

Shannon Dowler

Biography

Professionally, Shannon Dowler, MD is a board-certified Family Physician and Fellow from Asheville, NC and Certified Physician Executive (CPE). An advocate for health equity and the intentional reduction of health disparities, Dr. Dowler maintains a small panel of patients in a primary care walk-in clinic as well as spending time every week at the local health department seeing patients in the Sexually Transmitted Disease clinic. She enjoys public speaking at the local, state, and national levels to both lay and professional medical audiences on topics related to STD's and provides subject matter expert content to educational articles on this topic.

Known by the moniker RapDktaD, her educational rap video *Vigorous: STDs Never Get Old* achieved international acclaim in March of 2017. A popular public speaker, Dr. Dowler entertains audiences with a unique, and at times quirky, style of direct and (much needed in healthcare) self-deprecating humor. Recounting patients she has served, she hangs the important learning lessons on composite stories to make her content relatable and memorable. Her speaking engagements are often received enthusiastically, and her evaluations consistently rate her at the highest levels.

Currently Chief of Community Medicine and Ambulatory Population Health at Mission Health System, she is Chair of the North Carolina Physician Advisory Group, advising the Department of Health and Human Services on Clinical Policy for the Medicaid Program. At the national level, she serves on the American Academy of Family Physicians Committee on Health of the Public and Science, and the Subcommittees on Health Equity and Public Health Issues, and recently completed a three-year term as the AAFP representative to the American College of OB-GYN (ACOG) Adolescent Health committee. She is an Adjunct Associate Professor with the UNC School of Medicine Department of Family Medicine. Prior to assuming her current role, Dr. Dowler served as Associate Chief Quality Officer for Mission Health System and guided the development and implementation of Care Process Models, creating real time access to clinical tools to reduce unnecessary clinical variation in clinical care and improve overall outcomes.

Dr. Dowler served over six years as the Chief Medical Officer for a large community health center in Western North Carolina with a focus on Latinx migrant farmworkers and underserved people across WNC. In that role she developed a Teaching Health Center to provide medical training to young physicians in the heart of rural communities. Her entire career has focused on expanding and improving access to vulnerable and marginalized populations.

Dr. Dowler's interest in sexual health was deeply secured in medical school. In her second year of training, a thirteen-year-old girl came into the clinic with a flat rash on her upturned palms—secondary syphilis—caused because her addicted mother traded her daughter's body to extinguish her crack cravings. Medical school in Eastern North

Carolina, a place where drug addicts “fell off the I-95 drug belt” in the mid-90’s, meant countless HIV and AIDS diagnoses in the early days of antiretroviral therapy, when young people still tragically died of AIDS. Throughout Shannon Dowler’s 20-year career, she has maintained clinical time in health department STD clinics, while flourishing as a health care executive known for having a passion for innovation and providing the highest quality of care to our most vulnerable populations.

Dr. Shannon Dowler has volunteered and taught over 100 church, school, civic, and other lay groups about safe sex. In November of 2018, her STD Update was the highest rated lecture in a group of 800+ physicians out of a four-day conference. By partnering her passion for helping people achieve healthy sexuality with a natural proclivity to rhyme and rap, she has written dozens of educational STD limericks and produced two educational rap videos aimed at lay audiences. As a performer, entertainer, educator, and “go-to” subject matter expert for the American Academy of Family Physicians, Dr. Dowler has boundless energy to draw audiences in to live healthier and more satisfying lives. She lives in her Blue Ridge mountain home in Asheville, North Carolina.

