



SUPPORTING EACH OTHER WITH COMPASSION AND STRENGTH

By Christine Steele

Being a physician and being a mom each come with their own unique challenges. Dr. Hala Sabry found that out when she was trying to balance her two full-time careers – one as a board-certified emergency medicine doctor and the other as a mother of five with two sets of twins.

That led her to create the Physician Moms Group, to offer support and strength to other female doctors who also are moms. In just six short years, the group has grown from 20 friends into the largest online support network for women physician mothers, with more than 120,000 members nationwide.

Charleston family practitioner Dr. Kay Durst discovered the group when it was still in its infancy – with just a few hundred members. A third-generation family practitioner and the first woman in her family to become one, Dr. Durst said the support and camaraderie the group offers fills a much-needed void.

"I've been out of medical school for a while, but there wasn't as much uplifting of female physicians then. Unfortunately, these days, women still face challenges when it comes to equal rights and equal pay. In academics, there are still more male physicians in leadership roles. Even though my babies are teenagers now and going off to college, it has been good to get some feedback and support around being a full-time mother and full-time physician."

The group has offered educational seminars on topics such as physician burnout, women and finances, contract negotiation and the business of medicine – running your own medical practice.

Dr. Durst said the group has also been a great source of support to the women doctors during the COVID-19 pandemic: "From racial issues to shootings to accidents to COVID, we talk about how it affects us because we are on the front lines. It's been very helpful."

The group is open to any female M.D. or D.O., including researchers, emergency doctors and family practitioners. Smaller unofficial "chapter groups" like the Holy City Physician Moms Group also have popped up to support each other locally.

"There are a lot of smart women physicians who are also moms who are putting together education for the greater good," said Dr. Durst.

In addition to offering support in their professions, the group serves as a resource for the women in other ways: sharing referrals for nannies, advice on schools and

even gardening, for example.

"It's a great group," said Dr. Durst. "We really get a lot of support from each other."

The group will hold its first in-person gathering since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic this year. The Physician Moms Group Third Annual Conference will be held Aug. 5 through Aug. 7 at the West Beach Conference Center on Kiawah Island. Registration is open now, and the conference still has a few openings for sponsors. Visit meeting.mypmg.com/registration/ to sign up.

"It's very exciting, because it's a chance for us to meet with female physicians from all over," Dr. Durst said.



Dr. Hala Sabry, left, with Dr. Kay Durst.

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