHILDREN'S
When your child needs a hospital, everything matters.™

“Would you like to go see him?” was his response and for the first time for either of us, private pediatrician and neurosurgeon rounded together on a patient! This felt like how medicine should be done and gave me more energy to continue to seek out other opportunities to learn and grow.

Many classes were devoted to working on communication styles, leadership skills, and some business aspects of medicine. I came away with a newfound understanding of myself (as cliché as that sounds). There was one particular personality inventory that I found incredibly enlightening. It allowed me to see the exchanges in our partner meetings and business dealings in a new light and showed me what I could focus on to become a more effective leader. Additionally, our practice had struggled with a mission statement. After one class on Mission, Vision and Values, I had a much better understanding of those concepts, which allowed me to use that knowledge to help craft a mission statement my partners and I love. Additionally, that class inspired our practice to design a logo to allow us to begin to do some branding.

Most importantly for me is the renewed energy the class brought me. One day, ¾ of the way through the year, I found myself driving back to my office thinking of all I had to share and singing along happily to the tunes on the radio. In that moment, I realized how much I enjoyed the class, the people, the experience, and how energized I was after every meeting. This led to me to search for ways to connect with Nationwide Children’s on a more regular basis starting with changing my schedule so I can attend weekly grand rounds.

The Medical Leadership Program may not be for everyone, but it was invaluable for me. It taught me about myself, my partners, and many of Nationwide Children’s missions and projects. It gave me a renewed energy and sense of belonging at Nationwide Children’s. Most importantly, it inspired personal growth for the next stage of my medical career.

The opinions and policies expressed in MedStat are those of its contributors, and are not necessarily the opinions or policies of Nationwide Children’s Hospital. Nationwide Children’s Hospital does not endorse or recommend any specific opinions, policies, tests, physicians, products, procedures, or other information that may be mentioned in MedStat. The content made available on MedStat, such as text, graphics, images, and other material contained on the website are for general educational and informational purposes only and do not constitute medical advice; the content is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Reliance on any content provided by MedStat is solely at your own risk.



NATIONWIDE CHILDREN'S
When your child needs a hospital, everything matters.™