



Dr. Anderson with her husband, Ashish, and her children Asha, 15, and Ajay, 13.

A Passion for Compassion:

A spotlight on Duval County Medical Society member Dr. Cynthia Anderson

By Erica Santillo, Duval County Medical Society



Dr. Anderson speaks about guest editing the Pediatric Oncology issue of Northeast Florida Medicine during the July Tumor Board conference at Wolfson Children's Hospital

When you walk into Dr. Cynthia Anderson's office, you immediately notice the pictures of her family over her desk, the posters of past events and conferences leaning against the wall, and a box of "The Hobbit" PEZ dispensers peering from the top level of her bookshelf.

But what might you not see right away is what gives the most insight into her character as a physician: the cluster of awards on the lower level of the aforementioned bookshelf, most noticeably the Most Compassionate Director award.

Compassionate patient care is the aspect of medicine that Dr. Anderson is most passionate about. According to her, seeing patients as people is crucial, especially during a cancer diagnosis.

"No matter what a patient is going through, they always want to feel like they're being treated as people, not as patients, and they want to have their dignity and self-esteem remain intact," she said. Dr. Anderson is a radiation oncologist who primarily sees patients diagnosed with breast cancer. She has been practicing medicine in Jacksonville since 2007 and has been awarded the honor of being Most Compassionate Director from 2011 to 2014. "It can be very emotionally fatiguing for a family and for a patient to go through a cancer diagnosis, especially if they have the constant worry about if the cancer could ever come back," she said. "So I try to encourage patients to see themselves constantly as a

whole person, not just a person diagnosed with cancer."

Part of that compassionate patient care is considering the patient's caregivers as well, something she said modern medicine doesn't give enough attention to.

"For us to only take care of patients in isolation keeps us from understanding what is going on in the family dynamic," she said. Their suffering, she said, could be financially, emotionally, or the time that they're taking to give to a family member. A caregiver doesn't even have to be a blood relative to be considered family, she said. Dr. Anderson added that she believes sometimes it's harder to be the caregiver than the patient.

"No one ever goes through a diagnosis entirely alone," Dr. Anderson said. "Caregivers are just as likely to suffer while a family member is going through treatment and celebrate when a family member does well."

Often Dr. Anderson finds herself inspired by her patients. She recalls a recent patient who survived a cancer diagnosis as a child. The woman was the definition of resilience, surviving cancer and intense therapy, only to battle terminal breast cancer years later as a mother.



“Imagine someone whose journey from a very early age through the end of her life was so centered on a cancer diagnosis,” she said. “And yet, she was able to raise four boys, be active in her community, be active in her church, and really kind of be a strong role model to everyone who knew her. I just felt so honored to be a part of her family and her care, through her journey, and it was a very touching and tender moment when she passed away.”

Before entering the medical field, Dr. Anderson said her love was politics. She was a political science major during her undergraduate years and worked in Washington D.C. for the National Security Archives. But she turned to medicine after she realized she wanted to help people more directly.

“I was looking for something that gave me a more tangible connection, where I could see the difference I was making more closely,” she said.

She still remains active in the political world, however, by her in-

volvement in the Duval County Medical Society. For the last few years, she served as a delegate to the Florida Medical Association for DCMS. She decided to take this year off due to a family illness. However, her mother, Dr. Tracy Sinha, an allergist and fellow DCMS member, served as the delegate on her behalf.

Physicians run in Dr. Anderson’s family; she said that half of her family members are physicians, so there is a nice blend. But she said whether her two teenage children will continue the medical trend is up to them.

“I’m open to them being involved in medicine but they should explore their options,” she said. “The world is so creative now and there are careers that didn’t exist when I was growing up.”

Dr. Anderson said she encourages doctors to become members of the DCMS so they can be aware of important issues affecting medicine and have an outlet to voice their feelings on those issues.

“It’s important to put the power in your voice, so that other people don’t have the power there for you,” she said. “I know the importance of letting politicians know where I stand on issues that feel important to me and recognize that no one can do the work that I believe in for me.”



ASK YOUR NEIGHBORS... WE LITERALLY HAVE A SHOWROOM IN EVERY NEIGHBORHOOD!!

LIFETIME Enclosures INC.

ENCLOSURE OF THE MONTH

25 YEARS
CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE

Pam H. MANDARIN

OPEN HOUSE SAT OCTOBER 31ST
VISIT NORTH FLORIDA'S PREMIER SHOWROOM & FACILITY!
FREE FOOD, TRICKS & TREATS!

starting at **\$69/month** DAILY

LifetimeEnclosures.com • 5521 Chronicle Court, 32256

638-7540
Military & Senior Discounts!

FALL SPECIAL!
Save up to **15%**

FREE In-Home Design Services

Sunrooms • Screen Enclosures • Carports • Patio Covers
Lanai Conversions • Outdoor Kitchens • Replacement Windows

ACCREDITED BUSINESS
Rated A+

Lifetime Enclosures • 5521 Chronicle Court • 638-7540
See designer for details. With this coupon. Not valid with other offers or prior purchases. Offer expires 11-05-15.