

Clinical Excellence

An Interview with Jodi L. Cohen-Ansari, MPA, Chief Strategy Officer, Mount Sinai Health System

EDITORS' NOTE Jodi Cohen-Ansari joined Mount Sinai in 2008 as Senior Director of Business and Strategic Planning. She became Vice President of Business Planning when Mount Sinai Health System merged with Continuum Health Partners. In 2019, Cohen-Ansari was promoted to Senior Vice President of the Health System. Before coming to Mount Sinai, Cohen-Ansari held several roles at St. Vincent's Hospital between 2001 and 2008, ultimately serving as Vice President of Finance and Clinical Services. From 1999 to 2001, she was Senior Associate-Healthcare Regulatory Group at PricewaterhouseCoopers, and Assistant Manager-Patient Financial Services at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center from 1994 to 1999. In her current role, Cohen-Ansari performs financial and market analysis to guide Mount Sinai's multimillion-dollar clinical investments; develops and executes external clinical partnerships across New York City, New York State, and New Jersey; and evaluates program development and physician recruitment across the Health System's eight hospitals, among other responsibilities. Cohen-Ansari earned her BA degree in history/law and society at Binghamton University and her master of public administration from New York University's Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service.



Jodi L. Cohen-Ansari

Mount Sinai Hospital, Mount Sinai Queens, Mount Sinai St. Luke's, Mount Sinai South Nassau, Mount Sinai West, and New York Eye and Ear Infirmary of Mount Sinai – have a vast geographic footprint throughout the New York metropolitan region.

How do you describe Mount Sinai Health System's culture and values?

Mount Sinai is made up of extremely intelligent and highly motivated and dedicated physicians,

administrative leaders and staff. We maintain a “can-do” attitude and always proceed with a strong sense of integrity. As our leaders are so bright and hard-working, the bar for performance is set very high.

What have been the keys to Mount Sinai Health Systems' industry leadership and how do you define the Mount Sinai difference?

The Mount Sinai team takes its responsibility to provide high-quality healthcare to our community very seriously. We work to make processes more efficient. We seek to be on the cutting edge. We want to work with the best and brightest in each field. This overlaps with our educational mission which is a large component of the clinical excellence we deliver.

Will you provide an overview of your role and areas of focus?

I direct our business planning function. This implies that I ensure our investments in new providers and programs are assessed to ensure they will result in a positive return. That return is not always financial in the first place, but might be reputational. I tend to focus on the financial performance of these investments

to ensure we can continue to fund our mission. I negotiate the budget for school purchased services which is in excess of \$650 million. This is a difficult role as it walks the tightrope between what is a nice to have versus what is a necessity. We want to keep moving our organization forward but that can be very costly in the short-term and gains are not realized in the short-term. In my role, I am a financial steward working to ensure we are cost conscious in an effort to serve as many patients as possible.

How critical is it for Mount Sinai to develop and execute external clinical partnerships?

Mount Sinai is one of the few local players that has executed on external partnerships. We know we can't always get to market with the speed required, but external clinical partners are able to. It is worthwhile for us to participate in this quick-to-market growth. It allows us to participate without requiring human and real capital investment during the start-up phases.

Will you discuss Mount Sinai's commitment to build a diverse and inclusive workforce?

Mount Sinai has put a lot of resources into creating a diverse and inclusive workforce. We have created a movement that fosters engagement in this commitment across management in hiring decisions, promotion opportunities and student engagement. We seek representation from our diversity leaders when we discuss corporate strategy and especially HR policies.

What do you see as Mount Sinai's responsibility to be engaged in the communities it serves?

We have so many programs that assist the community. We have had an active visiting

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Mount Sinai Health System on Manhattan's Upper East Side

doctors program for decades that works to provide care to home-bound patients. This is an expensive model that we work to maintain from a budget point of view annually. We also serve our employees through innovative programs including providing mental health support which is very important in the post-pandemic workplace. We have rolled out population health programs that help to coordinate care for underserved populations as well as diabetes management programs. We train other hospitals in the creation of the diabetes program at little cost to them. The list is too long to note here.

Do you feel that there are strong opportunities for women in leadership roles in the industry?

Absolutely. A large portion of our leadership team is women. We work together beautifully. I wish I had known that healthcare, outside of the clinical roles, was an opportunity to pursue when I first went to college. I would have been a lot more secure about the direction I wanted to go. I kind of fell into healthcare as a temp employee during college and knew this was where I was meant to be. There are so many roles that we can play. The best part is that we are contributing to society

in fulfilling important functions of keeping accessible, quality healthcare available for our patients.

What advice do you offer to young people interested in pursuing a career in medicine?

Try to find an internship position. It is a good idea to experience the environment you plan to work in prior to committing so many years of your life to education and training. Also, think beyond medicine. There are so many problems to solve in healthcare and while medicine is the front door, there are so many other roles that a physician is asked to fill. ●

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