

Q&A with Dr. Allen Rader

Q: What do you find most challenging about the field of obesity medicine?

A: Nutrition, metabolism, behaviors, and psychology. Most every patient that struggles with weight has contributing factors in all four areas (we look at it like four pieces of a puzzle). I find it most challenging in working with each patient to learn which piece affects their weight the most and in what order we need to attack the pieces. The psychology of gaining weight, losing weight, and maintaining weight loss is challenging yet exciting.

Q: What influenced your decision to work with patients affected by obesity?

A: In my years as an emergency physician, I saw cases of persons coming in with premature cardiac disease and dying even with normal cholesterol levels. They seemed to have one thing in common. Their abdomens looked just like mine. I finally decided I wanted to help prevent my own and others' premature deaths, and I started looking into obesity medicine.

Q: What do you think will change about obesity treatment and research over the next five years?

A: Evidence-based, value-priced medicine. I strongly believe no other field of medicine will need statistics and numbers to support the outcomes results to support the value of the treatment.

Q: What might someone be surprised to know about you?

A: I began practicing medicine at the age of 27 in rural Kentucky, delivering babies, caring for intensive-care patients, and running a busy inpatient and outpatient practice. I convinced the hospital to purchase fetal monitors and trained the staff, improving the care to OB patients. I did the first internal scalp electrode during labor in rural Kentucky. I did one of the first streptokinase infusions for acute MI in rural Kentucky. I assisted on nearly every type of surgery done in the hospital. I was one of the first to take ATLS in rural Kentucky. After not seeing my children for nine days, I decided to pursue emergency medicine so I could be more of a father.

Q: What do you do when you aren't working?

A: Spend as much time as possible with grandkids. I enjoy snow and water skiing and recently earned my sailing license.

Q: Why do you support the Obesity Treatment Foundation?

A: I have spent my entire career in the front "battle lines" of medicine. Research is important, but learning how to take that information to the front line and use it effectively is the future of quality care. Obtaining positive results and monitoring changes that improve patient care are the secrets to developing treatments that are reproducible in all front-line practices. This can lead to the improvement of obesity medicine. I believe that is the challenge for the Foundation and the reason I support them.