After spending a decade as a hospital-based physician, Dr. Michael Magro Jr. made a self-diagnosis that changed his career trajectory – and led him to his new job: CEO of Nazareth Hospital.

Magro’s to-do list at the Northeast Philadelphia medical center includes developing an off-campus ambulatory care center that will focus on women’s health, renovating existing hospital space for a new cardiolpulmonary rehab center, expanding the cardiovascular program, and establishing an internal medicine residency clinic to care for the region’s low-income and uninsured population.

The projects are examples Magro cited of how he can still influence patient care despite hanging up his stethoscope.

“As a hospitalist [a physician who specializes in care of patients after they are admitted to a medical center] for 10 years, I grew up in the hospital,” he said. “I loved taking care of patients and getting involved in the clinical operations of a hospital. The last year I was practicing, the patients I saw were sicker and sicker. It can get depressing being the physician who always has to have the conversation with a loved one. It takes its toll.”

So he decided to make a move to the administrative side of health care.

“It was a way to stay clinically engaged without doing direct patient care,” Magro said.

Magro earned his medical degree from the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine and later a master’s degree in business from Eastern University. He spent the past three years at Nazareth as the hospital’s vice president of medical affairs. Prior to that he spent more than a decade at Mercy Suburban Hospital in East Norriton where he started as a hospitalist and last served as chief medical officer.

Mercy Suburban was sold by Conshohocken-based Mercy Health, which owns Nazareth, in early 2016 to Prime Healthcare, which changed the name of the hospital to Suburban Community Hospital.

As an administrator, Magro still felt involved in patient care through responsibilities that included supporting the medical staff and educating physicians on issues ranging from process improvements to patient safety.

As CEO, Magro will get to oversee every facet of hospital operations. “I can impact patient care in a much broader sense,” he said.

Nazareth’s previous CEO, Nancy Cherone, retired this month after spending 10 years leading the hospital, and the past 45 years in health care. Succeeding Magro as vice president of medical affairs at Nazareth is Dr. Edward O’Dell.

Magro is one of a small group of Philadelphia hospital CEOs with a medical degree. Three area health systems are led by physicians: Jefferson Health is led by Dr. Stephen Klasko, Temple University Health System is led by Dr. Larry Kaiser, and Lourdes Health System is led by Dr. Reginald Blaber. Dr. Richard Fisher is president and CEO of Fox Chase Cancer Center.

As the CEO of Nazareth, Magro is on familiar turf.

“I am from Northeast Philadelphia and I have a lot of family and friends here,” he said. “My own father uses this hospital. Coming here means coming home and helping the community where I grew up.”