

EDWARD D. SIMMER, MD, MPH, DLFAPA

Executive Summary

An experienced clinician and leader who has provided care to thousands of patients and performed hundreds of forensic evaluations. Experienced, successful leader at all levels of the healthcare system, from leading a state public health agency to serving as the Chief Executive Officer of a hospital and being the Chief Medical Officer of the nation's ninth largest health plan. Over 25 years of extensive leadership and team-building experience. Focused on quality improvement, patient experience, and wise use of resources throughout his career.

Professional Experience

Interim Director, South Carolina Department of Public Health

July 2024 – present

Leads the state agency which has primary responsibility for public health and healthcare quality, which was created from the split of the Department of Health & Environmental Control (DHEC). Successfully led the transition of DHEC into two new agencies, involving the assignment of over 3500 staff and splitting IT, finance, and administrative functions, creating a new public health agency with over 2500 staff and over 90 offices across the state. Markedly increased the agency's focus on outreach and engagement as well as healthcare quality. Responsible for public health and healthcare quality as described below.

Director, South Carolina Department of Health & Environmental Control

February 2021 – June 2024

Led the state agency with primary responsibility for public health, environmental protection, and healthcare quality efforts in South Carolina. Supervised over 3500 staff members located in over 100 offices across the state, including in every county. Led development of the first full revision of the strategic plan since 2015, and created a statewide task force to Strengthen the Health and Promote the Environment of South Carolina (SHaPE SC). Created an "agency coin" recognition program, focused on improving morale and recognizing outstanding performance. Oversaw the agency's over \$600 million budget. Worked closely with the state Legislature and Governor's office to achieve the agency's mission and vision.

Public Health: Led the state's COVID-19 response, including testing, vaccine administration, and public information efforts. These efforts led to over 69% of those eligible receiving at least one dose of COVID-19 vaccine, and over 5 million tests administered. Worked closely with healthcare providers and facilities to manage the state's response and ensure access to treatment for COVID-19. Also oversaw the state's response to mpox, which has led to increased access to the vaccine, and relatively low incidence compared to neighboring states. Moved the agency to a primary focus on increasing

access to care in rural areas, improving maternal and child health, and providing resources that empower residents to improve their care. Implemented an electronic health record for all health departments. Worked with numerous federal, state, and private stakeholders to extend the agency's reach and ensure a coordinated approach to improving public health.

Healthcare Quality: Oversaw licensing and quality of care at healthcare facilities across the state, including hospitals, nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and hospice care. The agency had delegated authority from CMS, and conducted regular inspections of healthcare facilities. Led revisions to the state's certificate-of-need program with the goal of improving quality and reducing bureaucratic delays. Oversaw emergency medical services and controlled substance prescribing, and was responsible for the state's prescription management program and controlled substance registration.

Environmental Protection: Oversaw environmental protection efforts across the state, including air and water pollution, proper management of scarce water resources, efforts to mitigate the impact of "forever chemicals", wastewater management, dam safety, commercial pool safety, underground storage tanks, and safety of restaurants and dairies. Efforts also included management of coastal resources. Led efforts to convert all permits to an electronic format.

Board Certified General and Forensic Psychiatrist Sept 1996 – Present

Clinical Psychiatrist: Provided evaluations and treatment, including individual and group psychotherapy and medication to over 10,000 patients with a wide range of mental health issues. Treatment approaches focused on cognitive therapies, medication management, and response to trauma. Worked in a variety of settings including outpatient clinic, consultation/liaison, intensive outpatient, and inpatient. Developed and led embedded mental health in primary care settings. Provided numerous organizational consultations. Led a large buprenorphine clinic for opiate addiction and managed a large tobacco cessation clinic. Deployed as an Individual Augmentee (IA) with an Army Combat Stress Control Unit to Camp Taji, Iraq. Served on the Onslow County, NC Mental Health Board and the Island County, WA Board of Health.

Forensic Expert: Performed over 500 forensic mental health evaluations for the legal and equal employment opportunity systems, testified as an expert witness in court over 200 times for both prosecution and defense. Conducted numerous competency evaluations. Published articles and gave presentations on forensic issues. Provided care to youths confined to South Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice facilities.

Disaster Psychiatry: Led the Navy's Special Psychiatric Rapid Intervention Team (SPRINT) for nine years. Planned and led a multidisciplinary mental health team in response to natural disasters, terror attacks, and operational mishaps, including Hurricanes Ivan and Katrina and the U.S.S. Cole (DDG-67) bombing.

Education: Current appointment as Adjunct Professor of Neuropsychiatry and Behavioral Science in the Department of Neuropsychiatry and Behavioral Science at the University of South Carolina School of Medicine, Columbia, SC. Previously faculty member at the Tri-County Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse Psychiatry Residency Program, Orangeburg, SC, and Naval Medical Center Portsmouth, Virginia (NMCP), Psychiatry Residency Program. Previously instructor for Eastern Virginia Medical School, Campbell University, and Tidewater Community College.

Research: Principal investigator on several Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved studies, focusing on tobacco cessation and public health issues. Member of the Naval Medical Center Portsmouth IRB for over five years.

Chief Medical Officer & Deputy Director, TRICARE Health Plan, Defense Health Agency, Falls Church, VA Sept 2014 – Dec 2020

Responsible for overseeing the day-to-day operations of the TRICARE Health Plan, which provides civilian healthcare and dental care to 9.5 million active duty military, their families, and military retirees and their families. Involved with development, implementation, and oversight of multiple healthcare contracts worldwide, including the two largest contracts in the Department of Defense, with a value of over \$10 billion per year.

Supervision: Led staff of over 300 active duty, civilian (GS-12 to GS-15), and contract staff located in seven offices worldwide, including clinical, customer service, and administrative personnel, with a focus on improving performance, staff morale, team-building, and training.

Clinical Policy: Responsible for transforming the Nation's ninth largest health plan from a fee-for-service system to a high-value, pay for quality and outcomes model. Led the development of numerous clinical policy initiatives, including measuring and incentivizing providers based on clinical outcomes, access, and quality; and determining clinical standards and what services should be covered. This included developing and implementing increased beneficiary choice. Led efforts to improve care and support to children and families, especially those with special needs, including care management, and integrating care between military medical facilities and civilian providers. Led pilot program to incorporate social determinants of health into services provided. Developed multiple federal regulations and submitted them for executive branch approval.

Oversight of Clinical Care and Quality: Oversaw all aspects of clinical performance of eight large contracts providing care to over 9.5 million people, including quality and patient safety, population health, case management, and utilization management. Frequently interacted with other leaders in DoD, clinical staff, advocacy and civilian provider groups. Ensured compliance with complex medical and dental contract requirements, and approved quality management plans. Worked closely with leadership of the Office of Special Needs and service Exceptional Family Member Programs (EFMP) to improve services for families with special needs. Reviewed adverse events and cases with significant ethical issues. Led efforts to improve outcomes on HEDIS, NPIC, and other national benchmarked outcomes measures.

Contract Development: Clinical lead for a multidisciplinary team responsible for the development and writing of the next generation of military healthcare contracts, valued at over \$50 billion. These incorporated major changes in the areas of payment models, value-based care, beneficiary choice, access to care, and reporting and use of outcomes measures. Worked with industry to identify best practices. Led development, selection, and implementation of a multi-million-dollar healthcare navigator contract which provides comprehensive support to patients with complex medical needs. Served on source selection teams for multiple healthcare contracts.

Master Communicator: Provided over 200 briefings and presentations on medical and insurance issues to national and regional professional societies, congressional staff, external advocacy and

patient groups, and senior leaders. Provided congressional testimony on issues related to military healthcare and the EFMP. Reviewed and prepared multiple Reports to Congress. Led development, in collaboration with strategic communications staff, of multiple strategic communication campaigns focused on provider recognition, benefit changes, and beneficiary education.

Specific Accomplishments:

- Led a Tri-Service (Army, Navy, and Air Force) workgroup which developed an outcomes data dashboard based on the quadruple aim which tracks performance across the military health system.
- Oversaw the creation and implementation of major changes to the mental health benefit which removed artificial barriers to care, and increased access and quality. These changes led to a 90% increase in intensive outpatient treatment with a corresponding decrease in more intensive service utilization and a 50% increase in access to residential treatment for children.
- Oversaw a joint medical/pharmacy effort to identify and address providers who overprescribe opiates, utilizing a model focused on education and mentoring, with further action if needed.
- Oversaw efforts to increase telemental health usage in light of COVID-19, which led to an increase from less than 5% to over 50% of mental health visits provided by virtual health. Developed plan to measure impact of this change on clinical outcomes and patient experience.
- Oversaw the comprehensive revision of a \$370 million/year autism care program when the existing program was shown to be ineffective after conducting a thorough program evaluation. Working with numerous advocacy and provider groups as well as other Federal and State agencies, this revision incorporated meaningful clinical outcomes to drive coverage decisions, improving support to families of children with autism, and strengthening utilization management and fraud controls.
- Wrote draft statutory language focused on treatment of eating disorders in adult patients as well as improving the effectiveness of beneficiary incentives.
- Led a team that developed a performance-based maternity pilot, which provided quality outcomes-based evaluations of maternity facilities to beneficiaries and incentivized the top-performing providers.
- Developed a program to require military-owned inpatient facilities to submit data to the Leapfrog® patient safety and quality database allowing for comparisons with civilian facilities.
- Served on and led multiple DoD working groups developing and implementing policy related to evidence-based prevention and treatment.

Commanding Officer, Naval Hospital Oak Harbor, WA Aug 2012 – Aug 2014

Chief Executive Officer of a small (20-bed) rural community hospital serving active duty military, retirees, and their families on Whidbey Island, WA.

Chief Executive: Responsible for all aspects of hospital operation, including support of military readiness, clinical care, customer service, staff support, medical coding and billing, financial management, logistics, credentialing/privileging, Joint Commission certification, pharmacy and ancillary services, building maintenance and security, community relations, and collaboration with area civilian medical facilities. Led hospital through a comprehensive redesign, collaborating with local civilian facilities to ensure continued high-quality care.

Financial Management: Responsible for effective and efficient oversight of over \$3 million budget, ensuring audit readiness, preparation and submission of annual budget requests, and ensuring proper internal controls were in place to prevent waste and ensure wise use of resources. Oversaw development of a comprehensive facility redevelopment plan.

Human Resources: Supervised staff of over 300 military, civilian, and contract personnel, including provider, clinical support, and administrative staff. Ensured timely hiring actions, performance evaluations, and equal opportunity for all staff members.

Patient Safety and Clinical Quality: Served as privileging authority, responsible for all patient safety and quality issues, and ensured a robust patient safety and quality program was in place.

Executive Officer, Naval Hospital Beaufort, SC Oct 2010 – May 2012

Chief Operating Officer for a 12-bed community hospital serving a widely diverse population from Marine Corps recruits at Parris Island, SC to retirees and their families. Included a 30-building main campus with historic resources, residences, and support facilities and two outlying clinics.

Leadership: Supported the commanding officer, managed day-to-day operations of the hospital. Responsible for over 500 diverse staff, as well as surgical suites, an emergency room, and extensive outpatient and occupational medicine facilities. Led community relations efforts, oversaw facility maintenance, and collaboration with civilian facilities. Created and led the first stakeholder advisory council and oversaw development and oversight of a comprehensive facilities management plan. Ensured timely hiring actions, performance evaluations, and equal opportunity for all staff members. Oversaw the development of comprehensive disaster response plans, in association with Marine and civilian county leadership, ensuring continuity of services if Marine recruits had to evacuate to another location due to a hurricane or other natural disaster.

Supervision: Supervised staff of over 300 military, civilian, and contract personnel, including provider, clinical support, and administrative staff. Oversaw all human relations issues, including hiring, performance management, and disciplinary issues. As the senior clinician, responsible for all patient safety and quality issues, and ensured a robust patient safety and quality program was in place.

Senior Executive Director for Psychological Health, Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury (DCoE), Silver Spring, MD May 2008 – Sept 2010

Led mental health efforts for the Department of Defense, including development of policy, collaboration with the Department of Veterans Affairs, and education efforts.

Collaboration: As one of the founding members of the DCoE leadership, developed collaborative relationships with other military agencies, Veterans Affairs leadership and subject matter experts, and the Center for the Study of Traumatic Stress at the Uniformed Services University as well as numerous professional societies. DoD Chair of the first DoD/VA Mental Health Summit, which developed 26 collaborative projects across both DoD and VA in the area of mental health and resilience.

Education: Oversaw the creation of educational efforts for providers and military personnel and their families. Provided numerous briefs to professional societies, leadership, and congressional staff regarding evidence-based treatment of mental health disorders common to military personnel and their families. Developed the psychological health portion of the Real Warriors Campaign, which highlights Service members of all ranks who have successfully utilized mental health services with the goal of increasing acceptance and decreasing stigma.

Clinical Policy: Developed evidence-based standards and programs for resilience, suicide prevention, short-and long-term treatment of mental health conditions and substance abuse, and developed and oversaw research efforts in the area of military mental health. Evaluated existing military mental health and resilience programs, identifying those which were most successful and worked to expand them while assisting those having challenges to improve. Developed initiative to utilize common outcomes measures for military mental health treatment.

Navy Intern Specialty Leader, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, Washington, DC April 2007 – June 2010

Responsible for over 300 first year Navy medical residents across seven sites and 25 training programs in the Navy. Advised the Surgeon General of the Navy and other senior leaders on issues related to internship and first-year physician training. Ensured consistent training requirements including readiness to serve as primary care physicians in operational settings. Responsible for internship selection/match process.

Director for Quality Management, Naval Medical Center, Portsmouth, VA June 2005 – May 2008

Responsible for all quality and patient safety at the Navy's largest medical and dental facility, a 200-bed tertiary medical center with eight outlying outpatient clinics. Responsible for managing credentialing and privileging of over 500 providers in a variety of medical professions. Developed a comprehensive quality improvement plan in conjunction with clinical leaders from all clinical areas that led to significantly improved outcomes.

**Command Intern Coordinator, Naval Medical Center, Portsmouth, VA
April 2002 – June 2007**

Responsible for 75 first year medical residents across seven internship training programs at the Navy's largest graduate medical education site. Provided mentoring and guidance, ensuring an almost 100% successful completion rate.

**Psychiatry Department Head, Naval Medical Center, Portsmouth, VA
July 2003 – July 2005**

Responsible for all aspects of a large psychiatry department with a psychiatry residency training program, including over 200 staff, 40 inpatient beds, intensive outpatient program, and adult and child outpatient clinics. Developed and led complete reorganization of the department which led to a 75% increase in clinical productivity, significantly improved access, reduced spending on civilian mental health care, and increased integration with clinical psychology and pastoral counseling departments.

**Team Lead, Outpatient Psychiatry, Naval Medical Center, Portsmouth, VA
July 2001 – July 2003**

Led a large outpatient psychiatry clinic, including adult, child, consult-liaison, and forensic services. Developed and implemented a plan to move the clinic from a 200-year-old building to a new facility.

**Fleet-Liaison Psychiatrist, Naval Medical Center, Portsmouth, VA
Oct 1998 – July 2001**

Responsible for providing outpatient mental health care to active duty Navy personnel onsite on ships and at other operational commands in the Hampton Roads, VA area. Worked closely with primary care providers at these sites, developed first embedded mental health model in the area. Trained primary care providers in identifying and treating mental health issues.

**Division Psychiatrist, 2d Marine Division, Camp Lejeune, NC
October 1996 – September 1998**

Responsible for outpatient mental health care for the 15,000 Marines of the 2d Marine Division and advisor to the Commanding General on mental health issues. Implemented the first in-unit mental health program, providing onsite mental health care to Marines in their units. Developed and led the first traumatic incident response team for Camp Lejeune, utilizing clinical and non-clinical resources.

**Psychiatry Resident, Naval Medical Center, Portsmouth, VA
October 1993 – September 1996**

**General Medical Officer, U.S.S. Enterprise (CVN-65)
August 1991 – September 1993**

Responsible for the primary medical care of over 3000 Sailors assigned to the ship and supervision of over 30 medical technicians. Responsible for all mental health prevention and treatment efforts.

Education

Psychiatry Residency, Naval Medical Center, Portsmouth, Completed 1996

Psychiatry Internship, Naval Hospital, Portsmouth, Completed 1991

M.D., Saint Louis University, 1990

M.P.H., with a focus on epidemiology, Eastern Virginia Medical School/Old Dominion University Consortium, 2001, Graduate of the Year

B.A., Double major, Chemistry and Science with Honors, Hiram College, 1986,
Summa Cum Laude

Major Honors/Awards

Distinguished Life Fellow of the American Psychiatric Association

One of *Columbia Business Monthly's* 50 Most Influential people for 2021

Defense Superior Service Medal (2 awards)

Meritorious Service Medal (4 awards)

Joint Service Commendation Medal

Delta Omega Honor Society in Public Health

Rear Admiral Hogan Award for Navy Psychiatry Research

Phi Beta Kappa

Licenses/Certifications

Medical License, South Carolina, expires June 2025

Medical License, Virginia, expires December 2024

Controlled Substance Registration, Drug Enforcement Administration

South Carolina Controlled Substances Registration

Board Certified in General and Forensic Psychiatry, American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology

CV for Edward Simmer, MD, MPH, DLFAPA

Administrative Psychiatry Certification, American Psychiatric Association

Certified Group Psychotherapist, Internal Board for the Certification of Group Psychotherapists