

Finding purpose in THE FUTURE OF MEDICINE

By Mary Caire, MD



I was only 19 years old, but I remember my grandfather's funeral like it was yesterday. The cathedral in New Orleans was overflowing with generations of people who literally owed their lives to Dr. Arthur Caire, III. He had been with them when they were born, taken them through broken bones and illnesses, and had even been by the side of many of their loved ones as they died. They were there to pay their respects and to say thank you.

I was deeply moved by the connection my grandfather had to each person there. That day was a pivotal moment which fueled my desire to become a fifth-generation doctor. Like him, I knew that I wanted to do my part to impact as many lives as possible.

I earned my MD from Louisiana State University (LSU) medical school, and trained at Charity Hospital, the largest public hospital in New Orleans. We took the toughest medical cases, regardless of a patient's ability to pay. The training was intense. I worked for five years as a combined Internal Medicine and Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation (PM&R) resident, achieving Chief Resident status in my final year.

I slept there. I ate there. I lived there. I often wondered if I was sacrificing too much of my personal life for one goal-- to be the best doctor

I could possibly be. My desire to help others never wavered.

I completed my residency and became Board Certified in PM&R. Within a year, I started my own business. **Medical school teaches us so much about what it takes to be a great doctor, but there is no time dedicated to showing us how to run a business.** Shortly after completing my residency, I had a crash course in business development... hiring staff, writing a business plan, buying equipment, marketing, and navigating my way through a maze of insurance contracts.

The realities of caring for people under the umbrella of managed care and insurance reimbursement forced me to see a large number of patients in a short amount of time. I was constantly frustrated that I didn't have enough time to truly know my patients on a deeper level.

I started my family at the age of 40 with the birth of my son, Andrew, and the following year, my daughter, Elizabeth. Becoming a mother gave me an even higher sense of purpose to help others and to make the world a better place. This awareness was heightened by the knowledge that my children would be raised in a more toxic world. I thought about my own long-term health in a whole new light, wanting to be

there for my children as long as possible.

This shift in my view of healthcare, paired with the changes in insurance and government regulations, made the business side of my practice more laborious and brought me back to my deep roots in medicine. **How could I have that same profound impact on my patients that my father and grandfather once had?** I asked myself over and over: What do I want my legacy to be?

Around the same time I began questioning my role in medicine, I received an enticing offer to join a hospital-owned Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation (PM&R) practice. Deep down, I knew that wasn't my answer. I began to look for other ways to help my patients. I remember one day in particular. I was at the surgery center performing interventional pain procedures, when another surgeon, Dr. Kevin Light, began describing his new training through The American Academy of Anti-Aging Medicine (A4M) and the conversion of his surgical practice into integrative medicine. I was intrigued. Could this be what I was looking for?

For weeks, I researched my options. With only hours left to sign the hospital-owned group contract, I made a bold choice – I chose to cut my salary and my clinical hours in order to work on the cutting-edge of science. I made the choice knowing that it would be virtually impossible to go back to the traditional world of medicine. I was re-energized by the possibilities ahead for me and for my patients. I chose to follow the path of integrative medicine.

I thought back to my father, my grandfather, and the doctors who came before them and how they built real relationships with patients. I knew this shift to integrative medicine would allow me to do the same. Ironically, embracing the future of medicine allowed me to reconnect to its past.

What happened next shocked me. My staff found other opportunities due to concerns about the future of my practice and their job security.

I was left to write a new business plan, design a new office space, hire new employees and complete a fellowship. I am as thankful for the challenges as I am for the opportunities.

Today, I am Fellowship Trained in Anti-Aging & Regenerative Medicine and Metabolic &

Nutritional Medicine, and certified by the American Board of Anti-Aging & Regenerative Medicine. I have a dedicated staff and a renewed vitality for my career. I no longer accept insurance and make a good salary focusing on the greater good of my patients. Today, my patients seek me out for my education and expertise, instead of coming to me because I am the closest doctor who accepts their insurance plan.

I practice precision medicine and embrace the role of DNA in my integrative practice. Precision medicine elevates integrative, holistic care by enabling a higher-level of patient knowledge. In addition to a patient's lifestyle, diet, health history, biomarkers, microbiome composition and metabolomics, we can now understand their unique genetics and genetic predispositions. We can pinpoint risks for specific diseases and help patients make choices that prevent the diseases from ever manifesting.

With integrative medicine's focused approach for doctors and DNA's power to motivate and inspire patients, we are poised to have more control over our health (our lives) than ever before.

As I immerse myself in the latest DNA research, I marvel at advancements that are revolutionizing health care today:

- **Individualized Medicine or Precision Medicine:** We are moving from prescribing a one-size-fits-all pill for a particular disease or disorder to creating individualized health programs based on a person's unique nutritional needs, genetics, and biochemistry.
- **Personalized Longevity Plans:** The child probably has already been born who will live to be more than 150 years old. Therefore, we need to switch our thinking from how to stop disease and refocus on how to maintain health so that people over 100 can live active, productive lives and contribute to our society's success.
- **Big Data and Predictive Analytics:** Matching a particular therapeutic plan to a specific genomic profile is a big data problem. Massive data storage and processing power is required to analyze data on therapeutic interactions with different genetic combinations. For example, just focusing on 20 genes is a calculation with 4.3×10^{67}

possible combinations. Large, open big-data platforms can do what humans cannot do – analyze that data and take it to the next level by predicting outcomes and doing it almost instantaneously.

As doctors and medical professionals who embrace integrative medicine, we must blaze the trails for this amazing medical future.

I have already begun to reach out to genetic testing companies, big data companies, educational institutions, and policy makers to create partnerships and learning opportunities. My vision is to find the right combination of partners to create the healthy future I know we can for our patients and our families.

Moving forward into the unknown, I think doctors need to understand not only medicine, but also its role in society. We need to reach out to our policy makers, big businesses and the media to help them understand what could be if we all worked together to create a healthier nation.

As a fifth-generation physician, I proudly take my place alongside those who went before me, and am inspired by their dedication. I understand now that the real lesson they tried to teach me was not about a specific medical procedure or building a successful practice. It was about changing lives and making the world a better, healthier place.

Dr. Mary Caire is an integrative medical doctor, speaker, and author who is a leader in DNA-informed precision medicine. She is board-certified in the specialty of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation and fellowship-trained in Regenerative and Metabolic Medicine.

Using a process called the “The Caire Method,” Dr. Caire practices personalized medicine. Her clients receive customized health restoration and preservation plans which are based on their own unique genetics, hormonal balance, and biochemistry.

Dr. Caire is founder and medical director of The Caire Institute, located in Allen, TX, where she trains other physicians and healthcare providers on her unique protocols and methodology, which promote optimal health through integrative medicine.

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