

# Quality of care. Quality of life.

Ob Hospitalist Group clinician testimonial



## Texas-Based Hospitalist Mindful of Her Blessings

Dr. Nahille Natour knew from a very young age that she wanted to help people.

"I've wanted to be a physician since I was probably 6 years old," she said. "There was no one event that triggered the desire. I wasn't sure what kind of doctor I wanted to be, only that I wanted to take care of people."

Dr. Natour was not sure what specialty to pursue until she was an undergrad at the University of Texas at Austin. "I worked at the UT student health center. Everyone who received birth control at the center had to take a class, which I taught," she explained. "It helped me become a public speaker. I got to be good friends with my colleagues. That is when I really began to enjoy women's health and formed an interest in the clinical side of OB/GYN."

After graduating, Dr. Natour went on to attend medical school at Texas A&M University Health Science Center College of Medicine and completed her residency at Baylor University Medical Center in Dallas.

The rigors of medical school and residency provided a robust introduction to the intellectual, physical, and emotional demands of the medical profession as well as the stressors that could hold some of her classmates and colleagues back. At the time, she soldiered through and suppressed any dissatisfaction in the belief that it all comes with the territory.

Dr. Natour worked in OB/GYN private practice for 10 years until one day, she realized she needed help.

"I now know I was going through burnout," she said, "but at the time, I was in complete denial. I found myself in the delivery room just wanting it to be over. I didn't feel like I was being the physician I wanted to be and living the way I expected to be living as a physician when I first started in medicine."

Emotionally exhausted, Dr. Natour had become someone she no longer recognized.

"My dissatisfaction grew to the point that I was contemplating leaving medicine," she said. "I wasn't living up to my ideal in my mind. So I started making changes, part of which was working with a coach."

That experience helped her heal and take decisive action to improve her work/life balance. In 2013, she left private practice and became an OBHG hospitalist at Houston Methodist Willowbrook Hospital. The change allowed her to have a predictable schedule with more time off.

"One of the great things about being a physician with OBHG is taking care of patients. Period," she said. "Every day in private practice there was some financial issue that needed to be dealt with. I don't have to do any of that. So I get to do what I do without those types of distractions."

With the extra personal time afforded by her new job, Dr. Natour studied to become a Certified Physician Development Coach and develop a part-time business – Inspiring Balance – through which she speaks about burnout at conferences and counsels others who may have found themselves in a burnout-induced career rut.

"Burnout is pervasive across many occupations, and there aren't many physician coaches," she said. "I think it's best if the coach is a physician, because you don't have to explain the nuances of medicine when they have a challenge because, as a physician, I have experienced that same challenge and they don't have to use a lot of words to get their meaning across. ... Working with physicians is invigorating both for them and for me."

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Dr. Nahille Natour  
Hospitalist, Ob Hospitalist Group



In her free time, Dr. Natour enjoys visiting Waterford Harbor Marina in Kemah, TX.



### From Burning Out to Igniting a Flame

Now, instead of dreading work, Dr. Natour looks forward to going on shift. She uses a form of positive visualization to begin the day.

"In the morning, I set my intention for the day and map out my day. It really helps set the tone," she said. "What is my purpose for today? It's not just a To Do list. What do I want my theme for the day to be? A lot of times, when I am going to work at the hospital, it's a theme of service."

In her coaching, Dr. Natour has found that a simple change in environment can work wonders.

"One time I was working with a client, a family practitioner in the Midwest. She wished she could be outside more. She got so much fulfillment being out in nature. It fed her creativity," Dr. Natour recalled. "So we both just walked outside while talking on the phone. It's amazing how that little change in your environment makes such a big difference."

Dr. Natour also devotes more time to nurturing her own love of the outdoors and her creativity.

"I like beading jewelry," she said. It's just a hobby; not a business. She generally doesn't sell her handmade wares. "So far, I've only given my jewelry away as gifts. I've kept some pieces for myself or donated them to be auctioned in a charity fundraiser. ... I think there are a lot of physicians who have an artistic side."

She also enjoys being outdoors and often visits a nature preserve near her home. "It's a great green space with a water element," she said. "I love to walk through it and watch the wildflowers bloom."

Another way to keep stress at bay is to practice mindfulness. Mindfulness is being alert and actively cognizant in the moment – being aware of details like your breathing, sounds, smells, surroundings, and feelings. It's pausing to take a sensory inventory and to accept, appreciate, and be fully present in the moment.

"I think mindfulness is easier to practice as you continue to do it more and more," Dr. Natour said. "I have this technique, before I walk into a patient's room, to take a couple of breaths and clear my mind so I can go in fresh and I am more able to focus on the person I am taking care of."

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