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PNN Interview | Dr. Monica Perlman, Passionate about Public and Preventive Health



Monica Perlman, MD, MPH, is a private practitioner, CEO of Perlman Clinic and a member of the XiMED Board of Directors for the last two years. Dr. Perlman brings a passion for patient care and preventive health to her work as an internist. Perlman Clinic is an expanding medical practice that currently provides primary care in three locations in San Diego County.

Dr. Perlman's early commitment to medicine was born out of a personal tragedy when her mother died at age 38 from colon cancer. Later her commitment showed itself as a fearless ambition and self-confidence that saw her give birth to her three now-adult children while still in medical school, and her fierce commitment to medicine on both an individual and macro scale drove her to focus on internal medicine while also completing a master's degree in public health. All of this was aided by the support of her husband of more than 30 years, Ron Perlman, who is an attorney, real estate developer and investor.

Dr. Perlman arrived in San Diego at the age of 16 with her parents, who emigrated here from Mexico. She is fluent in Spanish, and English, which she speaks without an accent, is actually her second language.

In college she studied science but didn't know she would go to medical school until just before her mother died. She was compelled to study medicine as she witnessed the care given her mother.

"I was always good in math and science," she says of her early educational interests. "I told my mother I would be a good doctor."



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She attended medical school at the University of California, Irvine, graduating in 1989. Her daughter, Raquel, was born between her second and third year of medical school, and her twin boys, Mitch and Ian, were born in her last year just prior to starting her internship. After finishing an internship at Scripps Clinic and Research Foundation, she completed her residency at the University of California, San Diego. Dr. Perlman has lifetime Board Certification in Preventive Medicine and Public Health. She earned a Master's Degree in Public Health with an emphasis in occupational medicine in a combined UCSD/SDSU program. During her career at Scripps Clinic, she also served as director of primary care and as the head of occupational medicine and employee health. Today, Dr. Perlman is also a voluntary assistant professor in the Department of Medicine at the University of California, San Diego.

When asked about her accomplishments, her first words are of gratitude. "I am grateful for what we have," she says. "Every day I think of 10 things I am grateful for."

She oversees the operation of Perlman Clinic, which includes four physicians and three physician assistants with locations in Clairemont, Hillcrest and La Jolla. Working with her son Mitch, she is planning to expand by adding sites in San Diego.

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