



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Heywood Healthcare

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Heywood Healthcare Appoints Dr. Kavita Babu, MD, MBA as Chief Medical Officer and Vice President of Medical Affairs

Gardner, MA - May 28, 2026 - Heywood Healthcare is pleased to announce the appointment of Dr. Kavita Babu as Chief Medical Officer and Vice President of Medical Affairs. A highly respected physician executive and emergency medicine leader, Dr. Babu brings more than 20 years of clinical and leadership experience to the organization.

Throughout her career, Dr. Babu has led a wide range of initiatives focused on quality improvement, patient safety, physician engagement, and operational excellence. She has also played a key role in advancing substance use disorder services and strengthening community-based care delivery. Known for her collaborative leadership style, Dr. Babu has extensive experience working across multidisciplinary teams, including medical staff, nursing, pharmacy, emergency medical services, and executive leadership, to enhance patient care, improve access, and optimize clinical operations.

In addition to her leadership roles, Dr. Babu remains an active practicing emergency physician. She is widely recognized for her expertise in addiction medicine, medical toxicology, clinical informatics, and healthcare operations.

Dr. Babu earned her Doctor of Medicine degree from Brown Medical School after completing her undergraduate studies in Biology at Brown University. She completed her residency in Emergency Medicine at Brown Medical School and went on to complete a fellowship in Medical Toxicology at the University of Massachusetts. In addition, she recently completed her MBA through the Isenberg School of Management at the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

“Dr. Babu’s depth of experience, clinical expertise, and commitment to patient-centered care make her an outstanding addition to our leadership team,” said Heywood Healthcare President and CEO Rozanna Penney, CRNA, MBA. “We are excited to welcome her to Heywood Healthcare and look forward to the impact she will have on our organization and the communities we serve.”



We would also like to recognize and sincerely thank Dr. Frank Sweeney for his leadership and service as Chief Medical Officer over the past year. Since beginning private practice in 1999, Dr. Sweeney has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to patient care and community medicine, including leading Chair City Family Medicine from 2003 through June 2024.

Dr. Sweeney has been a valued member of our Physician-Hospital Organization (PHO) for more than 20 years and has served as both a Trustee of the Heywood Healthcare Board of Directors and a board member of the UMass Accountable Care Organization (UMACO). As he re-enters retirement from the Chief Medical Officer role, we are grateful that he will continue to remain actively involved with the organization as President of the PHO and as an active member of the Heywood Healthcare Board of Trustees.





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About Heywood Healthcare:

Heywood Healthcare is a non-profit, community-owned health system serving north central Massachusetts and southern New Hampshire. The system includes Heywood Hospital, a 134-bed acute care hospital in Gardner, MA; Athol Hospital, a 25-bed Critical Access hospital in Athol, MA; Heywood Medical Group; and multiple regional satellite facilities.

Heywood Hospital and Athol Hospital provide a full range of inpatient and outpatient services, including emergency care, surgery, imaging, rehabilitation, and specialty services. Heywood Medical Group, a non-profit physician organization with more than 75 providers, delivers primary and specialty care across a broad range of disciplines.

Together, the system provides coordinated, patient-centered care focused on expanding access and improving health outcomes across the region. Our mission is To be our region's first choice for quality, compassionate, patient-centered care.