

2025

DISTINGUISHED ALUMNUS



ERIN W. PUKENAS, MD, MBA, FASA, FAAP
CLASS OF 2003

Dr. Pukenas is the inaugural Associate Dean for Program Development and Strategic Initiatives and Vice Chair and Associate Professor of Anesthesiology at Cooper Medical School of Rowan University (CMSRU). She is responsible for spearheading growth of strategic partnerships and the advancement of innovative academic programs for the school and provides overarching strategic leadership of

the education and research missions of Cooper University Health Care (CUHC), Southern New Jersey's leading academic health system, in support of their nearly 1500 interprofessional learners. Prior to this, she was the Associate Dean for Student Affairs and Enterprise Patient Safety Officer and was part of the original team that launched CMSRU in 2012.

Dr. Pukenas received her Bachelor of Science degree with Honors distinction from West Virginia University (WVU) where she also received her Medical Doctorate and is a member of the Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Medical Society. She completed her residency at Rutgers/Robert Wood Johnson Medical School/CUHC and served as the first Chief Resident in the department of anesthesiology. She completed a fellowship in Pediatric Anesthesiology at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia and is dual board certified in General and Pediatric Anesthesiology. She later completed a fellowship in Safety, Quality, and Informatics Leadership at Harvard Medical School and is certified in Patient Safety by the Certification Board of Patient Safety Professionals/Institute for Healthcare Improvement. She holds an MBA from the Haslam School of Business, University of Tennessee and completed the prestigious Hedwig van Ameringen Executive Leadership in Academic Medicine fellowship at Drexel University. Her clinical practice is based at the Philadelphia region's busiest Level I trauma center where she is co-investigator on a US National Institutes of Health multicenter trial to improve care of complex perioperative patients.

Dr. Pukenas has served in several national leadership positions and is the recipient of various regional and national awards, including multiple New Jersey Top Doctor recognitions and the NJBiz 40 Under 40 Award for healthcare leadership. She received the Learning

Communities Institute International Award for Program Innovation and was honored by Rowan University (RU) with the annual Employee Excellence Award. She was recently awarded the RU Women's Alliance Network Leadership Award for her service and commitment to the advancement and professional development of women in higher education. In 2023, she led CMSRU to national recognition by the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) for pioneering a holistic model to support and empower learner success.

Outside of work, Dr. Pukenas volunteers as Chief Medical Officer on the national Board of Directors for the Best Day of My Life So Far, an organization fostering intergenerational connection to improve health outcomes of older adults. She is a certified Pilates instructor and has been married to her husband, Bryan, a 2003 graduate of WVU School of Medicine, former captain of the WVU Mountaineer football team, and Associate Professor of Neurosurgery and Radiology at Penn, for almost 25 years. Her proudest achievements are their two children, Jake and Ellie.