

Q&A with David O. McCready

October 2023

Where did you grow up?

I grew up in a small steel mill town an hour north of Pittsburgh, PA called Beaver Falls. Beaver Falls had about 12,000 people living in the small city in the 1970s and 1980s when I was growing up there. My parents and most of my family are still living in the western PA region. I'm proud of my working-class upbringing; the values I learned there are an important part of how I treat others.

Where did you go to school?

My primary and secondary education was in the Beaver Falls public school system. I stayed in the Pittsburgh region for college (BS in psychology) and for my graduate studies in business (MBA) and healthcare administration (MHA). My wife Susan and I are the products of—and big supporters of—public education. Our daughter Kate is currently finishing her senior year at Andover High School, the same public school where Susan graduated. Susan is a long-time member of the Andover School Committee, and public education is a strong passion of hers.

What is one of your favorite places you have visited?

In New England, my favorite place is Kennebunkport, ME. Susan, Kate and I vacation there every summer. Outside the country, one of my favorite places is the west of Ireland. I'm so taken with the cities, towns, and lovely people, especially in County Clare and Galway. There is something magical about Ireland and its culture—so remarkably hospitable, warm, earnest, and fun.

What are you most excited about moving to the region?

The South Coast and southeastern Rhode Island are such beautiful regions. Susan, Kate, and I love the ocean, and we're looking forward to long walks along

the coast with our dog Gracie. We're just now finding our way around, exploring the neighborhoods, having a cup of coffee or a meal in the various communities, and getting a feel for the beautiful uniqueness of the region.

In addition to getting settled, I'm looking forward to getting deeply involved within the community. I am eager to participate in many service organizations and causes throughout the region in some way so that I—either as a representative of Southcoast Health or as an individual—can be of service to the community. I realize that many of the communities in the Southcoast service area are underserved; I plan to do my part to try to make a positive impact.

Who is one of your biggest role models?

Dr. Gary Gottlieb, the former CEO of the Brigham, Partners Healthcare, and Partners in Health, has become a cherished mentor and friend. What is most impressive about Gary to me is not the "what" that he has accomplished in his remarkable career (which is spectacular), but the "how" he has done it. Gary leads with his brain and his heart. He insists that we who are privileged to lead healthcare organizations must ask ourselves critically whether we are truly serving others with all the energy, creativity, courage, resources, kindness, and dignity that we can summon. As Gary says and teaches, our sacred mission in healthcare is to do as much "great good" as we can. This is how I aspire to lead, too.

Who gives you the best advice?

Oh, that's easy—my wife, Susan. Susan and I have been married for 24 years, and she remains my greatest thought-partner and friend. Susan guides me when I'm lost, and gently pulls me back on track to remember who I am and what's truly important. Susan's rock-solid support of me is the underpinning of my career and how I am able to do my work.

continued

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What inspired you to work in healthcare?

I come from a family of nurses, including my mother. Caring for others in whatever way that we can, given the skills we're blessed with as individuals, was always forefront in my home growing up. After working in psychiatric social services for a few years during and after college, I realized that direct patient care was probably not my calling; however, I love being part of the healthcare ecosystem and supporting the caregivers who work in medical facilities. Also, I enjoy the business side of healthcare. Once I got some traction in management and eventually leadership, I knew I found my life's work. I consider this role as CEO of Southcoast Health to be the pinnacle of my career—I'm very proud to assume this position and serve this wonderful organization and our local communities.

What energizes you about joining Southcoast Health?

I love that Southcoast Health is a community-based organization that is singularly focused on providing excellent care and service to our patients. The patient comes first here—there is no conflict or confusion about this mission. And we offer so much—we are not just three first-rate community hospitals; rather, we are an integrated healthcare system of clinicians, staff and facilities that are able to do so much for our patients. I am energized by where the system is now, and by how much potential we have for doing even more as we move forward together.

What are some of your hobbies outside of work?

I don't have too much time outside of work these days, so I try to spend every moment that I can with my family. I love attending my daughter's school and sports activities when I am able, and Susan and I enjoy a glass of wine and getting caught up on our favorite Netflix series when we have a quiet evening together.

What is an essential part of your daily routine?

Ten minutes of meditation every morning. At first, I was intimidated by the word "meditation," but it's

quite simple. You just close your eyes and focus on your breath. I use Headspace, which is a really good iPhone app. I meditate every morning before I get into my day. It allows me to settle and focus my mind. Some days I really don't have time for it or, frankly, I just don't want to do it...and that's exactly when I most need to sit and do it. So I do. It's a practice.

How do you motivate yourself in your career?

I go through the same ups and downs that everyone else has with their career or job. One of the most enjoyable and challenging parts of a career in leadership is that other people are relying on me to be bring my A-game all the time, be present, and guide the team with positivity and inspiration. I love trying to do that, but it's also hard to maintain full throttle constantly. I'm human, and I get tired and burnt-out too. I try hard to keep this in mind when I relate to my team. That's why self-care is so important—we all need a break once in a while and we need to take care of ourselves so that we can take care of others, whether our patients, our colleagues, or our family and friends.

What is your favorite food?

My wife Susan's meatball sandwiches. The best.

What is your favorite movie?

Favorite fun movie: *Back to the Future*. Favorite serious movie: *Ordinary People*.

What is the last book you read?

Ordinary Grace by William Kent Krueger.

What is one thing that always makes you smile?

Playing with our dog, Gracie.

What is a fun fact about you?

I am a yogi. I have practiced yoga seriously for the past thirteen years at least four times per week. I credit my practice with staying well physically and emotionally, especially important with a stressful job. Yoga is my primary source of exercise these days.