

# Transitioning to CEO? Self-awareness is vital

Sachin Jain develops his team to make his own leadership take root

A C-Suite Conversation with

**Sachin Jain, MD**

President and CEO, CareMore Health System



The Companies of MPI



When we last chatted with Sachin Jain, he was transitioning from his role as chief medical officer of CareMore Health System, a subsidiary of Anthem, to become president and CEO of the company.

So, what is his new role like, and what observations does he have that might help other new CEOs just stepping into the job?

“As the chief medical officer, I had responsibility for more than half the organization,” he says. “But when you’re the leader of last resort, the day never actually starts or ends. You’re just ‘on’ all the time.”

Jain says the new role has encouraged him to develop his

leadership team and learn to delegate, and to keep in check his tendency to try to do too much.

“I’m actually creating boundaries for myself, so I don’t burn out,” he says. “The other piece of it has been getting to the place where my team is making decisions, not just me. I love to be involved in every single detail, but there are times when you have to pull back. I’m learning how to telescope in and out as needed.”

In leadership development, the art of delegation is an undervalued skill, but one that can be taught. Personality assessments often shine a light on this. Some leaders feel they are too busy to delegate or that the quality of the work will be lacking if they don’t address it themselves. Jain’s assessment of his own journey on this path is critical because it not only took weight off his own shoulders but allowed his team to grow in new leadership roles.

### The value of physician leadership

CareMore, which was founded by a physician, just reached its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary. It has established a reputation for doing things differently as it transitions from treating primarily a Medicare population to a wider group of patients. It was the first to use taxis, Uber and Lyft

to ensure patients made it to their appointments – it saved money in the long run. It bought a refrigerator for a diabetic patient who was previously unable to store insulin. And CareMore just established a chief togetherness officer to combat what it calls an epidemic of loneliness among seniors that has adverse effects on health outcomes.

Jain, a much-honored, Harvard-trained physician himself, believes physicians and nurses are more in demand as physician leaders and organizational executives today because health systems and insurers need to have a “clinical soul” to be most effective. “The secret sauce of any great clinical organization is the people. They have to have a high sense of efficacy. Absent that, it’s difficult to deliver high quality care.”

Clinicians can sometimes be at a disadvantage when they first step into leadership because their executive peers who are career administrators have in many cases been nurtured and developed as leaders since their formal education ended. That’s where accelerated physician executive development can help to bring clinicians up to speeds on an intensive basis.

Jain says universities are also

*Continued on next page...*

helping in this regard.

“I think the reasons that physicians are finding themselves more in demand as leaders is twofold. First, a growing number of physicians are being cross-trained, and more medical schools are offering a dual MD-MBA program,” he says.

“Second, the thing that organizations need most is that clinical soul. You need people willing to trade off short-term profits for doing what’s right for patients. By doing that, you’ll have better outcomes for the communities we serve and, in the long run, an even better financial outcome.”

#### 4 key qualities for leaders

With his clinical credentials and his experience as an executive, Jain and his team have developed four imperatives for leaders at CareMore:

1. “Inspire daily. Be inspirational to your people.”
2. “Be willing to do and say hard things. I think that’s a muscle we all develop over time.”

## EXECUTIVE’S TOOLKIT: The #1 mindset that leaders need today

These are times of great challenge in healthcare – and great opportunity as well. That’s why Jain says the most needed skill in today’s leaders is something that isn’t always taught in the MD/ MBA programs.

“I think comfort with ambiguity is the number one attribute needed in healthcare organizations today,” he says.

The pace of change in healthcare

is making this reverberate in health entities across the U.S. Jain explains why.

“The way many organizations are organized and structured, decisions can take months to make. But the reality is, in today’s atmosphere, your strategy could be obsolete in weeks or months, so you need to be comfortable in that tension.

“Leaders help people understand this.”

3. “Learn constantly. We’re all evolving as leaders and people.”
4. “Teach your people constantly as well. When I think about leading people, that’s absolutely critical.”

Vision and mission statements create alignment on leadership teams and enhance executive team performance. The most progressive organizations find great value in

developing their own goals for how they can function optimally. But less formal declarations can be essential as well for building internal engagement, like Jain’s list of key qualities for leaders.

“The reality,” he says, “is that people want to stretch and more in their day-to-day work. They want to be trusted to lead and trusted to develop their best.” **MPI**



### ARTICLE: Executive Team Performance

Want better team performance? Check out these 5 steps to unlock your team’s potential, and jump-start your plan for better team cohesiveness.

[bit.ly/team-dev](https://bit.ly/team-dev)

**DOWNLOAD NOW**

The Companies of MPI

**FurstGroup**

Executive Search

FurstGroup.com | 800.642.9940

**NuBrickPartners**

Leadership Consulting

NuBrickPartners.com | 800.960.9245

