



Dr. James Merlino

Chief Transformation Officer

Dr. James Merlino joined Press Ganey as president and chief medical officer of the Strategic Consulting Division in 2015. As an accomplished surgeon and industry leader in improving the patient experience, Jim draws from more than two decades of health care experience to oversee Press Ganey's consultancy division. Under his leadership, the consultancy team helps providers improve the delivery of safe, high-quality care in a patient-centered environment.

In 2018, Jim began serving as Press Ganey's first chief transformation officer. In this role, Jim is responsible for ensuring that the company's solutions align with current and future industry needs. He also will oversee the creation and delivery of client-specific plans to help clients achieve transformational and sustainable improvement.

Prior to joining Press Ganey, Jim served as chief experience officer and associate chief of staff at the Cleveland Clinic health system, as well as a practicing staff colorectal surgeon at the organization's Digestive Disease Institute. At Cleveland Clinic, Jim was responsible for leading strategic programs to improve the patient experience across the system. He spearheaded numerous groundbreaking initiatives to ensure the highest standards for patient care as well as to improve patient access and referring-physician relations. He also championed organizational cultural alignment around the patient as a key component of patient-centered care.

Previously, Jim practiced at the MetroHealth System, one of the largest safety-net hospitals in the country. There, he was involved in several quality initiatives, including implementing care paths for the management of complex colorectal surgery patients and advocating for the implementation of the American College of Surgeons National Surgical Quality Improvement Program.®

Jim is actively involved in many industry organizations and non-profits dedicated to improving patient care. He is the founder and current president of the Association for Patient Experience, a nonprofit organization committed to enhancing the clinical, physical and emotional health care environment. Jim is also a founding executive council member of the Institute for Innovation, a nonprofit research collaborative dedicated to advancing the science of improving patient care and performance.

Recognized as an expert in improving the patient experience, Jim is frequently invited to speak on strategies to redefine care around the needs of the patient, and has developed and led patient experience programming around the world. In 2013, Jim was named to *HealthLeaders* magazine's HealthLeaders 20, its list of 20 people making a difference in health care, and was recognized as one of Becker's Healthcare's 50 Experts Leading the Field of Patient Safety in 2015 and 2016. He has been widely published in academic journals, and in 2014 he released his first book, *Service Fanatics: How to Build Superior Patient Experience the Cleveland Clinic Way*.

Jim holds a bachelor's degree in business administration from Baldwin-Wallace College and a medical degree from Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine. Board-certified in general and colorectal surgery, Jim completed his general surgery training at University Hospitals of Cleveland and his colorectal surgery fellowship at Cleveland Clinic. During his residency, he took a two-year research sabbatical to complete an AHRQ-funded research fellowship in Health Services Research. He lives in Richfield, Ohio, with his wife, Dr. Amy Merlino, who is a maternal-fetal medicine specialist at Cleveland Clinic.

