



## Kevin Blackney, MD

Assistant Physician-in-Chief,  
Professional Development &  
People Operations  
KP Fresno

As Assistant Physician-in-Chief (APIC) for Professional Development & People Operations, Interim Chief of Anesthesia, and ICU Medical Director at KP Fresno, Kevin Blackney, MD, has demonstrated an exceptionally high commitment to clinical excellence. Under his leadership, the Fresno Medical Center has seen vast improvement, especially with the culture of wellness.

Reflecting on some of the initiatives Dr. Blackney led to achieve this, many came to mind. He created the Peer Outreach Support Team (POST), something he started during his residency, introduced at TPMG, and then expanded to Fresno. He also created numerous events for physicians to decompress and build professional fulfillment. “Units work best when they know each other, like each other, and get along,” he says.

Dr. Blackney also undertook process improvement projects, such as revitalizing the physician recruiting experience, which has been a challenge in Fresno. He created a “Warm Welcome” program so that new physicians receive support and guidance. He also enjoys mentoring students from high school through medical school to inspire the next generation of physicians.

Finally, Dr. Blackney is very active with the Growth and Retention Council and is passionate about increasing membership. While advocating for wellness, volunteering locally, and highlighting members’ better outcomes, he has established KP as a trusted partner in the community.

**“Dr. Blackney’s clinical excellence, discipline, and integrity quickly build trust. By setting clear expectations and leading by example, he drives efficiency and accountability. He has fostered a high-performance culture rooted in professionalism, stewardship, and pride across TPMG.”**

Shahzad Jahromi, MD, Physician-in-Chief,  
KP Fresno

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## Megumi Tomita, MD

Assistant Physician-in-Chief,  
Medical Subspecialties  
KP Central Valley

Megumi Tomita, MD, Assistant Physician-in-Chief (APIC) of Medical Specialties, oversees one of the largest clinical practice areas at KP Central Valley. In addition to balancing several interim chief responsibilities, including Gastroenterology, Cardiology, and Endocrinology, she has led a complex portfolio that requires intense engagement and high accessibility. Despite these demands, Dr. Tomita has demonstrated tremendous leadership through discipline, stamina, and commitment.

As an oncologist, Dr. Tomita is best known for redesigning cancer care. In 2008, she established a new model for coordinated patient service, starting with a multidisciplinary cancer leadership group. The program not only obtained prestigious accreditations, but also improved satisfaction. “As a cancer survivor myself, I have a deep understanding of what families and patients go through,” she said.

Dr. Tomita is always willing to try things that have never been done before and learn from them. Her recent initiative, leading a partnership between TPMG and Golden Valley Health Centers, established an innovative approach that has served Medi-Cal patients across Stanislaus County.

Finally, Dr. Tomita’s enduring focus on continuous improvement can be seen through her leadership on work stoppage and

contingency planning, an intense role requiring coordination across physician communications, patient safety, and more. Her dedication to patients, physicians, and teams is unparalleled, and her leadership has made a profound impact in the Central Valley.

**“Across clinical quality, operational excellence, and high-stakes contingency readiness, Dr. Tomita has demonstrated boundless energy and a rare ability to influence through active listening, credibility, and authentic service. Her leadership is sustained, value-driven, and consistently focused on delivering better care for patients.”**

Sanjay Marwaha, MD, Physician-in-Chief,  
KP Central Valley

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## Kasey Cortese, MD

Assistant Physician-in-Chief, Risk,  
Med Legal & Mental Health  
KP Greater Southern Alameda Area

As Assistant Physician-in-Chief for three pillars — Surgical and Procedural Services; Risk, Patient Safety, and Medical Legal; and Mental and Behavioral Health — Kasey Cortese, MD, has led high-impact initiatives that strengthen surgical services and patient safety across KP Greater Southern Alameda Area (GSAA) and beyond.

A KP orthopedic surgeon for 21 years, Dr. Cortese led the development of a high-volume Total Joint Arthroplasty Center of Excellence at KP San Leandro, between GSAA and KP East Bay. This involved coordinating with surgeons from four medical centers to consolidate and standardize equipment, clinical workflows, and best practices; and create a multidisciplinary team with anesthesia, nurses, rehabilitation services, and clinical staff to create a seamless end-to-end experience for joint replacement patients.

Likewise, Dr. Cortese led a major operating room construction project that reduced capacity by 50 percent for 4 months in GSAA, while maintaining surgical access with no increase in case backlogs, surgical site infections, or workplace injuries.

“I can’t remember a project I’ve started that hasn’t taken a little detour along the way,” Dr. Cortese says. “It’s important to remain

mindful when things go in an unanticipated direction, analyze what’s going on, listen to all involved, and then pivot with that input to drive the project back in the right direction.”

**“With steady, values-driven leadership, Dr. Cortese is widely respected for her ability to navigate complex clinical, operational, and organizational challenges; to pivot quickly in dynamic environments; and to partner across disciplines to navigate complex change.”**

Eric Cain, MD, MBA, FAAOS, Physician-in-Chief,  
KP Greater Southern Alameda Area

Kapil Dhingra, MD, MBA, FACEP, Physician-in-Chief,  
KP Greater Southern Alameda Area

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## Sarah Mandel, MD, MS

TPMG Regional Director,  
Inpatient Obstetrics  
KP San Francisco

As Regional Director of Inpatient Obstetrics, Sarah Mandel, MD, consistently drives improvements that advance quality, safety, and equity for maternity patients across KP Northern California. She partners with Maternal-Fetal Medicine, Neonatology, Pediatrics, outpatient OB/GYN, Anesthesiology, certified nurse-midwives, nursing leadership, and hospital operations to solve complex problems and works closely with Kaiser Foundation Hospital partners to ensure that TPMG and nursing work collaboratively side-by-side.

Dr. Mandel has championed efforts to reduce care disparities, launching the first Crossing the Quality Chasm (CQC) metric to track low-risk cesarean rates among black patients. To close care gaps, she partnered with the California Maternity Quality Collaborative Council to implement toolkits for equitably addressing hypertension and hemorrhage management during pregnancy.

Other maternity-related initiatives launched by Dr. Mandel include sepsis protocols, the integration of personal birth doulas, and care pathways for pregnant patients with urgent health concerns. Likewise, Project Permission integrates communications skills training, trauma-informed care, and culturally responsive practices to ensure that respectful communication is foundational to safe maternity care across the region.

“It’s about improving care for all of our pregnant population and empowering them to be the key decision-makers,” Dr. Mandel says. “To have the knowledge at their fingertips, feel empowered, ask questions, challenge, and do whatever they need to have agency over their birth experience.”

**“Through exceptional communication and a deep commitment to patients and colleagues, Dr. Mandel has strengthened maternal-child health across TPMG and built a culture of shared purpose among the many teams involved in caring for birthing people, newborns, and their families.”**

Maria Ansari, MD, FACC, CEO and Executive Director, The Permanente Medical Group

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## Jeremy Pearl, MD

Chief, Anesthesiology  
KP Diablo Service Area

As Chief of Anesthesiology for KP Diablo Service Area, Jeremy Pearl, MD consistently prioritizes patient care, physician engagement, and cross-departmental partnership, collaborating closely with surgical and hospital leaders to optimize workflows across operating rooms, procedural areas, and inpatient settings.

Dr. Pearl leads anesthesia services across the KP Antioch and Walnut Creek medical centers, Dublin Surgical Center, and Martinez Special Procedures Unit. He works with anesthesiologists and Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists (CRNAs), as well as specialists including Surgery, Internal Medicine, Gastroenterology, Cardiology, Interventional Radiology, and Ophthalmology.

Under his leadership, the KP Diablo Service Area Anesthesiology department successfully provided 24/7 procedure and anesthesiology support in crisis situations such as the COVID-19 pandemic, staff shortages, and work stoppages by proactively redesigning staffing models to preserve patient access and maintain safety.

Dr. Pearl is a leader who strives to create a collaborative environment where every team member feels safe to speak up and have a say in group decision-making.

“One of the things about making big, impactful change is that it usually doesn’t happen overnight,” Dr. Pearl says. “But if you do a little bit of change week by week, month by month, and go and look back at the end of the year, you see that we actually made a big difference.”

**“Dr. Pearl has built a resilient, highly collaborative department and has led with steadiness, integrity, and clarity through some of the most challenging operational periods our medical center has faced.”**

Nina Y. Lee, MD, Physician-in-Chief,  
KP Diablo Service Area

Sharon Mowat, MD, FAAP, Physician-in-Chief,  
KP Diablo Service Area

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## Christopher Stokes, MD

Chief, Outpatient Quality and PHASE  
KP North Valley

Christopher Stokes, MD, chief of Outpatient Quality and PHASE (Preventing Heart Attacks and Strokes Everyday) at KP North Valley, is an exceptional leader, widely respected for his clarity, empathy, and (often humorous) stories, which make complex quality concepts relatable and inspiring.

A TPMG Adult and Family Medicine physician since 2003, Dr. Stokes served in numerous leadership positions at KP North Valley, a widespread area that includes Sacramento and Roseville. Under Dr. Stokes's leadership, KP North Valley tripled its Crossing the Quality Chasm (CQC) metrics and established new benchmarks for quality care, achieving or sustaining 12 of 25 quality metrics at goal and improving 9 of 25 metrics year over year.

Through innovative, cross-departmental problem-solving, he delivered the service area's first-ever quality goal attainments in colorectal cancer screening, hypertension, adolescent vaccination, depression monitoring and response, and smoking cessation; as well as its highest-ever performance in diabetes A1C control, hypertension control, and depression care.

"I have four sons and coach high school flag football and basketball," Dr. Stokes says. "The most important thing is to put your team in a

place where they can be successful, with an executable strategy and game plan. And if it's not working, then you have to listen, learn why, and adjust."

**"Dr. Stokes exemplifies the highest standard of physician leadership — uniting teams, elevating clinical performance, and transforming KP North Valley's culture through exceptional communication, innovation, and a deep commitment to patient-centered care."**

Richard Florio, MD, FACS, Physician-in-Chief,  
KP North Valley

Roderick Vitangcol, MD, Physician-in-Chief,  
KP North Valley

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## Wynnyee Tom, MD

Regional Lead, Vaping Cessation  
KP Greater San Jose Area

In 2019, Wynnyee Tom, MD, pediatrician at KP Greater San Jose Area, began noticing an alarming increase in vaping among her teenage patients.

Dr. Tom started including a question about vaping in her medical center's well-child questionnaire, which allowed for systematic vaping screening during routine pediatric visits. She developed SmartPhrases in the electronic medical record, providing pediatricians with the tools to easily offer educational materials to youth and their families about vaping risks and cessation strategies.

These efforts laid the foundation for a multidisciplinary initiative across KP Northern California. As regional lead for Vaping Cessation, Dr. Tom partnered with colleagues in Pediatrics, Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, Addiction Medicine, and Health Education to develop an anti-vaping program based on screening, evidence-based interventions, physician referral pathways, and educational outreach. Along the way, this work garnered five peer-reviewed publications and 15 academic presentations.

Dr. Tom's leadership is defined by rigorous commitment, interdepartmental teamwork, the desire to drive change, and compassion for her patients.

"A patient asked me, What do you love about being a pediatrician?" Dr. Tom says. "I told them, 'Watching the kids grow up, and then they become parents themselves, and the moms become grandparents. If you see a whole family grow up and they're healthy and safe, that's the greatest joy.'"

**"Dr. Tom identified a care gap, studied it, and developed a thoughtful, practical solution. What began as a small initiative has spread across the region through her quiet determination, discipline, and remarkable ability to bring people together."**

Meena P. Pai, MD, Physician-in-Chief,  
KP Greater San Jose Area

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