

Annual Board Report 2023 - MSA President
Submitted by Dr. Eddie Chan

One comment that has resonated with me throughout this year was made during a meeting by one of our senior leaders who expressed the challenges of being a leader in healthcare. With their decades of experience, this statement deeply underscored the realities we face.

Undoubtedly, these are challenging times for everyone working in healthcare. However, the perseverance, camaraderie, and resilience demonstrated by our physicians and staff have been truly remarkable and inspiring. Over the past three years, we have navigated the storm of the pandemic as it transitions into an endemic phase. Now, our focus lies on recovering from its impact.

Once again, we find ourselves confronted with similar challenges, but with heightened intensity. Resource constraints, healthcare worker shortages, overcrowding, burnout, inadequate healthcare funding, and budget deficits all contribute to the complexities we face. Nevertheless, amidst these difficulties, Southlake has distinguished itself as an exceptional workplace. Our hospital faced these challenges alongside other institutions in Ontario, and we often excelled in comparison.

Earlier in the year, particularly during the surge of pediatric viral illnesses, there was a palpable sense of rising burnout. However, as the surge subsided and operations gradually returned to a semblance of normalcy, a renewed sense of optimism emerged in the new year. Despite ongoing challenges, I have observed a notable improvement in the morale of our physicians.

I firmly believe that the positive culture at Southlake plays a significant role in our success and resilience during these demanding times. This sentiment is frequently echoed by candidates during interview panels, emphasizing their locum experiences at Southlake and the exceptionally collegial and supportive environment.

Physician engagement is of utmost importance and I am confident that the executive leadership team has recognized this. I commend their efforts over this past year to enhance physician engagement and it is vital that initiatives aimed at enhancing engagement continue to be prioritized.

I would like to highlight some of the notable achievements and exceptional work performed by our medical staff this past year. During the surge of pediatric respiratory viral illnesses, when pediatric ICUs across the province reached full capacity, community hospitals were tasked with admitting and caring for sicker pediatric patients. Our pediatricians went above and beyond, working overtime to manage the increased volume and acuity. Additionally, our adult medicine and ICU physicians readily stepped up to assist by providing care to pediatric patients aged 14 years or older. This unprecedented change in practice was commendable. The Covid pandemic exacerbated the backlog of surgical cases. Despite constraints on human health resources that limit our surgical capacity, our surgeons collaborated with the administration to address the backlog of long waiters. As a result, Southlake has achieved the most significant reduction in the waitlist compared to our comparator hospitals.

Our physicians not only demonstrate tireless dedication to their patients but also generously volunteer their time to work with the Southlake Foundation and support its activities. The success of the 2022 Gala is exemplified by a record twenty tables that were purchased by physicians. Moreover, many physicians have actively participated in other events such as the Golf tournament, the Run for Southlake, and the New Roads bike ride, while also engaging with donors to discuss Southlake's programs and needs.

The medical staff warmly welcomes Dr. Makary as Southlake's inaugural VP of Medical Affairs. We acknowledge the board's efforts to engage physicians and gather their feedback in the creation of this role. Both Dr. Van Schaik as Chief of Staff and Dr. Makary serve as strong representatives for physicians on the Executive Leadership team.

The Medical Staff Executive, comprised of Dr. Conrad, Dr. Tone, and myself, eagerly anticipate our continued work and collaboration with the Board and Executive Leadership team in the upcoming year.