



Fast Five with Dr. Thomas Pulling

Physician Liaison Officer, MaineHealth ACO

Sports Medicine Physician, Franklin Community Health Network

Dr. Tom Pulling recently became a physician liaison officer with the ACO, joining Dr. Mike Clark, Dr. Julie Grosvenor and Dr. Joel Wirth. We asked him five quick questions about his new role and his ongoing clinical work serving patients in the Farmington area.

Q: You've recently joined the MaineHealth ACO as one of four regional physician liaisons, a role you're taking on in addition to your regular clinical duties. What motivated you to become a liaison?

A: For me, the interest in the ACO position is twofold. First, I think that the ACO is the key to providing care efficiently at a sensible cost and I want to be part of shaping that. The liaison's role can help to bring providers together around capturing, managing and controlling the cost of healthcare while maintaining or even improving quality of care. Second, I hope to use my role to help providers connect with one another. We're in practices that are generally pretty isolated from each other and that makes it hard to connect and see the big picture. I am hoping my role will help us break down that barrier, particularly between specialists and primary care providers.

Q: One of the liaison goals is to increase communication between the ACO and participants. How do you think you can contribute to that goal?

A: What comes to mind first is getting out into the community to meet the ACO's participants where they practice. I'm excited to host a [Listening Dinner in Farmington on December 7th](#), along with ACO's CEO Dr. Betsy Johnson, to hear what's top-of-mind for my clinical colleagues. I plan to bring back what I hear to the ACO to help affect change.

What is your top work priority this month?

On any given day, it's taking care of the patients who are right in front of me. I'm also working hard to establish services that people in Franklin County need better access to locally, like physical therapy.

What do you do to stay healthy and active?

I certainly try, as a sports medicine doc, to stay active since it's as much a professional obligation as it is a personal one. We have a one-year-old at home, so that's led to some routine changes. Whereas I used to do a lot of distance sports - cross country skiing and running - now my routine is a 30 minute trail after my office days; we have a great trail system outside our office. And days when I am home with my daughter, I strap her onto a backpack and I use her for my lunges and pushups and hiking up and downhill. Sure fired way to cheer her up. I've been with the national ski patrol for almost 20 years

now doing mainly alpine stuff. In the past year and a half we've started a nordic ski patrol in Maine and I'd like to get more of those going throughout the state.

What is on your nightstand/playlist right now?

I am always in the middle of about half a dozen books, one right now is a biography of George Harrison. I play a little bit of acoustic guitar so I was looking for a little more info on that. Most of my reading tends to be either historical or technical. I do a lot of work with aviation safety, so I spend time reading and listening to information about that, and it how it intersects and overlaps with healthcare safety.