

Chapter Member Spotlight



Name: Ilona Kleiner

Practice location: Sherman Oaks, CA

Number of years in practice: 20 years

I grew up in the greater Los Angeles area. I earned my undergraduate degree at UCLA, where I graduated *magna cum laude* and simultaneously received a Bachelor of Science Degree in Biology and a Master of Art Degree in Immunology. I attended The David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA where I conducted research on mutagenesis of neuroblastoma. That experience confirmed that I enjoyed direct patient interaction more than bench-work. I went on to do my internship and residency in Pediatrics at Cedars Sinai Medical Center.

After completing my residency in 2002, I joined an independent practice in Sherman Oaks, Pediatric Associates Medical Group, and have been there ever since. I enjoy providing guidance and support to parents as they navigate their children's many different stages of development. I love working with children of all ages and cultivating interpersonal relations with patients and families.

When I am not working, I love to cook, try new restaurants with friends, and spend time outdoors with my husband and fur-son. But, I most look forward to my daughter coming home from college and spending time with her.

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

I try to get to work early and have my first cup of coffee there while reviewing my schedule for the day. It gives me an opportunity to see if there are any significant changes that have occurred since I last saw the patient. I will have a huddle with my nurse to discuss any complex patients as well. This helps my day run more smoothly.

My colleagues and I will go over the mommy-calls from the night before and decide which patients need to come in that day. This helps with comradery in the office and continuity of care for the patients.

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

One of my struggles is trying to run a business while still providing good patient care. I feel ensuring proper reimbursement for time we spend in patient care is a constant battle. Another struggle I face is time management. I feel that I am being pulled in many directions including patient care, meetings, committee obligations, and practice management.

However, my biggest struggle is the limited mental health resources that are available for my patients. I try to counsel and help to the best of my ability while finding appropriate and affordable resources.

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

I prioritize what needs to be done each day. I focus on the task at hand and try not to leave things for later as the obligations just seem to pile up. Also, my partners and staff really help me get through my tough days. I think that it is important to know our limitations and to ask for help. I have the best work family! I rely on them heavily as their commitment to our practice is extraordinary. The care our clinic team shows for our patients and their needs is unparalleled.

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

Every evening after work, I come home and make dinner. It gives me a chance to relax and reflect on my day. Afterwards, my husband and I take our dog for a long walk. During this time, I get to unwind and get a different perspective on situations from my husband. If a good book is not available, local news followed by a television comedy is always a good escape to cap out the evening.

From what/whom does your inspiration or motivation stem?

My parents have always been my inspiration. They went through 2 immigrations and made many sacrifices for the benefit of their kids. Through their actions, they have instilled in me a strong work ethic, shown me how to face adversity, and taught me the important things in life are family and health. My mother always said it is important to be learned, kind, and humble.

My daily motivation comes from my staff. I am impressed by their hustle and how they step up every day. Their commitment to our practice and our patients is shown in their fierce advocacy and dedication.

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

Physicians tend to put patients' needs first and ignore or defer their own. It is easy to say focus on nutrition, exercise, and sleep. But in reality, we come home and we are both mentally and physically exhausted.

My recommendation is to write down one positive thing in a journal every night. It could be something for which you are grateful; something that made you smile; something that a parent said; something that a patient did; or something good that your staff did. This will give you an opportunity to reflect on your day, or review prior days/weeks, and realize the impact that you have. Contact Information: drkleiner@pamgdocs.com