

# Caring for the Community

An Interview with Susan Fox, President and Chief Executive Officer, White Plains Hospital

**EDITORS' NOTE** Susan Fox has been at the forefront of the healthcare industry transformation regionally over the last decade. Fox first joined the White Plains Hospital team in 2010 as Senior Vice President of Administration, bringing with her more than 25 years of experience in health management administration. In 2011, she was named Executive Vice President, and then President in January 2013. She assumed the position of CEO of the Hospital in May 2015. Fox serves as the Chairperson of the Westchester County Association, serves on the Columbia University School of Nursing Board of Visitors, and the Board of the Healthcare Association of New York State (HANYNS). She is a former Chair of the American Hospital Association (AHA) – Regional Policy Board 2 and AHA Board of Trustees member. Fox earned a BSN, Nursing from Columbia University, and an MBA from Baruch College – Mount Sinai School of Medicine.



Susan Fox

## Will you discuss the history and heritage of White Plains Hospital and how the hospital has evolved?

White Plains Hospital has an incredibly rich history of caring for our community. What began as a four-room house in 1893 has now grown into one of the most advanced medical centers in New York's Hudson Valley, with more than 866,000 visits each year to our Hospital and outpatient practices. Over the last decade, we have doubled the number of people seeking care at our Hospital. Our

mission has always been to meet the healthcare needs of our community and over the years we have continued to evolve the complexity of our programs and services to meet the needs of patients. In 2011, we established a multi-specialty physician network which has grown to more than 320 providers and 43 practices across Westchester County. Today, we are proud to provide our patients with access to the most advanced care, performed by world-class physicians, in the most state-of-the-art medical facilities available. We have become a destination for comprehensive cardiac care in the Hudson Valley – with two cardiac catheterization labs, an outstanding electrophysiology program and a recently launched cardiac surgery program, one of only two in Westchester County. Soon, we will be performing thrombectomies – the most advanced stroke treatment currently

available – in our new hybrid OR, featuring the latest biplane angiography technology. The transformation of our Hospital in terms of both its programs and facilities has been astounding, especially over the past decade. In 2021, the Hospital opened a new nine-story, 252,000 square foot outpatient facility with six operating rooms, multiple procedure suites, advanced imaging, including the only PET/MRI outside of New York City, hyperbaric chambers for wound care, and specialty physician offices.

## How do you define White Plains Hospital's culture and values?

I believe we have a very special culture at White Plains Hospital. It is a culture of excellence that is centered around teamwork and collaboration with the patient at the center of all we do. As an organization we are laser-focused on quality and patient experience, we track metrics to monitor our goals and relentlessly communicate to ensure staff at every level of the organization understand the role they play in helping us achieve our goals. Everything we do is guided by our commitment to delivering the highest quality care to our patients. This summer we received a 5-Star designation for quality from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), one of only 8 hospitals in New York State to receive that rating, and were the only hospital in Westchester County to be awarded the highest safety grade of "A" from the Leapfrog Group for seven consecutive periods. The dedication, care, and compassion

**HOSPITAL BRIEF** White Plains Hospital ([wphospital.org](http://wphospital.org)) is a member of the Montefiore Health System ([montefiore.org](http://montefiore.org)), serving as its tertiary hub of advanced care in the Hudson Valley. The Hospital is a 292-bed not-for-profit healthcare organization with the primary mission of providing exceptional acute and preventive medical care to all people who live in, work in, or visit Westchester County, New York and its surrounding areas. Centers of Excellence include the Center for Cancer Care and The William & Sylvia Silberstein Neonatal & Maternity Center. The Hospital's Flanzer Emergency Department is the busiest in Westchester County. White Plains Hospital performs lifesaving emergency and elective angioplasty in its Joan and Alan Herfort, MD, Cardiac Catheterization Laboratory and Marie Promuto Cardiac Catheterization Laboratory and in 2021, the Hospital formally launched its cardiac surgery program with its first-ever open-heart surgery in partnership with world-class cardiac surgeons from Montefiore Einstein. White Plains Hospital has outpatient medical facilities across Westchester, including multispecialty practices in Armonk, New Rochelle, Somers and Yorktown Heights; and Scarsdale Medical Group locations in Harrison and Scarsdale.

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that our staff bring to work each day is a point of pride for me and the entire leadership team. Our leaders throughout the organization naturally seek the highest goals to ensure our patients will always get the highest quality care.

**Will you highlight the relationship between White Plains Hospital and Montefiore and what has made this relationship so effective?**

We were fortunate to partner with the Montefiore Health System in 2015. We share a unique vision to bring advanced care to local communities and since then we have successfully partnered to bring an array of complex programs and procedures to the world-class facilities at White Plains Hospital. As an example, when we launched our cardiac surgery program it was in conjunction with the distinguished surgeons from Montefiore and later this year we will once again be partnering with Montefiore physicians and surgeons to begin performing complex neurointerventional procedures at our Hospital. We also work very closely together on a variety of other programs to ensure our patients have the access to the tremendous resources and treatments that a health system has to offer close to home. If a patient does need a higher level of care, we ensure care is coordinated with the clinical team at Montefiore Medical Center to make the process seamless for patients.

**How critical is it for White Plains Hospital to build a diverse and inclusive workforce to mirror the diversity of its patients and communities?**

We take pride in the diversity of our workforce. Our employees represent a varied collection of talent, backgrounds, and life experiences. We realize that each employee's unique experiences, perspectives, and viewpoints add value to our ability to create an exceptional culture and ultimately deliver the best care to our patients. We have strong Diversity, Equity and Inclusion initiatives and this year earned a "Top Performer" rating in the Human Rights Campaign Foundation's 2022 LGBTQ+ Healthcare Equality Index. We live and work in a diverse community and it is essential that we do everything we can to understand the



*White Plains Hospital*

specific needs of our neighbors and always deliver high-quality, compassionate care.

Our employees represent the various communities we serve. In fact, more than 60 percent of our employees live in Westchester County, which is a large part of the area we serve. To have neighbors taking care of neighbors is very powerful.

**Do you feel that there are strong opportunities for women to grow and lead in the industry?**

We need to advocate for more female leaders in healthcare. Our Hospital was started by 22 women and 3 men more than 125 years

ago. Women have always played an important role in advancing healthcare across the globe, yet only 15 percent of healthcare CEOs are women according to a recent JAMA study. At White Plains Hospital, 74 percent of our 4,000 employees are women and 70 percent of positions at the management level and higher are also filled by women.

**What advice do you offer to young people interested in a career in healthcare?**

I recently gave a commencement address to Mercy College School of Health and Natural Science graduates with a theme of "healthcare needs you." The shortage of qualified and trained healthcare professionals in New York and across the nation is an ongoing problem that has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. By 2030, it is predicted that there will be a shortage of more than 39,000 registered nurses in New York and the State is estimated to fall short of 500,000 total healthcare workers as early as 2026.

In addition to the practical assurance that there will always be jobs for qualified individuals, I cannot think of a more gratifying career than working in healthcare. Day in and day out you are making a difference in someone's life. Whether you choose to work in the clinical areas or administration, there are many opportunities to try new things and advance one's career. Those of us who are veterans in this industry know how important it is to cultivate the next generation of leaders who will continue to innovate new approaches to patient care and break new ground in medicine, science, education, and public health. ●

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