



## Fast Five with Dr. Kate Herlihy

Medical Director of Pediatrics and Medical Staff President  
at Western Maine Health

*Welcome to Fast Five—our monthly feature that spotlights an individual connected with the MaineHealth ACO. This month we had a chance to catch up with Dr. Kate Herlihy for five quick questions.*

### As a pediatrician, which ACO resources do you find most valuable?

**Care Management.** The Care Management model that we've been following for many years has been invaluable to us at Western Maine Pediatrics. We have a care manager in our office and it works very well—that concept and experience came out of the ACO.

**Population Health Management (PHM) Solution.** Access to a PHM tool will make a significant difference to both pediatricians and to providers who practice adult medicine. By having our cost and quality data at our fingertips we can adjust our workflow, teamwork, patient education and/or decision making tools to incorporate best practice processes. One of the reasons I'm part of the ACO is because I truly believe that nearly all chronic disease begins during childhood. We need to have a serious focus on children's health to ensure success in managing and preventing chronic disease. EPIC, in and of itself, is a valuable tool. There is a lot of room for improving the efficiency in the EPIC system.

### As a member of both the Physician Engagement & Alignment Committee (PEAC) and the MaineHealth ACO Board, what do you think will be most critical for strengthening provider involvement in achieving the Quadruple Aim this year?

We have a good opportunity to begin the year with a fresh start for engaging physicians and setting new priorities. I think engagement begins with building relationships. Helping to facilitate relationship-building with providers and setting that as a goal will be important. From a patient perspective, we need to have a seamless positive experience that includes a network of providers—both specialty and primary care doctors as well as ancillary staff within the system. It will also be important to see how we can streamline that process and make it more efficient so that physicians are happier moving forward. Another part of engagement is feeling like you can make a real difference and be part of a positive change.

### What is your top work priority this month?

I recently became the new president of our medical staff, so my focus has been on physician health. We have lots of goals and outcomes related to the fourth component of the Quadruple Aim (which includes the work/life health of providers.) We tend to focus on the measures of the Triple Aim, but a very big part of that work is making sure we pay attention to provider burnout. Primary Care is in a dire situation right now, especially in

rural areas, and we must figure out a way of dealing with that crisis. I've seen the stress level of primary care doctors rise to astronomical heights, and work/life balance becoming distorted, which in turn, can cause burnout. We used to come in and see our patients and go home at a decent hour, but now a lot of people are going home and doing more work or coming in on the weekends to get it finished, and that can be very stressful. Doctors tend to get energized from the time spent with their patients, and that time is getting shaved due to competing priorities and workflows that support conceptually good ideas—but those workflows and their extensive documentation can be onerous and inefficient at times and I think we can improve in that area.

It's also important that I dovetail my priorities into what the medical staff is asking me to do. For example, at our last meeting, I asked our medical staff what their priorities are and I hope to work from that —so that we have consensual goals and priorities.

### **What do you do to stay active?**

I teach two Zumba classes per week in our community at the elementary school gym near the hospital. I started this five years ago because I wanted to help address the obesity issue in our community. I talked to a lot of people who said they wanted to do something like that but it was too expensive, so I thought I could help with that. I got my certification and started charging \$1 per class—which goes to a non-profit or charity of choice. It's now very popular in our area which has resulted in hundreds of pounds shed. I also love to do anything outdoors—snowshoeing, sledding, skiing, hiking and biking— whatever I can do to get outside.

### **What is on your nightstand right now?**

I am one of those annoying people who reads three books at once—so it can take me three times as long to finish a book. Right now, I am reading Behind the Beautiful Forevers by Katherine Boo, which is nonfiction about the underworld of Mumbai— it's a fascinating and wonderful book. I'm also reading The Selfish Gene by Richard Dawkins, which is a modern perspective on evolution. And then I am re-reading The Stress of Life by Hans Selye—I love his books.

*Kate Herlihy, M.D. F.A.A.P. MHP, is the Medical Director of Pediatrics and Medical Staff President at Western Maine Health in Norway, Maine and serves on the MaineHealth ACO Board. Dr. Herlihy received undergraduate and graduate degrees from Tufts University and Northeastern University respectively. She received her medical degree from the University of Vermont, School of Medicine in 1998 and completed her residency in general pediatrics at Maine Medical Center. She completed the Physician Leadership Development Fellowship in 2009. She is an associate clinical professor for the University of Medicine and Health Sciences and a clinical instructor in pediatrics for Tufts University. She also has served as the MSAD 17 school physician since 2007. Dr. Herlihy lives in Norway with her husband and daughter. She has two college-aged sons.*