

# Putting the Patient at the Center

An Interview with Susan Green-Lorenzen,  
System Senior Vice President – Operations, Montefiore Health System

**EDITORS' NOTE** Susan Green-Lorenzen has been associated with Montefiore for over thirty years. She began her career as a staff nurse and progressed rapidly through a variety of leadership positions before being appointed Senior Vice President of Operations in 2009. She is responsible for overseeing hospital operations at the Moses, Weiler and Wakefield Campuses and The Children's Hospital at Montefiore as well as Montefiore Homecare and Montefiore School of Nursing. In her current role she is extremely focused on enhancing the patient experience and leads projects emphasizing quality of care and improving patient access to services, as well as the flow of patients throughout the hospital.



Susan Green-Lorenzen

**INSTITUTION BRIEF** As the academic health system and University Hospital for Albert Einstein College of Medicine, Montefiore ([montefiore.org](http://montefiore.org)) is nationally recognized for clinical excellence – breaking new ground in research, training the next generation of healthcare leaders, and delivering science-driven, patient-centered care. Montefiore is ranked among the top hospitals nationally and regionally by U.S. News & World Report. For more than 100 years, Montefiore has been innovating new treatments, procedures and approaches to patient care, producing stellar outcomes and raising the bar for health systems in the region and around the world.

## What have been the keys to the success of Montefiore Health System?

I would say that our success starts with having a clear vision that has been articulated throughout the organization, and then establishing goals, objectives and measurements around that vision. This is supported by our efforts to be a data-driven organization. This structure helps us stay focused, sometimes in turbulent times, and contributes to our on-going success and growth.

## How do you define your role as System Senior Vice President for Operations?

I am responsible for hospital operations, meaning everything that is happening in the hospitals within the health system.

Additionally, I oversee homecare services and the Montefiore School of Nursing.

## Are these areas of focus intertwined?

They are all intertwined. We view the School of Nursing as the future of our workforce. We work to ensure we have excellent training opportunities for students, we recruit the best candidates to the school and position those students to be successful in the future.

Our homecare services are very much aligned with all of our hospital services. Keeping patients at the center of everything we do is a key driver of success whether we're talking about ambulatory care, acute care, homecare, training and education or any of the other services we provide.

When you look at the emphasis around ambulatory and homecare today, what will the role of the hospital be in the future?

We will always need hospital beds, and our goals and objectives are to make sure that we are ready for patients when they need acute care services, while also doing everything we can to support health and wellness, and keeping people home and in the community.

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All of our ambulatory programs, community outreach, homecare services and care management work collaboratively to support the focus on keeping people out of hospitals. On the hospital side, the focus is on making sure we are poised for higher acuity care, providing a higher level of care, and then transitioning people back to their homes. We work in partnership with physicians' offices and with homecare to ensure a smooth transition as we discharge the patient back into the community.

Is technology enabling a better patient experience or do you worry that technology is taking away the human touch?

At the heart of our business, we're talking about people, meaning the patients that we care for, the providers who deliver care to patients and all of the associates who work at Montefiore.

I view technology as a tool that enhances our work, since the delivery of healthcare revolves around people and relationships. If we didn't move forward with an electronic medical record, we would be in the dark ages. We use technology to help us be more efficient, but it should never interfere with the relationship between patients and providers.

Everyone at Montefiore understands that.

For young people today interested in nursing, what do you tell them about the opportunities that nursing offers, and is top talent coming into the nursing profession?

Today, we are seeing an incredible pool of candidates coming into nursing, whether they are just graduating from high school or those moving into a second career who already possess a bachelor's, master's, or higher degree in another field.

Nursing is an absolutely phenomenal career for any person and I strongly encourage young people to go into the field. My daughter is a nurse here at Montefiore.

There are wonderful opportunities for nurses beyond bedside nursing such as clinical research, academic, information technology and other corporate roles.

At Montefiore, we have extraordinary talent in our nursing department and our nurses often sit right at the table with senior management working collaboratively to improve services.

We have 5,295 nurses in the Montefiore Health System and I couldn't be prouder of the quality of talent we have at Montefiore.

Having been in nursing for 40 years now, I have seen the cycles of recruitment. Right now, nursing is an extremely desirable career.

What has made the industry and Montefiore so special for you?

Every day I get up and I know I can make a difference in someone's life – that never gets old or boring. It's an exciting time to be in healthcare with many changes on the horizon.

I am so proud of the work we do at Montefiore taking care of our patients. Our staff and physicians do extraordinary work every day. To know that I am a part of that, and to know that in my role I can make a difference in someone's life, that's what I find to be very rewarding. I never get tired of that. ●