

# OSMA Member Spotlight



## Steve Allen, MD

As the CEO of one of the nation's largest and busiest children's hospitals, Steve Allen, MD, has a short, succinct but very important view of health care delivery.

"If a patient shows up at the hospital and we do everything correctly and it is just perfect, but the patient isn't treated with respect and dignity, then that isn't medicine. That's something else," said Dr. Allen. "Medicine is that we deal with every patient and his/her family in a way that recognizes their uniqueness, that they are fellow human beings who are going through perhaps an incredibly stressful time in their lives."

An OSMA member since shortly after he came to Columbus' Nationwide Children's Hospital as CEO in 2006, Dr. Allen leads a medical staff of nearly 1,000 and a hospital staff of 7,500. He is quick to point out the team effort needed to provide pediatric care for almost 933,000 patient visits annually. At the same time, he notes that physicians do bring a unique understanding to leadership positions such as his.

"Having practiced taking care of sick people for twenty-four years, I know very clearly that the whole purpose of what the

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organization stands for is what happens at the bedside,” he said. “I always remember that the buildings, the equipment, the staff, all of this is there to create the best experience at the bedside.”

Before coming to Ohio, Dr. Allen spent nearly two and a half decades at the Texas Medical Center in Houston. With a medical degree from the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston, he says he began what he calls a very typical academic physician career that he was very happy with at the time.

However, after gaining some experience as a medical director of an intensive care unit, Dr. Allen’s executive leadership career began with a part-time administrative

Dr. Allen’s vision for Nationwide Children’s included incorporating his passion for health and wellness. It was with that in mind that Dr. Allen and Nationwide Children’s, alongside the OSMA, the Ohio Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Ohio Children’s Hospital Association and many others, advocated for the passage of the Healthy Choices for Healthy Children Act.

Signed into law by Gov. Strickland in June, the Healthy Choices for Healthy Children Act creates a pilot program for school districts to incorporate 30 minutes of daily physical activity, outside of recess, in grades K-12, among other things. For Dr. Allen, this process highlighted the im-

physicians aren’t organized in order to influence policy in a way that they think benefits their patients and families, it’s their patients and families that are going to suffer. It is important that physicians participate in these activities,” he said.

Up next for Dr. Allen and Nationwide Children’s is the nation’s largest pediatric expansion to date, which includes a new, 12-story main hospital building. You can safely assume that each step of the project will include Dr. Allen’s vision of creating the best experience possible at the bedside for the patient. ☞

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role that he agreed to do only if he could continue to see patients. As executive opportunities continued to come his way, he obtained his MBA and his career path brought him to Nationwide Children’s.

As he looks back on his journey, Dr. Allen passes along advice to physicians that he says might sound trivial but is very important.

“Whether or not you choose to pursue a career in executive leadership, the first person you need to lead is yourself. If you have gotten through medical school and residency, you have already shown the ability to set goals for yourself that don’t have an immediate payoff,” he said. “To further develop that ability, you need to set a vision for what you want to get done in your life and go about doing the things that will make that happen. Overall, it is really hard to lead another group of people, unless you can do that for yourself.”

portance of belonging to professional associations such as the OSMA.

“So much of what affects medicine these days is done at the public policy level. If

