

# The Power of Physician Mentorship: My Personal Journey

I'm extremely passionate about my role as a pediatric nephrologist and feel honored to be a part of child health at such a pivotal time. When I accepted my position as division chief of pediatric nephrology at the OU College of Medicine, I quickly learned that with so few pediatric nephrologist colleagues to lean on across the country, being in a leadership role in this specialty can feel a bit solitary at times.

However, in working with CareerPhysician, I was provided with the support that would end up being an important part of my success – a mentor to guide me throughout my journey.

By working with Dr. Bruder Stapleton, chair of CareerPhysician's Child Health Advisory Council (CHAC), a former pediatric department chair and pediatric nephrologist as a mentor and advisor, I gained insight and direction that allowed me to have more confidence as I embarked on my leadership role.

### Nurturing Growth

When I began my journey as a young physician leader, I had many questions and scenarios where a sounding board was helpful. Dr. Stapleton provided me with advice that was very beneficial in building my division's academic and clinical programs. His confidence in me was empowering as I explored my strengths, identified areas for improvement and developed strategic initiatives. From our discussions, I gained confidence in my abilities to address administrative questions, resolve conflicts and communicate with various leaders in our organization.

### Knowledge Transfer and Skill Development

It was quite helpful to discuss ideas with Dr. Stapleton due to his long-standing leadership experiences and also because he was very familiar with our culture at the University of Oklahoma. With his experience and expertise, Dr. Stapleton generously shared his insights, lessons learned and clinical expertise with me. His reflections have not only refined my skill in strategic planning but also enhanced my understanding of institutional operations. In part with the help of his mentorship, I have enjoyed staying at the forefront of medical advancements, supporting me in my goal to provide the best possible care to my patients.



### About Ikuyo Yamaguchi

Ikuyo Yamaguchi, M.D., Ph.D. is a pediatric nephrologist at Oklahoma Children's Hospital OU Health, and she serves as the division chief of pediatric nephrology at the OU College of Medicine in Oklahoma City. Board-certified in pediatric nephrology, Dr. Yamaguchi specializes in hypertension, chronic kidney disease and kidney transplantation.

Dr. Yamaguchi received her medical degree from Kumamoto University and her Ph.D. from Kurume University in Japan. She completed a residency in pediatrics at Georgetown University Medical Center in Washington, DC and a fellowship in pediatric nephrology at Seattle Children's Hospital in Seattle, WA.

## Navigating Challenges and Striving for Work-Life Balance

As physicians, we face numerous challenges in our demanding roles, including burnout and maintaining a healthy work-life balance. Having a mentor has provided me with a safe space to discuss and navigate these challenges. I have learned effective coping mechanisms, prioritized self-care and managed the demands of my profession. Having a mentor who understands the intricacies of our field, as well as our academic environment, is a tremendous asset in maintaining a healthy work-life balance and thriving in our careers.

Now that I have been in my role as division chief for two years, I am enjoying my leadership position and am excited about the clinical and academic progress of my colleagues and the growth of our end-stage kidney programs. I look forward to continuing our advancements in child health and know the support provided by Dr. Stapleton has had a positive impact on my career.

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## About CareerPhysician

CareerPhysician is the national leader in executive search and leadership development in academic pediatrics with more than 20 years of unprecedented success supporting the complex faculty and executive leadership needs of child health organizations.

With an extensive network of pediatric leaders and a dedicated team of recruitment experts, CareerPhysician is committed to helping healthcare organizations find the right talent to improve child health outcomes. Through its Core Leadership Competencies and partnership with the Child Health Advisory Council, CareerPhysician is committed to the continued development of current and future physician leaders. **To learn more, visit: [careerphysician.com](http://careerphysician.com).**