

## Dr. Schaal: Our Physicians LEAD the Way

Dear Colleagues and Friends,



I'm honored to begin my service as the new President of UMass Memorial Medical Group. I consider myself incredibly privileged to lead this highly regarded group of physicians and caregivers who relentlessly serve the diverse community of Central Massachusetts.

Almost five years ago, I welcomed the opportunity to join UMass Memorial Health Care as the Chair of the Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences. During this time, I've been immersed and inspired by the innovative, collaborative, and professional way we conduct our mission-driven service to our community. I'm passionate about our mission to provide exceptional health care, hope, and compassion to every person, every day. I'm united in this mission with you and our 1,100 physicians who are committed and dedicated to preserving our community's health and well-being.



Over the past five years, and especially throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, I've seen the greatness, resilience, and hope of our Medical Group members who courageously and selflessly lead the fight against this deadly virus. I've learned so much from all of you, and you continue to move me.

Inspired by our mission and by our courage, I've put forward four priorities for our Medical Group to focus on during the next year. These priorities are:

- 1. LEAN:** Disseminate LEAN management tools to all physicians and offer leadership development to our providers. Practicing LEAN principles enables team building and promotes respect to our fellow caregivers. It's a platform that fosters innovation and improves the care we provide to our patients — as well as to advance our own work environment. LEAN is practiced by many caregivers in our health care system, and I would like us, as physicians, to be educated and have the tools we need to implement successful huddles, idea board systems and process improvement efforts. As physicians, many caregivers look up to us as role models, and I believe we can all learn more and bring our teams to the next level.
- 2. ENGAGEMENT:** As physicians and caregivers, we're the engine behind our health care system. Therefore, our motivation, our engagement and our alignment with our health care system's priorities are key to our success. I've made it a top priority of the Medical Group to work together to combat the effects of burnout — and help elevate physician satisfaction within the wonderful practice of medicine. These efforts will be in partnership with the Medical School and the Medical Center and facilitated by our Clinician Experience Office (CXO), which is supported by all three entities.
- 3. ACCESS:** As physicians, I know that we want to offer our patients easy access to appointments. I want us to work together on initiatives that make access to care easier for our community. We will continue to work with the Medical Center leadership, as well the leaders of other entities where we provide services, to make it as easy as possible for our patients to receive our exceptional care. As physicians, let's commit to doing everything we possibly can on our end to allow for easy referrals, and seamless and timely appointments for our patients.
- 4. DIVERSITY:** Diversity in our environment creates a stronger sense of inclusion and community for us as human beings — which makes the workplace feel safer and more enjoyable. As an immigrant to this country and as a woman in academic medicine, I've personally felt the tremendous pain and frustration of bias and prejudice in medicine. Many departments recently adopted an anti-racism effort, and I would like us, as a Medical Group, to make sure we learn from each other and make the Medical Group a safe community where everyone feels that they belong — no matter their color, culture, religious belief or sexual orientation.

The acronym for these top priorities is: LEAD (Lean, Engagement, Access, Diversity). I can't think of a better group to LEAD than physicians.

I hope you will join me in my excitement surrounding our impending work on these top priorities. I look forward to working with you during my tenure as Medical Group President. I hope you know how greatly I value your friendship, your partnership, your innovative ideas and your extraordinary commitment to the care of our patients.

Shlomit Schaal, MD, PhD, MHCM  
President, UMass Memorial Medical Group