

Musculoskeletal Health

An Interview with Louis A. Shapiro,
President and Chief Executive Officer, HSS

EDITORS' NOTE Lou Shapiro assumed his current position in October 2006. Previously, he served as Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of Geisinger Health System's Clinical Enterprise. He began his career at Allegheny General Hospital in Pittsburgh and then joined McKinsey & Company as a leader within their health-care practice. Shapiro is a fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives, former Chair of the Greater New York Hospital Association Board of Governors (2014-2015), and on the board of Crutches 4 Kids and Latitude Food Allergy Care.



Louis A. Shapiro

INSTITUTION BRIEF HSS (hss.edu) is the world's leading academic medical center focused on musculoskeletal health. At its core is Hospital for Special Surgery, nationally ranked No. 1 in orthopedics (for the tenth consecutive year) and No. 3 in rheumatology by U.S. News & World Report (2019-2020), and named a leader in pediatric orthopedics by U.S. News & World Report "Best Children's Hospitals" (2019-2020). HSS has a main campus in New York City and a growing network of related facilities. In 2018, HSS provided care to 139,000 patients and performed more than 32,000 surgical procedures, and people from all 50 U.S. states and 80 countries travelled to receive care at HSS. In addition to patient care, HSS leads the field in research, innovation and education. Through HSS Global Ventures and the HSS Education Institute, the institution is collaborating with medical centers and other organizations to advance the quality and value of musculoskeletal care and to make world-class HSS care more widely accessible nationally and internationally. HSS is the official hospital for a number of professional sports organizations and teams including the New York Giants, New York Mets, New York Knicks, Brooklyn Nets, UFC, US Rowing, US Biathlon, US Lacrosse, and USA Basketball. HSS is one of only three hospitals in the United States designated as a Medical Center of Excellence by FIFA.

What have been the key factors to HSS' strength and leadership in the industry?

There are several key factors that help HSS to achieve a continued position of leadership within the industry.

The first is talent because talent drives performance. If you recruit the absolute best talent, it will give you the ability to achieve things that other organizations aren't able to achieve.

The second is culture, which enables this talent to do their jobs in the best way possible. This includes things like the right environment to work in, with engaged team members and all the other resources needed to do their jobs. I frame my philosophy for this as "Leadership By All" meaning that everyone is a leader, regardless of

their role. We have nearly 5,000 people at HSS and they all have different roles, but each one is a leader in what they do. This is something that really sets HSS apart and allows us to remain at the top of our field.

Finally, if an organization has a single focus rather than focusing on many things, they should achieve better results. For us, that focus is musculoskeletal health, and that is why we are the experts in the field. For example, we see thousands of people who have back pain so we know how to best prevent back pain and we know what to do when you have back pain. If you are in the minority that ends up needing back surgery, we know how to do it best because we have done it hundreds of thousands of times before.

HSS is known for its expertise in surgery. Is HSS' focus on prevention and wellness around musculoskeletal health well understood?

Yes, in an increasing amount. This is part of an evolution for us. Hospital for Special Surgery is at our core and always will be – but over time people started referring to us as Special Surgery and then as HSS. HSS is transforming the field of musculoskeletal health and playing an even greater role in people's lives. We aim to help prevent the very conditions we are treating.

When you look at the continuum of care, it has a health component to it and a care component to it. The health component has two big sets of activities: prevention and wellness, and fitness and performance. There are all kinds of things that fit into this bucket. One is the major strides we are making in injury prevention. With prevention and wellness, our goal is to work with you so that you don't ever need us on the care side. With fitness and performance,

our goal is to help you function at your highest level, whether you are a professional athlete, a weekend warrior, or just a person who is navigating through life.

The care part starts when you have a problem. When looking at what you need, we believe in, and are continuing to build capabilities in, conservative care. You may not need surgery. You may not need an injection. Maybe you will eventually, but you need conservative care first.

The complete continuum of care includes prevention and wellness, fitness and performance, conservative care, surgical care, and rehab and recovery. Over time, more people will understand how HSS does that not only for individuals, but also for very large populations nationwide.

Will you highlight HSS' focus on education and research?

Several centers drive research and education at HSS. With 20 laboratories and hundreds of staff members, the HSS Research Institute studies what our physicians see in the exam room and in the operating room and searches for ways to prevent those things from happening in the first place, as well as making treatment options even better for when they are needed.

HSS Education Institute offers a full spectrum of education from teaching kids how not to get injured to teaching future professionals, and everything in between. More than 25,000 medical professionals in 130 countries choose to receive online Continuing Medical education from HSS.

HSS Center for the Advancement of Value in Musculoskeletal Care is comprised of a group of people who really understand value-based healthcare, not just as a buzzword, but as an actionable concept. We are leaders in this area.

Finally, the HSS Innovation Institute facilitates advancements in the area of medications, devices and care delivery, including digital.

All of these centers focus on musculoskeletal health, and on each one of those five buckets in the continuum of care.

How do you define your role leading HSS and how do you focus your efforts?

Three things. One: Be better every day. Two: Cultivate knowledge continuously. Three: Fulfill our responsibility and opportunity to help larger populations to move better and live better. ●