Practicing Medicine After Retirement

Announcer:
You're listening to Your Career in Healthcare on ReachMD, the channel for medical professionals. Your host is Tim Rush, president and CEO of the healthjobsnationwide.com network, featuring over 1.5 million healthcare jobs daily from over 60 thousand employers nationwide.

Tim Rush:
After retiring from a children’s hospital in southern California where he founded a group called Pediatric Surgical Associates and later became surgeon in chief at the pediatric hospital, this physician began to reconsider his decision to retire, and he went back to work practicing medicine. Why would he do that after practicing for almost 30 years? I'm your host, Tim Rush, and I have the pleasure of welcoming Dr. Ali Kavianian to ReachMD where we'll be discussing practicing medicine after retirement. Dr. Kavianian, welcome.

Ali Kavianian:
Thank you.

Tim Rush:
You're old enough to retire. You retired. Reconsidered it and went back. Why did you choose to keep practicing?

Ali Kavianian:
Actually, I never planned to practice after retirement like other physicians. I thought when I retire, I retire, start other aspects of my life. But after about seven or ten months, about that time, I realized because I have been so busy with the practice and I thought that at the end of my career I was at the top of my knowledge, my experience, and I was really making a difference in the life of children and all the patients that I dealt with. Suddenly, I stopped and I thought that I'm wasting myself. Somehow this feeling came to me. And then the Locum tenens associate contacted me and approached me, and I looked at their activity, then I _____ (0:01:52) with some reservation, but after I practiced and I tried a few times the practice of Locum tenens, I really loved it and I knew that I'm in the right place and I'm still making a difference, especially when I see that I'm still physically and mentally, I say as long as I can go I should practice and make a difference in the life of some people.

Tim Rush:
Yeah. I can't imagine practicing for as long as you did, especially in the pediatric environment being so passionate and knowledgeable. I completely can understand that. In addition to seeing patients, what does the role of an older physician, how does that play in with mentoring younger doctors?

Ali Kavianian:
Actually, regarding the mentoring, just like I said earlier, I realized that I have a lot of experience, about 50 years of experience, and to me it seems that these experiences should be passed on to the younger generation and a lot of worthwhile and valuable ideas regarding how to treat (0:03:00 so basically) children, I have accumulated and I think I should, and it's a good idea to pass it on to the new physicians. And during the past few years, actually two years, since I've been doing Locum tenens practice, I have met a few younger physicians, discussing patients on their cases and their problems. They've really been very receptive to my suggestions and they really valued it. And I enjoy seeing that I can teach them something and give some of my experience to them.

Tim Rush:
With the increased shortage of physicians in the US, do you feel retired physicians is the way to address problem?

Ali Kavianian:
I think retired physicians, just like the way I have been doing the past two years, they can make quite a bit of difference in alleviating some of the shortages in some areas, especially...It depends on the specialty and the ability of the physician, of course, but when the physician thinks and realizes that he or she is fit to practice (0:04:16) that I have been doing in the past, I think it is a great idea that he can continue to be useful in different ways, practicing, teaching surgery, and all the things. I think it's a good idea.

Tim Rush:
What originally made you decide to try Locums and how were you introduced to Weatherby Healthcare?

Ali Kavianian:
Regarding Locums that I started two years ago and I still continue as long as I am able, I was approached by my email that they were showing me in an email that I received how to practice how much activity I was exposed to through the spectrum of their work and what they do. Then I approached them and they welcomed. Weatherby was the same. I received several emails and then I looked at their website. I was interested in their activities and I approached, and that's how we started.

Tim Rush:
If you're just tuning in, you're listening to Your Career in Healthcare on ReachMD. I'm your host, Tim Rush, and joining me today is Dr. Ali Kavianian, a semi-retired pediatric surgeon. You've gone from being a leader of your own group to a surgeon and chief at a pediatric hospital. Was it difficult for you to transition into a Locum assignment where you were just a member of a team?

Ali Kavianian:
Not at all. The reason is what is most important thing in my mind, and I believe in every physician's, is to be helpful to the patient. Now if it is a surgeon or a nonsurgeon, as long as we are treating patients and making them well and we're happy, and we see a patient who was really sick after the surgery and what we did recovered nicely and, especially children recover very nicely because their body is so go. Anyway, that's the most satisfaction. I don't care if I'm...I used to be a chief of surgery or any other title I had, my direct contact and relation with the patient is the most important. And as long as I'm doing that and I'm happy with what I'm performing, that's the maximum satisfaction.

Tim Rush:
What advice would you give to other retiring doctors who are thinking about working a Locum tenens project?

Ali Kavianian:
My advice is that even if they never have thought of that during their career, because I believe that just like myself doctors are so busy, most of them at least, they're so busy they never even have a chance to think about...I never even thought about Locum tenens. I never thought that such a thing existed, because there was no time for me to even think of anything else. So when they hear about Locum tenens after they retired, this is my recommendation and advice that they should try it. It doesn't hurt to try it. And I'm 100 percent sure that once they try it they will like it and they'll want to continue. Of course, it depends on the ability of the person, physically and mentally and the time they have. All those factors should come into play. But they should try and see how it is and to continue based on the amount of time they have and their schedule and other things that they have in life.
Tim Rush:
Well, after 50 years in medicine, what still makes you excited to go to work?

Ali Kavianian:
I think I have said that in a different way just in your previous question. My main...maybe I should say even more than main, absolute desire and passion is to take care of patients and see them when they get well and they go home and they come back and so appreciative, the parents. I think that never stops in me until the last day of my life, and I will stop doing surgery, practice of medicine when I see that I'm not fit physically and mentally. If I see that I will not continue. But other than that I don't think that I'm going to stop taking care of patients. During my career, I have seen some physicians, sadly to say, I realize that they did not have a passion for their career, for their practice or their profession. It's like some of them have come to call it making money, just have a good life or better life or just do whatever they're supposed to. How I discovered that was I realized they retired really early. They were almost 60 and they said I'm going to retire. I'm going to do other things. And so I realized that they did not like what they were doing. If you don't like what you're doing, you shouldn't have even started going to medicine, but me and I've seen many, many other MDs love their profession, and that love of profession and taking care of patients keeps us going.

Tim Rush:
Well, you've spoken a lot about your passion of patients, your passion to be involved in children's lives, and what other advice might you give young doctors about how to have a successful career in medicine?

Ali Kavianian:
In addition, aside from they should have a passion and love in medicine, is that just what I can tell you is I look at myself. Over the last six years and during my actual career, every morning I went to work early and I did what I had to do, didn't leave any stone unturned. Everything was taken care. Medical discipline is the most important thing that really has been taught many ways, but we all have to remember it until the last day of our career that the discipline of medicine, which means that you are responsible for your patient and you have to take care of your patient until that patient is well and their treatment is completed. It's a very important aspect that I can talk about for hours, and everybody knows about the discipline of medicine and how the physician should handle their profession. This is the advice I have. You should not during the day of work, an ordinary day you should not leave your patients. I don't mean next to the patient. I mean to be aware of all of the patients that you're taking care of and not to leave their treatment undone half way or not perfect or nearly perfect. This is what I can tell the patients. And I'm sure and I hope and I'm sure they all know it.

Tim Rush:
Well, I want to thank you, Dr. Kavianian, for discussing your lengthy career, your passion for medicine, your passion for making a contribution. I wish you the best of success in your continuation of your practice.

Ali Kavianian:
Thank you.

Tim Rush:
I'm your host, Tim Rush, and thanks for listening.

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