

Chapter Member Spotlight



Rene Bravo, MD has been a primary care pediatrician on the Central Coast for 34 years. He founded a single specialty group practice, Bravo Pediatrics, twenty years ago. He is a past First Five Commissioner in San Luis Obispo County and serves on the Board of Trustees for the California Medical Association. He is the Chairman of Cencal Health (the Medical Managed Care Organization for San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara Counties). He was President of the United State Pharmacopeial Convention (USP) in Washington, DC, working for 20 years in the area of international food and drug standard setting. Dr. Bravo is AAP-CA2 Area Representative in the County of San Luis Obispo.

Practice location: San Luis Obispo

Number of years in practice: 34

What do you do before work that sets the tone for your day?

I enjoy the quiet of the early morning. I will go to the gym and engage in physical exercise while planning the day in front of me. My faith is a very important part of my existence, and I pray in the morning often, thinking of family, friends, and patients.

What are some challenges or struggles that you face at work?

I feel very blessed on a daily basis to be able to go to a job that I really love doing. We all recognize the beauty of those little smiling faces, building relationships, and watching generations grow. I feel the biggest challenge has been the EMR's coupled with the absolute mindless rules and insurance companies that have made life more challenging. I never learned to type, so EMR's made it rougher, but I've been plowing through it for 10 years now.

How do you work through or overcome your challenges or struggles?

I focus on the good things in my day. No matter how rough, the pure joy of a giggling toddler, relieving the anxiety of a worried young mother, or hearing about the professional success of a former patient all cause the negatives to recede into the background. It takes time to get there, but I try to enjoy the depth and deep richness of my interactions with the families I am honored to serve.

After work, what do you do for your own wellness?

Exercise, reading, and volunteering are all things that maintain my wellness. My wife of 40 years is a wonderful source of "grounding" for me. Together, we have raised five sons (one who is a pediatrician also) and the joy of having grandchildren now is indescribable. I also enjoy hiking,

backpacking, cycling, and, before my knees could not take it anymore, running. The key words for me are balance, perspective, and gratitude.

From what/whom does your inspiration or motivation stem?

From an early age, facing my own mortality at 14 years of age (lymphoma), I have derived my inspiration and motivation from my faith. I have learned to see all people as magnificent, special beings, unique, and divine. That has helped me keep perspective even in these challenging times. It's a deeply personal belief and helps me deal with the injustices and darkness in our challenging world.

Wellness Tip: What is the one thing you would recommend to our readership to do each day to take care of oneself? Learn not to take things personally, especially in the clinic. Usually difficult people are “hurting” inside and don't mean to hurt others around them. It is best to forgive, understand, and enjoy. It's not easy, and it takes time, but it works.