

PUTTING PEOPLE FIRST

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(From *Rivier Today*, Fall 2019)

Jeff Scionti '91/'99G prioritizes employee talent development and engages the community.



MEET JEFF

Jeff Scionti '91/'99G has served Parkland Medical Center in Derry, New Hampshire for 33 years, starting his career in the lab as a medical technician and rising to the position of Chief Executive Officer. Driven to improve the lives of others, his focus is trained on investments in the Medical Center's services and quality of care, workforce development, and public health awareness. The stakes are high for Parkland, given the complexities of the U.S. healthcare system and competitive marketplace for services and talent. Yet Jeff maintains a relaxed posture and an easy smile—the marks of a man who loves his job and does it well.

Jeff is a two-time alumnus, having earned both his undergraduate and MBA degrees at Rivier. He shares the strong impact his education had on his personal and professional growth. "Rivier has absolutely played a role in my life and career as it laid a solid foundation of who I am. The people that I have met and the educators in the programs were so supportive in and out of the classroom."

Having served in the military before pursuing his bachelor's degree, Jeff was a few years older than his classmates. "It was very interesting being a non-traditional student attending courses with a majority of traditional students," he says. "I was able to use my life lessons and emerging leadership to support some of my fellow undergraduate students. That was probably the first time I really began to identify my own leadership skills."



Critical investments

A member of the national HCA Healthcare system, Parkland Medical Center operates an 86-bed hospital and provides ancillary services at several other locations. Urgent care, cardiology, urology, oncology, hematology, radiology, rehabilitation and other specialties are provided at facilities in Derry and Salem, New Hampshire.

Much of Jeff's time is spent engaging with patients, employees, and medical staff. "This is the foundation for high quality patient care and positive patient experiences," says Jeff. As a leader in New Hampshire's healthcare sector, he is also invested in several community initiatives. "Collaboration with local healthcare leaders and providers plays an important role in the success of the organization. Your competitor one day is your collaborator the following day."

Innovating healthcare solutions

Under Jeff's leadership, Parkland Medical Center responded to the state's shortage of behavioral health treatment resources by adding an inpatient psychiatric facility. "Of the many projects and innovations we have implemented at Parkland, I am most proud of the addition of our Behavioral Health Services and the building of our current 18-bed inpatient voluntary psychiatric unit," says Jeff. "At a time when beds were being closed in New Hampshire and inpatient behavioral health programs were being shuttered, Parkland made a significant capital investment to meet the growing needs of our community and state."

According to U.S. Department of Health & Human Services Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and Substance Use **Dr. Elinore F. McCance-Katz, MD, PhD.**, "individuals experiencing a psychiatric crisis have long delays in obtaining appropriate services. These delays result in serious consequences, including long waits at home, in emergency departments, or in jails for necessary services to become available." The need for behavioral health services in New Hampshire has escalated in recent years with the sharp rise in substance use disorders and the reduction in inpatient care beds.

Accompanying the shortage of behavioral health treatment resources is the limited supply of highly skilled and specialized healthcare professionals. "Healthcare is a highly competitive marketplace and applicants have many opportunities," shares Jeff. This challenge was met with an innovative internal residency program for recent nurse graduates and a similar program for registered nurses to specialize in emergency room and critical care services. The added training and education bolster support of new RNs, improve patient care and outcomes, and has resulted in a higher employee retention rate.

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Recognizing and promoting talent

As Parkland’s chief leader, Jeff values individuals, which he recognizes are an organization’s greatest assets. He reflects on his own background and realizes that the combination of his clinical background, business degrees, and a recognition early on of his leadership potential within the organization fostered his career advancement. “Great employees and leaders don’t just happen, but evolve and emerge through a system of support and opportunities,” says Jeff. “I am the product of a system that promotes success from within, and I make sure to pay that forward.”

As a result, Parkland Medical Center prioritizes employee talent development and maintains a formalized mentorship program. “There is so much that goes into the recruitment process,” Jeff explains. “Once we have found an individual that fits the organization’s culture and has the capacity for development and growth, it is our responsibility to retain that individual by offering a path for a career and not just a position.”

“I often share, ‘Medicine is just medicine—our people make the difference.’ It’s our employees, physicians, and volunteers that make the difference in our patients’ outcomes,” Jeff says.

Engaging the community

A force in the public health community as well, Jeff has taken on the chairperson role for the American Heart Association 2020 New Hampshire Heart Walk. “The Heart Walk supports research and provision of life-saving information—how to eat better, how to recognize the warning signs of heart attack, and how to talk to a doctor about critical health choices,” he says. “Our 2020 goal is to raise awareness, raise funds, and to educate the community on heart disease and stroke.”

Never one to shy away from a challenge or an opportunity to help others, Jeff often speaks publically about Parkland Medical Center and healthcare issues to local chamber, rotary, and legislative groups, as well as long-term care and assisted living community members. He serves on the Salemhaven Nursing and Rehabilitation Board of Directors and is a former Board president. Jeff is also a member of the Foundation for Healthy Communities Board and serves on the Granite YMCA Finance Committee.

New challenges

Jeff and his team have expanded Parkland’s services more recently to include outpatient mental health treatment programs and new bariatric, gynecologic oncology, and colorectal surgery programs. “I have been provided great opportunities at Parkland Medical Center and within HCA Healthcare,” says Jeff. “I have taken on every challenge offered to me and each challenge has been a new learning experience.” Dedicated to meeting and providing the highest quality of care, he continues to advance his and Parkland’s role in addressing community healthcare needs. ■