

Profiles IN LEADERSHIP

DONNA O'BRIEN

Executive Director

Hospice Atlanta

(a division of Visiting Nurse | Hospice Atlanta)



Proudest accomplishment: That I've been working in hospice for 20 years. Longevity is unique in this field.

First job: I was an oncology nurse in Portland, Maine

Education: graduated with a BSN from St. Joseph's College, Standish, Maine

What or who inspired you to pursue a health care career: First, my mother, who was a nurse. Second, the community service rotation I did in high school; I volunteered at our local hospital and nursing home and got hooked on healthcare. I never looked back.

What skills do you need to succeed in your job: The ability to blend a strong clinical practice with business smarts; there needs to be a very symbiotic relationship between the two; the ability to function well in both worlds.

Work habit you possess that you are most proud of: The ability to truly listen and hear what's being said, not just verbally, but between the lines, whether it's staff, patients or family members. I rely on a high degree of intuition when interacting with people.

Most valuable lesson you learned in your career: There is always something new to learn.

The toughest part of your job: Staying balanced. There are never enough hours in the day to tend to everything, but when a family member is in tears in front of me, the meetings can wait. Patients and families are our first priority, but leading the organization takes time too.

Your philosophy of success: My work is a vocation, not a job, so success means leaving the world a better place than I found it.

One of your goals: To continue, and build on, the tradition of excellence at Hospice

Atlanta

Person you most admire: My husband, because of his perseverance. He started his own company from nothing, and has been successful. He's a good man in every aspect.

Favorite book: Ralph Waldo Emerson's essays.

Biggest challenge confronting healthcare: Understanding how healthcare reform will impact patients and families who need end-of-life and palliative care.

Your thoughts on healthcare reform: It's important to look at the opportunities the Bill offers our organization, not just the challenges.

Suggestions on how you would solve a particular problem in healthcare: I tackle every problem in our organization the same way – with kitchen-table wisdom and by involving whoever is at the root of the problem. I leave the bigger, national issues to those who have that experience and expertise.

What do you think is going to be the most surprising health care development that is on the horizon: Which organizations will survive in this new environment. We're confident Hospice Atlanta is here to stay because, as a nonprofit, we believe in sticking to our mission and always doing the right thing.

Best thing about healthcare in Atlanta: The number of choices patients have. Competition makes us stronger and ensures we stay focused on improving the lives of those we serve.

Worst thing about healthcare in Atlanta: I am new to Atlanta and don't feel qualified to comment.

What advice would you offer young people considering a career in health care: Get involved. Volunteer. Explore. You don't know until you experience it, if you have what it takes.

What are your hobbies and interests: Painting in oils, jewelry making, crafts – when I have time!

If you were not involved in healthcare, what would you be doing: Healthcare has always inspired me, I can't imagine doing anything else.

Emory Leader to Concentrate on Health Care Innovation; Interim Head Named for Woodruff Health Sciences Center

Fred Sanfilippo, M.D., Ph.D., will step down effective September 1, 2010 as Emory University executive vice president for health affairs, CEO of the Woodruff Health Sciences Center, and Chairman of the Board, Emory Healthcare. As a nationally recognized researcher and leader in academic medicine, he will pursue his longstanding interests in improving the delivery of personalized healthcare. He holds faculty appointments in the School of Medicine and the Rollins School of Public Health.

Emory University President James W. Wagner thanked Sanfilippo for his leadership of the health sciences since joining Emory in 2007 from Ohio State University, where he was Medical Center CEO and executive dean for health sciences.

In announcing the leadership transition, Wagner said S. Wright Caughman, M.D., has agreed to serve as interim head of the Woodruff Health Sciences Center effective September 1, 2010. Caughman is director of The Emory Clinic, the group practice of the School of Medicine faculty, and the executive associate dean for clinical affairs in the School of Medicine.

In addition, Caughman has served for the past three years as vice president for clinical and academic integration. Caughman joined the dermatology faculty at Emory in 1990 after serving as medical officer and principal investigator in the dermatology branch of the National Cancer Institute of the National Institutes of Health. In addition to teaching and working as a staff physician at The Emory Clinic, Grady Memorial Hospital and the Veterans Affairs Medical Center, he was director of research in Emory's Department of Dermatology for four years before becoming department chair.

He has been a member of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences in the Graduate Division of Biological and Biomedical Sciences, of the Winship Cancer Institute faculty, and has served as director of the Emory Skin Diseases Research Center. Caughman led a successful research program in cutaneous biology for many years and was one of two co-chairs of the School of Medicine research strategic plans in 1997 and 2003. He served as Chair and Alicia Leizman Stonecipher Professor of the Department of Dermatology from 1997 to 2007.



Dr. S. Wright Caughman



Dr. Fred Sanfilippo

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