

Robert A. Phillips and Khurram Nasir Spearhead Special Issue on Quality and Patient Safety

The editors of the *Methodist DeBakey Cardiovascular Journal* thank Robert A. Phillips, MD, PhD, and Khurram Nasir, MD, MPH, MSc, for their leadership in curating this issue on quality and patient safety in cardiovascular care.



Robert A. Phillips, MD, PhD

Dr. Phillips is executive vice president and chief physician executive at Houston Methodist, president and chief executive officer of the Houston Methodist physician organization, and professor of cardiology in the Houston Methodist Academic Institute. He earned a combined MD/PhD in molecular biology from Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai in New York

City and completed his internal medicine residency at New York-Presbyterian/Columbia University Irving Medical Center followed by fellowships in cardiology and hypertension at Mount Sinai.

For the first 20 years of his career, Dr. Phillips was a clinical trialist, cardiologist, and professor of medicine at New York University School of Medicine, chair of the Department of Medicine at Lenox Hill Hospital, and professor of medicine at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai in New York City.

In the fall of 2005, Dr. Phillips was unexpectedly thrust into the world of quality and patient safety. Just weeks before he joined the UMass Heart and Vascular Center of Excellence as its inaugural director, UMass voluntarily stopped performing elective cardiac surgery due to its high mortality rates for coronary artery bypass surgery. Dr. Phillips immediately shifted his focus to public reporting and quality patient safety. Working with a dedicated team from UMass, he reopened the CT surgery program in 6 weeks and quickly reduced cardiovascular-related mortality rates across the board. For 5 consecutive years, mortality for acute myocardial infarction remained the lowest among academic medical centers in New England.¹

Dr. Phillips has participated in more than 60 clinical trials, been awarded multiple NIH grants, and written over 170 publications, including *America's Healthcare Transformation: Strategies and Innovations*. He is a fellow of the American College of Cardiology, the American Society of Hypertension, the American College of Physicians, and the American Heart Association, from which he has received numerous awards. In 2020, the Houston Business Journal named him one of the "Most Admired CEOs" for his role as president and CEO of the Houston Methodist Physician Organization.



Khurram Nasir, MD, MPH, MSc

Dr. Nasir is the chief of Cardiovascular Disease Prevention and Wellness and codirector for the Center for Outcomes Research at Houston Methodist. Previously he served as the director of Population Health & Health System Research at Yale University School of Medicine. His academic interests are preventive cardiology, big data applications for population health management, improving patient experiences, and eliminating disparities and health-care-related financial burden among vulnerable populations.

He earned his MD in Pakistan followed by an MPH at Johns Hopkins University. He completed his internal medicine residency at Boston Medical Center and his cardiology fellowship at Yale University. From there, he completed postdoctoral research training at Johns Hopkins Hospital and received an NIH T-32 fellowship in cardiac imaging at Massachusetts General Hospital. Delving into his interest in quality issues, he recently earned a master's degree in Health Economics and Policy Management from London School of Economics & Political Science.

Dr. Nasir serves as associate editor for *Circulation: Quality of Care and Outcomes*, is on the editorial board member for *Circulation* and the *Methodist DeBakey Cardiovascular Journal*, and sits on the board of directors for the American Society of Preventive Cardiology. In 2013, he was honored with the Johns Hopkins Distinguished Alumnus Award, which acknowledges alumni who have typified Johns Hopkins' tradition of excellence and brought credit to the University by their personal accomplishments, professional achievements, or humanitarian service. He was also recently honored with the 2020 Arthur S. Agatston Cardiovascular Disease Prevention Award recognizing individuals whose pioneering efforts have saved lives from coronary artery disease.

Dr. Nasir has over 500 peer-reviewed articles published in top journals such as *Lancet*, *New England Journal of Medicine*, *JAMA*, *Archives of Internal Medicine*, *Journal of the American College of Cardiology*, and the *European Heart Journal*. He has lectured extensively throughout the world on cardiovascular disease prevention, health economics, and policy.

REFERENCES

1. Phillips RA, Cyr J, Keaney JF Jr, et al. Creating and Maintaining a Successful Service Line in an Academic Medical Center at the Dawn of Value-Based Care: Lessons Learned From the Heart and Vascular Service Line at UMass Memorial Health Care. *Acad Med* 2015 Oct 1; 90(10):1340-6.