

## The Patient Care Journey

An Interview with Colleen Koch, MD, MS, MBA,  
Group Senior Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, NewYork-Presbyterian/Columbia Division

**EDITORS' NOTE** Dr. Colleen Koch is Group Senior Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of NewYork-Presbyterian/Columbia Division. In this role, she is responsible for the strategic direction, management, and day-to-day operations at NewYork-Presbyterian/Columbia University Irving Medical Center, NewYork-Presbyterian Morgan Stanley Children's Hospital, and NewYork-Presbyterian Allen Hospital, working closely with each facility's team to focus on patient experience, quality and



Dr. Colleen Koch

patient safety, financial and operational strength, and team member, physician and community engagement. Over the past 20 years, Koch has served in leadership roles at top-performing healthcare organizations. She has extensive experience in medical operations and strategic planning, building research and education programs, enhancing quality and patient safety, and recruiting and retaining top talent. Prior to joining NewYork-Presbyterian in 2024, she served as dean at the University of Florida (UF) College of Medicine, as well as chair of the board for the Clinical Practice Association and the UF Health Proton Center. Earlier in her career, she held positions as Professor and Chair of the Department of Anesthesiology and Critical Care Medicine at Johns Hopkins Medicine; as Anesthesiologist-in-Chief for the Johns Hopkins Hospital; and as Professor and Vice Chair of Research and Education for the Department of Cardiothoracic Anesthesiology during two decades with the Cleveland Clinic. Koch trained in anesthesiology at the Brigham and Women's Hospital. She earned a master's degree in clinical research design and statistical analysis from the University of Michigan School of Public Health, and an MBA from Case Western Reserve's Weatherhead School of Management.

**INSTITUTION BRIEF** Located in New York City, NewYork-Presbyterian ([nyp.org](http://nyp.org)) is affiliated with two of the nation's leading medical colleges, Weill Cornell Medicine and Columbia University Vagelos College of Physicians and Surgeons. NewYork-Presbyterian provides state-of-the-art inpatient, ambulatory, and preventive care in all areas of medicine, and is committed to excellence in patient care, education, research, and community service at ten hospital campuses: NewYork-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Medical Center, NewYork-Presbyterian/Columbia University Irving Medical Center, NewYork-Presbyterian

Morgan Stanley Children's Hospital, NewYork-Presbyterian Allen Hospital, NewYork-Presbyterian Westchester Behavioral Health Center, NewYork-Presbyterian Lower Manhattan Hospital, NewYork-Presbyterian Westchester in Bronxville, NewYork-Presbyterian Brooklyn Methodist Hospital, NewYork-Presbyterian Hudson Valley Hospital, and NewYork-Presbyterian Queens.

**What excited you about the opportunity to join NewYork-Presbyterian and made you feel it was the right fit?**

I am incredibly passionate about the role academic medical centers play within U.S. healthcare, so when the opportunity to support NewYork-Presbyterian and specifically the Columbia sphere came about, it resonated with me. I had always admired NewYork-Presbyterian from afar, especially the breadth and quality of research being done at its renowned affiliated medical schools, Weill Cornell Medicine and Columbia University Vagelos College of Physicians and Surgeons, and the remarkable reputation of the enterprise. As I've settled into my new role, I am impressed by so much, including the work being done through NewYork-Presbyterian's

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Ambulatory Care Network, community teams, and the Dalio Center for Health Justice. I want more of my peers within academic medicine to know about this work to address social determinants of health. It's been inspiring to spend time listening to and learning from our teams in all areas of the hospital, specifically what is going well and where there are opportunities for us to grow.

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

My formal title is Group Senior Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of NewYork-Presbyterian/Columbia Division, and that is inclusive of NewYork-Presbyterian/Columbia University Irving Medical Center, NewYork-Presbyterian Morgan Stanley Children's Hospital, and NewYork-Presbyterian Allen Hospital. In my role, I oversee the quality, safety, patient and employee experience, and the efficiency of our operations. I care deeply about the patient care journey and want to ensure that we're effectively optimizing all aspects of the patient experience and also that our teams have the tools they need to be successful in their professional duties and to provide the best patient experience possible.

"Listening tours" across the hospital and shadowing our teams in their various units has provided material for strategic initiatives; I recognize that the hospital is an incubator of ideas. I believe it is critical to include as many voices as possible to determine what change might be needed, and opportunities to implement that change. It allows the change to be more grassroots.

**How do you describe NewYork-Presbyterian's culture and values?**

Our leadership has outlined five organizational values that are spot-on: respect, integrity, innovation, teamwork, and empathy. I was particularly pleased with empathy being included as one of the core values. Not all organizations specifically name empathy as a value, but it is a critical factor in delivering excellent patient care.

During my "listening tour" over the last few months, the team at all levels and specialties has repeatedly shared how much they love working for NewYork-Presbyterian. This love for NewYork-Presbyterian is bolstered by our culture of excellence.

**Would you describe the NewYork-Presbyterian/Columbia University Irving Medical Center campus?**

The best way I can explain the NewYork-Presbyterian/Columbia University Irving Medical Center in Washington Heights is vibrant. The



*NewYork-Presbyterian/Columbia University Irving Medical Center on New York City's Riverside Drive*

community is incredibly diverse and the team at the hospital is equally as diverse, something I think resonates with the patients and communities we serve.

There is also robust data that helps guide our decisions, measure progress, and contributes to our culture of continuous improvement. This data also allows us to partner with our patients to be more preventative with their care. Early detection and intervention are critical to improve patient outcomes.

**How are you focusing on continuous improvement regarding quality, safety, patient experience, efficiency, and delivery of service at the NewYork-Presbyterian/Columbia University Irving Medical Center campus?**

I regularly talk to our teams, caretakers, patients, and their families to make sure the fundamentals of quality, safety, patient experience, efficiency, and delivery of care are well in place and solicit feedback on how we can improve from this baseline. NewYork-Presbyterian fosters a culture of innovation and collaboration, and I am focused on how we can best put together groups of inter-disciplinary team members who consider not only how we can improve care, but how we can

implement changes most effectively and with buy-in from each team. Academic healthcare systems are complex entities that involve critical decisions every day. It's important to evaluate how we make those decisions to achieve the best possible experience and outcomes for our patients. As healthcare continues to grow more complex, from the hospital to the ambulatory space, we must make critical decisions to ensure efficient and streamlined access to care.

We also constantly explore new technologies, such as AI-enabled platforms, to enhance care. We are excited about the rollout of home monitoring by which, for example, metrics like blood pressure and heart rate can be monitored remotely and assessed by a provider, adjusting medication and care accordingly without the patient needing to travel to the hospital.

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

I believe there are strong leadership opportunities for women within medicine. Indeed, in recent years, female medical students have started to outnumber their male peers. In fact, in the 2023-2024 school year, women made up more than 55 percent of students in the country's MD-granting medical schools.

Women, along with champions for women, currently in leadership roles are really helping to pave the way for others – particularly for young women who need exposure to role models early on to show them the possibilities.

**Did you know at an early age that you had a passion to become a doctor?**

My father was a vascular surgeon; he encouraged me to explore medicine at a young age. I was the only sibling who was not squeamish at the sight of blood, so I think by default it allowed my dad to talk about medicine and his work with me more in depth than with my siblings. I was also always intellectually curious. In addition to earning my medical degree, I earned my master's degree in clinical research design and statistical analysis, along with an MBA. I love learning new things and bringing knowledge back to my field.

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

There is nothing more rewarding than being able to change someone's life and improve their health. If you're thinking about going into medicine, go for it. Seek out mentors and ask questions to understand the steps.

It's been an amazing journey being in this field. I love it and would do it all over again. ●