

## HSP Success Story

High expectations, short timeframe.  
HealthSearch Partners sprinted to success  
for Adventist HealthCare's CEO search.

**The search:** President, Chief Executive Officer

**The organization:** Adventist HealthCare

**Primary organization contact:** Emmanuel Asiedu, Chairman Adventist HealthCare Board of Directors; Carlos Vargas, Vice President of Human Resources and Technology and Chief Human Resources Officer at Howard University Hospital

**Candidate selected:** John Sackett

### Challenge

When its long-serving President and CEO announced in late spring his intention to leave the organization, the Adventist HealthCare board of directors immediately launched a nationwide search for his successor. The search was driven by the need to have the new President and CEO selected and in place by the first week of August. The search committee also wanted a coast-to-coast search to identify the best possible candidates that fit the organization's criteria for the position. Adventist HealthCare chose HealthSearch Partners to lead the search and meet its rigorous timeline and high standards.

### Solution

"When we were looking to fill the CEO position, which is extremely crucial to our organization, one of our colleagues recommended HealthSearch Partners," explained Emmanuel Asiedu, Chairman of the Adventist HealthCare board of directors and Chairman of the search committee. "I quickly contacted Ivan Bartolome, HealthSearch Partners' President and explained what we were looking for, our compressed timeframe, and our expectations for the executive we would choose to lead the organization. I appreciated when Ivan acknowledged the challenge of conducting the search from start to finish in a matter of only six weeks, and at the same time pledged to me that he and HealthSearch Partners would do whatever it took to accomplish our vision and our goal for the search."

Asiedu's instructions to Ivan were clear and concise – the search committee wanted to look at internal and external candidates, it was absolutely committed to the timeframe, and it wanted a healthcare leader who was Seventh Day Adventist. He outlined four main criteria he was looking for in the new CEO. "First, I was looking for a leader with character because we are a faith-based organization," says Asiedu. "Second, I wanted a leader that would grow and groom the executive team, a mentor. Third, I was looking for a leader with operational experience that especially understood the Maryland healthcare model. Finally, a leader who could take our six-year strategic plan – Vision 2030 – and lead with it to gain traction at all our hospitals. I wanted someone who was adaptable."



### Adventist HealthCare Gaithersburg, MD

Adventist HealthCare, based in Gaithersburg, Maryland, is one of the longest-serving health systems in the Washington, D.C., region, and one of the largest employers in Maryland. It includes Shady Grove Medical Center, White Oak Medical Center, Fort Washington Medical Center, Adventist HealthCare Rehabilitation, Home Care Services, Adventist Medical Group and Imaging. Its mission is to extend God's care through the ministry of physical, mental and spiritual healing.

## Solution

Carlos Vargas, Vice President of Human Resources and Technology and Chief Human Resources Officer at Howard University Hospital, said he has known Ivan for several years. "In addition to knowing our system, he and HealthSearch Partners had the experience and professionalism we were looking for. He and his colleague, Doug Duffield, Senior Vice President of HealthSearch Partners, brought knowledge of healthcare, an understanding of a mission-based organization, an extensive network, and a commitment to make it happen to the table. I knew we going to get top quality work when we engaged HealthSearch Partners for the CEO search."

Vargas also explained HealthSearch Partners brought credibility to the process. "That was important to the objectivity and the confidentiality of the search," he said. "I also found the assessment HealthSearch Partners completed was invaluable. We did a survey of the company and key stakeholders that was included in the final assessment. This encompassed one-on-one interviews with members of the executive team and other key constituents, all completed within six weeks."

According to Vargas, HealthSearch Partners' database of potential candidates that fit Adventist Healthcare's needs and requirements was extremely helpful and allowed Ivan and Doug to get a head start on the search. Asiedu and Vargas agreed that HealthSearch Partners' willingness to be flexible helped Adventist HealthCare maneuver around bumps in the road and periodic challenges throughout the search. They both emphasized how critical HealthSearch Partners' knowledge and insight into the Adventist culture was to completing the search successfully and on time.

## Results

At the conclusion of the search process, the search committee selected John Sackett, Adventist HealthCare's Chief Operating Officer, to fill the CEO position. Sackett said he appreciated the integrity of the process HealthSearch Partners followed during the search. "I think HealthSearch Partners did its fiduciary job of making sure best practice was used to guide the search," he said. "They didn't assume anything. I appreciated the insights and requirements they provided about the position and the way they worked to prepare me for the interviews. At the end of the day, my understanding is the final pool of candidates was highly qualified."

Sackett described his experience with HealthSearch Partners as classic. "I do think their process had more integrity than other search firms I've worked with. I appreciated their commitment to ongoing communication and keeping me informed about the status of the search along the way."

Sackett said if he were speaking to a colleague considering participating in a search, to trust HealthSearch Partners' process. "Trust the process to have integrity, trust HealthSearch Partners to do the best job they can do. Interviewing for this type of position is life-changing so the steady hand they offered and the insight and advice they provided were extremely helpful."

Asiedu and Vargas agreed they will consider engaging HealthSearch Partners for future searches. "Ivan and Doug and the HealthSearch Partners team are trustworthy, efficient and thorough," said Vargas. "You don't have to worry about the process once it's turned over to them because you know it's going to be handled professionally. HealthSearch Partners did an excellent job," emphasized Asiedu. "They were very flexible, very adaptable and willing to work with us to select the best CEO that fit what we were looking for. We are going to continue to work with them and I just want to say thank you to them."

**Emmanuel Asiedu** | Chairman | Adventist HealthCare Board of Directors

"HealthSearch Partners did an excellent job. They were very flexible, very adaptable and willing to work with us to select the best CEO that fit what we were looking for. We are going to continue to work with them and I just want to say thank you to them."



**Carlos Vargas** | Vice President of Human Resources and Technology | Chief Human Resources Officer at Howard University Hospital



"In addition to knowing our system, Ivan and HealthSearch Partners have the experience and professionalism we were looking for. He and his colleague, Doug Duffield, brought knowledge of healthcare, an understanding of a mission-based organization, an extensive network, and a commitment to make it happen to the table. I knew we were going to get top quality work when we engaged HealthSearch Partners for the CEO search."

**John Sackett** | President | CEO | Adventist HealthCare

"HealthSearch Partners did its fiduciary job of making sure best practice was used to guide the search. They didn't assume anything. I appreciated the insights and requirements they provided about the position and the way they worked to prepare me for the interviews."

