Physician Spotlight: Dr. Syed Zaidi

In March, Radiology Partners announced the launch of the Office of the Chief Medical Officer (CMO), naming 13 radiologists to senior executive leadership roles. One newly named Associate CMO is Dr. Syed Zaidi, Associate CMO for Integration.

Dr. Zaidi is an interventional radiologist and serves as one of the leaders of the RP SEAL team. In addition, he has held multiple leadership roles in the American College of Radiology (ACR), such as his current role as Chair of Population Health Management Committee for the ACR. Dr. Zaidi has spearheaded national clinical value initiatives that have differentiated RP and led the relationship with Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) on recognition of RP as the Exemplary Practice in Radiology in 2019. Prior to joining Radiology Partners, he served as President of Radiology Associates of Canton and founded RadHelp, a startup to develop imaging-based population health management strategies. Dr. Zaidi earned his medical degree from Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai in New York City and completed his residency at Mount Sinai Beth Israel in New York City. He completed a fellowship at Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut, and received his MBA degree from the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia. He has worked with RP since 2015

and lives in Washington, DC, with his wife and daughter.

As Associate CMO of Integration, Dr. Zaidi will build on his service as part of the RP Seal Team; develop standard processes for new practice sites as they go live; partner with the RP sales team to determine correct diligence processes on new site sales; and lead RP in its growth at new system integrations as well as integrating new practices joining RP.

We sat down with Dr. Zaidi to learn more about his aspirations for RP's Office of the CMO and his role as Associate CMO for Integration.

Tell us about your tenure/history with RP.

When I joined in late 2015, RP was still fairly small, with about 200 radiologists. I've seen a lot of growth since then, being involved with the RP Growth team and having worked on our clinical initiatives and scaled them nationally as part of the Clinical Value Team. More recently, I've been helping to grow RP by serving as a leader of the SEAL team and Integrations. The SEAL team was formed specifically to help grow RP at new sites and system contracts. We provide both onsite and remote staffing, as well as clinical and operational leadership at new contracts. With the rapid growth that RP has experienced and the demand from health systems for our high-quality services, we needed to support our growth and have a dedicated team of experienced radiologists to lead it. We are developing the dyad model of radiologist and administrative joint leadership across the diverse functions of integrations in order to provide the highest level of service and quality as we grow RP with both practice partnerships and new site contracts.

What attracted you to RP?

In my practice in Ohio, Radiology Associates of Canton, I was leading clinical innovation about how radiology fits into population health management. The system was integrated, and there was a strategy to ensure each specialty fit into population health management initiatives. We collaborated with the system on clinical initiatives like growing interventional radiology (IR), partnering with specialties and elevating ER efficiencies. Based on that initiative, I formed RadHelp, a consulting company to help empower other radiology groups to do this work too. In 2014, it caught the attention of RP leadership who appreciated that we had focused on the clinical value of radiology. So both RAC and RadHelp then joined RP in 2015. The fact that RP has taken on investing in clinical value as a strategic mission ultimately attracted me to RP. I believe strongly that radiologists bring a lot of value to the healthcare system and clinical care coordination, and I know we are able to make an impact on healthcare in the United States with our national scale.

How has your experience prepared you for your role as Associate CMO of Integration?

Prior to RP, working with health systems on co-management and partnering on managing radiology as a service line made up a lot of my experience, which helped us grow our practice. We grew to multiple hospitals and systems and then spanned different systems, so I was experienced with growth and partnering with health systems to grow the radiology care platform. After joining RP, based on my experience, I worked on the Clinical Value Team and the Growth Team. In 2019, I joined the SEAL team, which was a natural fit based on my career path and skillset. As an IR, I’m comfortable being in a hospital-based role, starting new contracts and managing

relationships with the health system leaders, and I was comfortable taking on this new challenge as ACMO.

What do you want to accomplish in this role?

Integrations is the glue to how RP grows, and we must manage the integration of every practice partnership and new site. It's also the key to success in the world of mergers and acquisitions. Often, many organizations are unsuccessful with mergers because they're not able to manage the integration process well. My goal is to ensure our processes are able to scale to take on more complex system contracts, multi-site hospital systems, etc. I also will ensure our processes are standardized and reliable while still being flexible to adapt to the local situation. We recognize we have to customize some of the local elements, so we will remain nimble and agile. We will successfully integrate new groups to achieve the benefits of scale and prioritize clinical integrations so that we can achieve our goal of clinical value at the national level.

What does the future of radiology look like in 5 years? 10 years? How will RP contribute to that?

In the next 5-10 years, there will be more growth in artificial intelligence (AI) software, expansion of the radiologist's role in integration of care and population health management and consolidation of the space – not just radiology but payors, hospitals and other key stakeholders. As there is further consolidation, it benefits RP to take advantage of our national scale to make necessary adjustments to allow us to lead in clinical value, AI and the world of population health management. RP will contribute by being the national large-scale provider of radiology while making those adjustments. It's up to us and other radiology practices to

make our role important in integrated care and population health management.

I am optimistic about the future of radiology because of new technology, such as applications like portable imaging. We can actually democratize the use of imaging and increase its adoption to help provide more personalized and precision care and manage that imaging from the home to the hospital. It takes a national practice like ours to take full advantage of the opportunities and be the leader the specialty needs.

Dr. Syed Zaidi is the Associate Chief Medical Officer for Integration at Radiology Partners, a leading physician-led and physician-owned radiology practice in the U.S. Follow him on Twitter at @zaidirad. For the latest news from RP, follow along on our blog and on Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram.