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November 13, 2016

Independent Study and Mentorship

Interview Assessment #4

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Name of person interviewed: Dr. Gary Gerlacher

Profession: Former pediatrician and current CEO

Location and business name: Pediatric Urgent Care Consultants, Houston, TX

Date of interview: November 11th, 2016

Time: 4:00 pm

Summary and Reflections:

My interview with Dr. Gerlacher was very different from the other three interviews I had gone on because while he had practiced pediatric medicine for many years prior, he currently works as a business owner of his own pediatric clinic company. Dr. Gerlacher blends business with pediatrics in a unique way that appeals to me greatly, as I have been interested in business throughout high school.

This interview took place at a local Starbucks, and lasted about 50 minutes. One of the things that struck me instantly was that Dr. Gerlacher was remarkably laid back and casual in comparison to the professionals I had interviewed before. Before our meeting, I made sure to prepare questions that focused more on the business aspect of pediatrics

rather than the medicine practice aspect, because I knew that was the field he was more involved with.

He began by explaining what his current job entailed, which was a career in which he worked from home with extremely flexible hours. He owns a consulting business, where he advises pediatricians around Texas on how to open pediatric urgent care clinics to maximize profitability and efficiency. His current projects included helping pediatric clinics in California as well as an effort to open pediatric urgent care clinics in the rural areas of East Texas. I was very interested to learn about the financing and management behind operating a successful clinic.

The next question I asked him about was why he had decided to transition from the healthcare practice environment into the entrepreneurial and corporate environment. He went on to explain to me his educational background and his experiences as a practicing pediatrician. After medical school, he worked briefly in a hospital. He explained that as a physician in a hospital, it was difficult to have control of your career, meaning your salary and work actions were fixed by the hospital hierarchy. Oftentimes in the emergency care center, patients had to wait hours to see a doctor for a diagnosis that would only take 10 minutes to diagnose. In other words, practicing medicine in a hospital involved delays and a lack of individual responsibilities. Dr. Gerlacher was aware of this, and decided to leave the hospital environment to open his own practice for pediatric urgent care. Acute Kids Urgent Care ended up expanding into five locations across North Texas, and he was able to reduce patients' wait times while also saving them the inflated hospital service fees. He practiced in those offices for nine years until he sold the company and shifted to consulting in east Texas and California.

Learning about Dr. Gerlacher's medical and business endeavors inspired me to look beyond the confines of "pediatric care" and know that there are various ways to blend my interdisciplinary interests in business and medicine.

One of the most exciting parts of the interview occurred towards the end of our conversation. When I asked Dr. Gerlacher if he had any ideas for an original work project that blends business and pediatrics, he introduced me to a new innovation called PediaQ. It is an on-demand pediatric service in the North Texas area in the form of a mobile app. It instantly intrigued me, and to help me learn more about it, Dr. Gerlacher sent an email to the founder and CEO of PediaQ, Mr. Jon O'Sullivan, to introduce me so I could potentially set up a time to meet with him and learn more about his company.

This interview was by far one of the most interesting experiences I have had in ISM research this year. I loved that I got to apply the field of Pediatrics into the business world. I am looking forward to getting to delve deeper into the conjunction of the corporate and medicine fields.