

Chapter Member Spotlight



Name: Cindy Baker, M.D.

Practice location: Kaiser Permanente Medical Center, Los Angeles

Number of years in practice: 37 years

I was born in Philadelphia, PA and grew up in the suburbs of Philadelphia. I am the eldest of four, my Dad was a pediatrician, my Mom a librarian. I went to college and medical school at the University of Pennsylvania. I moved to LA and did my residency at CHLA, stayed on as Chief Resident, then moved across the street to Kaiser Permanente to get some experience in general pediatric practice. My plan was to stay for a year or so. I ended up staying my whole career!

I have cared for thousands of patients and now many grand-patients. I have served/volunteered as the Associate Residency Program Director, CME chair, Pediatric Symposium chair, numerous committees, and the Hollywood Sunset Free Clinic for many years. I have been honored with multiple teaching awards, the Lusk award and the PECA award among other honors given to Kaiser Permanente physicians. I was one of the founders of our multidisciplinary Vascular Birthmark Clinic Team in 1994.

I have been an AAP member since residency, but only when a dear KP colleague, Dr. Al Lieberthal, asked me to run for Member-at-Large in 2008, did I consider it and have been very grateful for the opportunity these past 13 years. I served on the AAP COPAM committee for 6 years (2012-2018). I learned so much about the AAP, advocacy, and policy making. This also gave me the AAP connection to be invited as an author on a number of AAP publications, including papers on the annual Periodicity Schedule, the Evaluation of the Visual System and Vision Screening (2016), Congenital Muscular Torticollis (2019), and the CPG on Infantile Hemangioma (2019). All were a true honor for me.

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

I am not a morning person. I review my patients' charts the night before to prepare for the day. I walk with my dog, Emily; say hi to other walkers; and enjoy listening to the birds who start their day earlier than we do. It gets me moving. I try to stretch in the morning when I have time.

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

The schedule and number of patients have always been difficult for me. I am someone who listens and talks to my patients. I tend to always be behind, but my regulars who know me are always generous and will wait for me, knowing I will give them the time they need.

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

I try to be more efficient, but I do struggle with time management. I wish my EMR skills were as good as my young colleagues and residents. I do most of my notes at night and often call patients in the evenings and on weekends if time escapes during the workday. Ultimately, it's about what we do for our patients and our relationships to our patients and families that makes general pediatric practice rewarding.

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

I enjoy spending time with family, friends, and my dog Emily. We live near a park which is our second home and walk in our neighborhood. I love to work in the garden. I am a birdwatcher. I attend a pilates studio with a good friend once a week. I am a choral singer and have sung with the Glendale Community College Concert Singers for 22 years. I really enjoy singing with this group of students and community singers and being back in the choir room the past few weeks has been so good. Please visit our [YouTube](#) as our concerts and Zoom recordings are all posted there. Singing is one of the best things for wellness.

From what/whom does your inspiration or motivation stem?

My father was a pediatrician, the best one I have ever known. He died far too young, and I miss him every day. I think of him when I am worried about a difficult patient. We used to talk about patients over the phone, and he taught me so much. He was a gentle, quiet, but brilliant pediatrician. I know that I carry a lot of him in my communication and management of patients and families. Parents comment on how they love the way I talk with their kids, and I know that comes from my dad. My mother is also my inspiration. Almost 90, she is amazing, active, busy and enjoying her life. I just visited her after 2 years as Covid has separated us across the country. I have had many teachers, colleagues, and patients who have motivated me in my career. My faith is important to me and keeps me going in times of difficulty and stress.

Wellness Tip: What is the one thing you would recommend to our readership to do each day to take care of oneself?

I would say to please do what works for you, whether it's healthy eating, exercise, quiet breathing, meditation, singing, dancing, spending time with those you love, hugging your child or dog, or spending quiet time with yourself. We all have things we can do to take care of ourselves, and it helps us take care of others.

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