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HEALTH CARE

40 Under 40: Dr. Sarah Johnson Conway, Johns Hopkins

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By Jessica Iannetta
Managing Editor, Baltimore Business Journal
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Dr. Sarah Johnson Conway

Title: Chief medical officer, Johns Hopkins Clinical Alliance; Senior medical director, physician alignment & integration, Johns Hopkins Physicians; Assistant professor of medicine, Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine

Age: 38

Residence: Baltimore

Education: Bachelor's degree in economics, Harvard University; M.D., Perelman School of Medicine at University of Pennsylvania

Career theme song: "Alien Superstar" by Beyonce. As a black, female physician leader who has charted a non-traditional path through finance to medicine, I find that I am "one of one" in many rooms. "Unicorn is the uniform you put on; eyes on you when you perform." That line aligns with how I have often described my lived experience and brings power to the opportunity and obligation of being "unique".



What recent professional accomplishment are you most proud of and why?

I recently led the transition of one of our largest primary care sites to a Federally Qualified Health Center. The collaboration brought together the resources and skills of Johns Hopkins Medicine and Baltimore Medical System to offer expanded healthcare access and wrap-around services for our East Baltimore community. It simultaneously created a novel venue for education and community-based research to train future generations of providers. This was a complex transition that had been contemplated for many years requiring buy-in from a multitude of key stakeholders both internal and external to the organizations.

Dr. Sarah Conway is chief medical officer of the Johns Hopkins Clinical Alliance.

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What made you want to get into your chosen profession?

From my youngest years I wanted to be a physician and by five was dead set on becoming a pediatric heart surgeon. Despite the early vision, I ended up taking a different path driven by a disillusionment with the way health care was changing. I studied economics in college and worked initially at Goldman Sachs as an investment banking analyst before returning to my childhood dream in medicine. I grew to appreciate that despite the challenges facing health care, physicians have a unique and powerful ability to impact the lives of others. Deciding to combine my business mind with my medical passion, I embarked on a career that allowed me to be a doctor who works to improve the overall health care delivery system.

What advice would you give to someone else looking to get into your field?

The care of others is a privilege and if you want to be a physician, it must be your passion. I changed career paths because I saw medicine as a mission, not just a job. It is a challenging and long road that can be all encompassing and thus is not for the faint of heart. Think the recent Covid-19 pandemic is a great example of this. Physicians (and all health care workers) were called to serve in ways we had not previously imagined and to be flexible both professionally and personally to take on an emergent crisis. If medicine does align with your passion, it's totally worth it and there are few other jobs that will match the sense of fulfillment.

What is the most valuable lesson you've learned so far in your career?

Just because things have "always been done that way" does not mean they always should. That lesson can apply to how you define your career path and to how you take on new challenges and initiatives.

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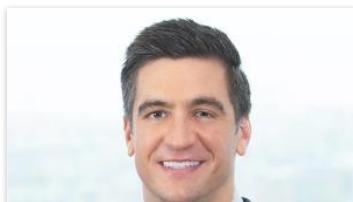
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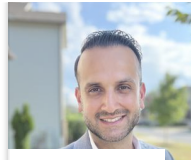


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