



Physician Spotlight: Dr. Rich Heller

In March, [RP 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. Richard Heller, Associate CMO for Communications and Health Policy.

Dr. Heller is a pediatric radiologist RP Chicago, which serves the University of Chicago Medical Center's Comer Children's Hospital. He also serves as RP's National Subspecialty Lead for Pediatric Radiology. Additionally, Dr. Heller is an officer of the Society for Pediatric Radiology, an editorial board member of the Pediatric Radiology Journal and a leader of economic-focused committees for the American College of Radiology. He is an Alpha Omega Alpha (AOA) graduate of Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine in Chicago. He completed his residency at the Mallinckrodt Institute of Radiology at Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri, and his fellowship in pediatric radiology at Boston Children's Hospital. Dr. Heller also earned an MBA degree from the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University in Chicago. He joined RP in 2013.

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As Associate CMO of Communications and Health Policy, Dr. Heller collaborates on RP's internal and external communications efforts, strategizes on payor and policy issues and helps direct our advocacy efforts. He works closely with the Vice President of Culture and Leadership, Director of Communications, Chief Development Officer and Executive Committee of Presidents Council on their goals and efforts.

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

Tell us about your tenure/history with RP.

Our practice, Radiology Imaging Consultants (RIC), was one of the first practices to join RP. My own role evolved from being the Chief of Pediatric Radiology at a small children's hospital on the south side of Chicago to the Chair of Radiology for a local children's hospital network. From that, I was fortunate to move into a broader role as RP expanded.

What attracted you to RP?

Our local practice, RIC, had been interested in the benefits of scale for several years. We started in Chicago, but over time expanded into Indiana, Kentucky and even Georgia. The value proposition that Rich Whitney, Chairman and CEO, and Dr. Anthony Gabriel, Chief Operating Officer, communicated – that we could marry the benefits of scale with local practice autonomy – resonated with me and my colleagues.

How has your experience prepared you for your role as Associate CMO of Communications and Health Policy?

One of the great benefits of RP is its sincere commitment to radiology leadership and professional development. This has allowed me to expand on my interests and develop new skillsets. For example, I have always had an interest in politics and health policy. I participated on debate teams in high school and college and even had a political science concentration as an undergraduate. As a young attending physician, I went back to school for my MBA and became increasingly engaged in the American College of Radiology and its economics committees. At RP, I have been fortunate to apply that interest and experience to our advocacy and revenue cycle management activities.

As for communications, I was grateful to accept the opportunity to work with Cameron Cleeton, RP's Chief Development Officer, who helps lead our public relations and external communications efforts as the practice rapidly grows. Because one of RP's founding principles is that we are a radiologist-led practice, communications is a component of the practice that should reflect this principle. Cameron welcomed me to the team in an effort to ensure our communications efforts are viewed through the lens of a radiologist. Over the last several years, I have been lucky to learn from true experts in the

field of communications, including our partners at Jarrard Phillips Cate & Hancock, as well as internal leaders including both Cameron and Director of Communications Melinda Collins.

What do you want to accomplish in this role?

Ultimately, all of our activities should support our mission to transform radiology. My role in pediatric radiology is to support my colleagues around the country and advocate for thoughtful children's imaging. In health policy, I hope to engage our physicians and support teammates to promote responsible policies that protect patients and the physician practices that serve them. In communications, we work to make sure that others, both internal and external to RP, are aware of the many wonderful activities that are happening in the practice.

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

The future for both radiology and Radiology Partners is exceptionally bright. Radiology exists at the nexus of healthcare; so much of care involves medical imaging. As healthcare delivery continues to evolve, radiology, supported by advancing technologies, will remain central to effective and efficient care.

Artificial intelligence (AI) will continue to evolve and modify the practice of radiology, which is incredibly exciting. Our specialty has always prioritized the application of new technology to advance patient care, and the wonders of AI and machine learning are thrilling.

The radiology groups that will achieve lasting success are those that offer a better value proposition to the various stakeholders, including patients, referring physicians and hospital leaders, among others. Our ability to not just survive but achieve the mission of RP, to transform radiology, is based on our two assets: our people and our culture. Healthcare will always be local, which is why our One Practice, Locally Led (OPLL) model is so important. With that said, the benefits of scale are increasingly necessary. Our culture unifies us around the mission. Together we will elevate the bar, providing better levels of patient care and enhanced value to all the stakeholders. That's how we will transform radiology.

Dr. Rich Heller is the Associate Chief Medical Officer for Communications and Health Policy and National Subspecialty Lead for Pediatric Radiology at [Radiology Partners](#), a leading physician-led and physician-owned radiology practice in the U.S. Follow him on Twitter at [@reh3md](#). For the latest news from RP, follow along on our [blog](#) and on [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Instagram](#).