



Five
Transformational
Leaders Challenging
the Status Quo

HealthSearch
P A R T N E R S

To be a truly mission-minded leader, you must be *all-in, unafraid to make bold decisions and commit fully to challenging the status quo when needed.*

It's not an easy path, but many leaders around the U.S. have stepped into the role well and are changing the way their health systems serve patients for the better.

Many leaders say they are dedicated to the new priorities of delivering quality care — community focus, continuum of care, quality, value- and outcomes-based — but to truly determine whether they are evolving and improving the patient experience, we have to consider their actions.

To HealthSearch Partners Chairman Keith Southerland, executing on these new values is a lot like learning a new language. As anyone who has acquired a second language will tell you, until you begin to think in the new language, you can't be considered fluent. In other words, if you're

constantly having to translate back through your first language, you're not truly fluent.

"I constantly hear healthcare leaders mouthing the words of the new 'language' of healthcare delivery, which are all laudable and aspirational goals," Southerland says. "However, when I look beyond the platitudes, what do their actions reveal about their true comprehension of what is required to lead tomorrow's provider organization — and their willingness and desire to do what it takes to effect such change?"

Leaders who are practicing what they preach may be in the minority, but they're enacting real transformation in the organizations they serve. Below are five in particular who are truly taking a stand and shifting the tide at their organizations.



MARC HARRISON, M.D.

President and CEO, Intermountain Healthcare

Marc Harrison, M.D. became the CEO of Intermountain Healthcare in 2015. The organization is one of the most respected and successful healthcare systems in the world — lauded by even the president of the United States for its quality of care. Dr. Harrison refused to see the organization as having reached its peak and understood that it must always continue to improve and evolve. The CEO led the system to shift its focus from “sick care” to wellness by investing in innovation.

In addition to traditional strategies like management restructuring and reducing cost through new supply chain strategies, Intermountain Healthcare is also pursuing an aggressive telehealth initiative to incentivize patients to seek care in the most efficient and cost-effective way. Telehealth visits are less expensive than physician’s office visits, and the organization’s EMR system allows physicians to directly schedule telehealth visits with their patients.

Under Dr. Harrison’s leadership, Intermountain has also joined with other progressive health systems like Ascension, SSM and Trinity Health to create the Generic Drug Company, which will focus on attacking the unwarranted shortages and high costs of life-saving generic drugs by manufacturing and distributing a select number of them. This effort will not only lower cost for patients but also make available drugs that can save lives.

GARY KAPLAN, M.D.

Chairman and CEO, Virginia Mason Health System

Though many systems remain focused on growth, size and market dominance, Gary Kaplan, M.D. has maintained Virginia Mason's focus on the "pursuit of the perfect patient experience." Under his leadership, the system implemented the Toyota Lean Management philosophy and established the Virginia Mason Institute in 2008, which trains and resources other healthcare organizations to implement the same principles of efficiency, increased patient safety and quality, a people-centered culture, and continuous improvement. Named by Healthgrades among the top 1 percent of hospitals in the U.S., Dr. Kaplan and Virginia Mason has developed a global reputation for a relentless pursuit of perfection, innovation and the elimination of waste and inefficiency.

"Virginia Mason is a prime example of an organization that did not get caught up in the pack mentality of 'bigger is better,' choosing instead to focus upon the patient experience," says Southerland. "Dr. Kaplan and Virginia Mason have achieved this success without overtly focusing on acquisitions to achieve top or bottom-line growth. To me, their approach proves that instead of 'bigger is better,' maybe simply 'better is better.'"

NANCY AGEE

President and CEO, Carilion Clinic

Nancy Agee, President and CEO of Carilion Clinic, in southwestern Virginia, is a forward-thinking executive passionate about patient-centered care. While serving as chief operating officer of the organization, she led the transition from a hospital network to a system of specialty clinics. Though the system was “doing fine,” she says, she believes it is crucial that leaders look toward the future, consider what’s happening in the world and how they can continue to serve patients well. Her innovative thinking keeps the system’s focus on how to continually improve the quality and efficiency of care it provides, rather than maintaining the status quo.

She remains open to new ideas and technologies, even going so far as to say that though hospital care is important, there is a need to find “more sophisticated, perhaps technological ways to deliver care that’s less dependent on hospitals.” Carilion is already on its way, as its My Chart program allows doctors and patients to use technology to communicate. The clinic is also planning for the future by investing in medical education, having established the Virginia Tech Carilion Institute in 2007. Having become CEO in 2011, Agee has been instrumental in championing that effort.¹

Named Virginia Business Person of the Year for 2017, Agee is preparing to take over as chair of the American Hospital Association, where she says her primary focus will be affordable care.

¹ <http://www.virginiabusiness.com/news/article/servant-leadership>

BILL ROBERTSON

President and CEO, MultiCare Health System

Bill Robertson, President and CEO of MultiCare Health System, has a rare focus making his organization “the best place where the best people feel comfortable working,”² noting that a thriving internal culture makes other successes possible.

Robertson doesn’t just talk about culture, efficiency and continuum of care, he demonstrates his fluency in the “new language” through his actions. The executive established a three-year plan to cut \$300 million from MultiCare’s operating expenses, and during his first six months in his role, he began reorganizing management structure, visited every MultiCare facility and took 19,000 employees and their families to the Washington State Fair, standing at the gate for hours to greet employees.

MultiCare was the third organization in the world to begin using Epic, Robertson says, an online system that allows patients to access their health records, email their doctors, pay bills and more. He says he also plans to increase their focus on telemedicine tools.³

The system is improving community health by working with local organizations to address behavioral and societal issues as well as supporting education and the arts. Robertson’s dedication to establishing a true continuum of care is evident in MultiCare’s recent ground breaking on a new behavioral health hospital, a joint venture with CHI Franciscan.⁴

“The swift and concrete actions Bill is taking are proof of his commitment to boldly stepping into the future of healthcare and his desire to bring the best care possible to the community MultiCare serves,” says Ed Fry, HealthSearch President/CEO.

² <http://www.thenewtribune.com/news/business/article25892323.html#storylink=cpy>

³ <https://www.spokanejournal.com/local-news/multicare-transition-begins/>

⁴ <https://thesubtimes.com/2017/10/02/chi-franciscan-health-and-multicare-health-system-break-ground-on-45-million-tacoma-behavioral-health-hospital/>

PATRICIA MARYLAND, DRPH

CEO, Ascension Health

Ascension Health CEO Patricia Maryland's passion for improving the quality and affordability of healthcare was cultivated at an early age, having managed her mother's diabetic health growing up. Now, her bold leadership is a crucial asset to the largest nonprofit health system in the U.S., making personalized, compassionate care its central priority.

In her first two years as president of healthcare operations and COO, her efforts helped achieve \$634 million in incremental savings. That's because Maryland believes successful leaders are unafraid to tackle daunting tasks, especially as a woman in a predominantly male field. The executive says she counsels other female leaders in healthcare to "dare to become a trailblazer, despite the high risk of failure that may be involved."

Now CEO, Maryland has committed Ascension to providing care that addresses physical pain in the context of a person's full health, which includes behavioral and mental health. Under her leadership, Ascension has assembled teams to combat opioid dependency through efforts like provider and community education, standardizing pain assessment tools and implementing pain management guidelines. They've also partnered with the city and other community organizations to launch the first program in the state placing peer recovery specialists in the emergency department to help identify individuals who overdose and encourage and guide them through treatment and rehabilitation.

"Pat's commitment to seeking out root causes for issues like opioid overdoses, considering social stigmas as well as educating prescribers and others about the disease of addiction, proves she is truly affecting change rather than simply addressing symptoms," says Barry Cesafsky, Board Vice Chair at HealthSearch.

As she leads the organization to focus on social determinants of health to implement patient-centric care and better control population health, it's clear Maryland is truly fluent in the "new language" of healthcare.



While the strategies implemented by these leaders will not be perfect or even ideal for every health system, each leader has each taken **bold** and **assertive actions** to transform their systems from speaking the “old language” to the “new language” when it comes to healthcare delivery.

“These leaders practice what they preach and are constantly striving to improve the health of the communities they serve,” says Southerland. “When boards of directors ask us to help them identify CEO leadership, the focus increasingly is to identify these types of leaders. If your desire is to lead the progressive delivery system of the future, I advise a healthy introspection to determine if you believe the direction healthcare is taking is right for you and just how ‘fluent’ you are.”

HealthSearch
P A R T N E R S