

June 27, 2016

Ramona Faith of Petaluma Health Care District wins Women in Business award

With a bachelor of science degree in nursing from Chico State University, Ramona Faith began a career of caring as a medical surgical nurse. After years of service there, she added a Masters of Science in Nursing from Sonoma State University to her educational portfolio and eventually began 25 years in various executive positions in health care including becoming CEO of the Petaluma Health Care District.

It's from that career vantage point that Faith, a fourth-generation resident of Petaluma, has overseen outreach to improve the health of the community, from educating residents to choose healthy foods to CPR training.

"I'm very proud of where we are today with a quality local hospital and measurable success stemming from our community health initiatives and programs."

She predicts health care at the community level in the future will mean people receiving more medical assistance and information in schools and community centers. Telemedicine will grow as well use of nurse practitioners, and "robots will be the norm."

TELL US SOMETHING ABOUT YOURSELF

Professional background: I started my nursing career at John Muir Medical Center in Walnut Creek, Calif. as a medical surgical nurse, and eventually pursued oncology, serving as an oncology nurse specialist. I continued my nursing career at Petaluma Valley Hospital, and over the past 25 years, I have served in various executive leadership positions in the areas of hospital operations, patient care services, quality management and patient safety, education, and community health. I have served as the chief nursing officer and administrator for Petaluma Valley Hospital, executive director of patient care services and nursing quality at Queen of the Valley Medical Center in Napa, and as an executive health care consultant. I have been an adjunct faculty member at Santa Rosa Junior College, Dominican University and Sonoma State University. I joined the Petaluma Health Care District as CEO in April 2011.

Education: bachelor of science in nursing, Chico State University, 1977; master of science in nursing, Sonoma State University, 1997

Staff: 15

As a fourth-generation resident who has had the opportunity to serve my beloved community, I am passionate about my work. The Petaluma Health Care District is a public agency and special district focused on improving the health and wellbeing of Southern Sonoma County residents. We own Petaluma Valley Hospital and currently lease hospital operations to St. Joseph Health.



Ramona Faith

CEO

Petaluma Health Care District

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Age: 62

Residence: Tomales

Hometown: Tomales — fourth
generation

Our community health work has expanded significantly over the past few years through the spearheading of local initiatives that address social determinants of health, including advocacy, funding and program development for universal access to preschool and academic achievement, healthy food and physical activity, mental and behavioral health services, and CPR training and heart health education. I believe that a healthy community requires a holistic approach, and I'm very proud of where we are today with a quality local hospital and measurable success stemming from our community health initiatives and programs.

MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENT IN THE PAST YEAR OR SO

We have propelled Petaluma Health Care District into a leading position locally, county-wide and state-wide with regard to health and wellness strategies, advocacy, policies, education and programing — including recognition from the California Department of Health Care Services out of our state's capitol, declaring us a "model district" that other health care organizations should emulate. Acknowledging our leadership, the Association of California Healthcare Districts selected us from among 78 health care districts as the 2015 Healthcare District of the Year.

WHAT IS THE ACHIEVEMENT YOU ARE MOST PROUD OF?

As much as I love and am dedicated to my profession, the greatest achievement of which I am most proud is that my husband and I have been married for 39 years and we have raised three great kids who are now contributing members of society, excelling in their chosen professions, and who have wonderful spouses and are raising families of their own. It doesn't get much better than that. Raising a family and building your professional life simultaneously isn't easy. We've been blessed.

WHAT IS YOUR BIGGEST CHALLENGE TODAY?

Managing the due diligence process to determine the future operator of Petaluma Valley Hospital. The current lease with St. Joseph Health ends in 2017.

WORDS THAT BEST DESCRIBE YOU: Tenacious, visionary, collaborator, leader, fair, inclusive.

AS A SUCCESSFUL FEMALE PROFESSIONAL, WHAT WERE THE BIGGEST OBSTACLES YOU FACED AND HOW DID YOU OVERCOME THEM?

Balancing family with work is a huge challenge for working mothers and I was no exception. I had the opportunity to work part time when my kids were young, and I was willing to put my professional goals on the back burner early in my career until I had more flexibility to focus more on it. I've had to advocate for comparative salary to male counterparts and will continue that advocacy for women in the workforce.

Work-life balance continues to be a struggle, and it is something on which I'm working. I try to calendar a block of time every two weeks to reflect on strategy and direction.

HOW DO YOU THINK YOUR PROFESSION WILL CHANGE IN THE NEXT FIVE YEARS?

Hospitals will become intensive care units. There will be more affiliations and mergers, and the industry will continue to shift toward community-based care with a focus on population health and illness prevention. We will see more and more unconventional partnerships, such as businesses, schools, local residents, service providers and city government, working together to create healthier communities by addressing social determinates of health. Care will be provided in neighborhoods through schools and

community centers. There will be an expansion of nurse practitioners due to community-based care and a shortage of physicians.

Telemedicine and technology will drive care delivery. Robots will be the norm.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO A YOUNG WOMAN ENTERING YOUR PROFESSION OR THE WORK WORLD TODAY?

There is nothing you can't accomplish as long as you are willing to put forth the effort to get there. With that said, keep your life in balance and know that there will always be opportunities for those who are good at what they do. If you have growth and elevation ambitions, you should be using your current position as the stepping stone to prepare yourself for your next position.

Find a mentor and use them as a sounding board as you learn to advocate for yourself, because you are your own advocate and don't expect others to do that for you.

MOST ADMIRED BUSINESSPERSON OUTSIDE YOUR ORGANIZATION: Carol Aaron was vice president of human resources at Santa Rosa Memorial Hospital when I was the administrator at Petaluma Valley Hospital. Today she serves as the chief administrative officer for Peace Health System in Washington.

What I admired most about Carol was her integrity and expertise in organizational development and strategy. Besides being admired, Carol served as one of my mentors.

TYPICAL DAY AT THE OFFICE: Meeting followed by another meeting. Analysis and prep for another meeting. Most of my time is spent establishing relationships with key constituents, building community capacity to meet the health needs of Southern Sonoma County residents, evaluating progress towards organizational goals, and ensuring my elected board has the information they need to make good decisions. I also lead a fabulous team executing great work and carrying out our mission. The greatest aspect of my job is that each day is different and strategic, and the positive health outcomes we are measuring is rewarding.

BEST PLACE TO WORK OUTSIDE OF YOUR OFFICE: Home. When I have to think and plan, sometimes it is best to work from home so I can focus with less interruptions.

MOST WANT TO MEET: Bill and Melinda Gates

SOCIAL MEDIA YOU MOST USE: Facebook and LinkedIn. I love how we are using social media, like Facebook, to reach and engage the district's community.

STRESS-RELIEVERS: Gardening and a day at the spa.