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Momentum

Early Careerist
Newsletter

A bi-monthly publication of the American College of Healthcare Executives

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Suzanne B. Jackson, FACHE
CEO
Dominion Hospital, HCA
Falls Church, Va.

"There is no one single path to becoming a CEO; therefore, I recommend that you take risks, remain open to all opportunities, volunteer for the project nobody else wants, work hard and have fun along the way."

Suzanne Jackson, FACHE, shares her thoughts on being an early careerist and CEO, and the opportunities she is facing. Jackson was promoted May 31 to CEO of John Randolph Medical Center in Hopewell, Va., a 147-bed facility and part of HCA. She officially assumes her new role July 1.

Q. Briefly describe your job responsibilities.

A. I serve as CEO of HCA Virginia's Dominion Hospital in Falls Church. I am responsible for all aspects of hospital operations while providing leadership, driving quality initiatives and setting the strategic vision for the organization. Additionally, I create an environment that allows staff members, regardless of their role, to produce their best work, be it the support services, nursing or medical staff areas. Ultimately, it is my job to ensure the team is unified in

creating the optimal patient experience.

Q. What professional experiences helped you become CEO of Dominion Hospital?

A. Two factors stand out in being named CEO. The first was my involvement with the summer enrichment programs at the University of Michigan and through the Institute for Diversity in Health Management. These two internships solidified for me that healthcare administration was my future. They provided me with concrete work experience and additional exposure to the industry. The other critical experience has been maintaining an excellent group of mentors who have invested time, offered career advice, exposed me to new ideas and provided me with honest feedback. There is no one single path to becoming a CEO; therefore, I recommend that you take risks, remain open to all opportunities, volunteer for the project nobody else wants, work hard and have fun along the way.

Q. What has been your most rewarding experience so far as CEO?

A. Two of my most rewarding experiences so far as a CEO include serving as a mentor and transforming my organization's culture. Because I attribute most of my success to having influential mentors, I truly feel a great sense of personal fulfillment being able to impact another person's life and career. In that same respect, I feel a tremendous amount of personal gratification from watching my organization transform in front of me. We have come from an organization that had an uncertain future and apathetic workforce to one that is energized, passionate and full of pride. In both situations—mentoring and transformational culture change—I have been afforded the opportunity to positively impact people's lives.

Q. What is the top challenge/opportunity you are currently facing? How are you addressing it?

A. Dominion Hospital has experienced significant growth during the last several years. Consequently, we have been managing capacity issues that come along with growing so rapidly in our current physical plant. In response, my team and I challenged ourselves one year ago and developed a long-term strategy designed to accommodate the community's demand for our services. Currently, we are executing this plan and moving any appropriate outpatient services outside the four walls of the hospital to nearby office space. Not only does this allow us to grow the capacity of our outpatient services, but it offers the additional space to expand hospital-based units and maximize our inpatient capacity.

Q. How has ACHE helped in your career and professional development?

A. I have been involved with ACHE since I was an undergraduate student, and my involvement has been an integral component of my career success. I have been able to develop long-standing professional relationships that have assisted me in improving my organization. ACHE's publications, local activities and annual Congress on Healthcare Leadership provide a venue for knowledge transfer. Instead of reinventing the wheel, you are able to provide insight on lessons learned or be introduced to a concept, which sparks a new idea that positively impacts your organization. As a healthcare leader, it is imperative that we continue to prioritize ACHE's value of lifelong learning; it allows us to make significant contributions to the delivery of healthcare in our communities.

[Feature Article:](#)

Is Your Career Ready for Healthcare Consolidation?

By John M. Buell

The healthcare marketplace is rapidly consolidating, and experts expect this trend to continue for at least another two years. With some 3,000 of the nation's nearly 5,000 hospitals now part of a system, according to the American Hospital Association, what does this mean for you and your career? Plenty, as it turns out.

While some career opportunities will shrink or disappear as organizations streamline their operations, other positions will emerge, according to Andrew P. Chastain, board vice chair of the executive search firm Witt/Kieffer, Atlanta.

"There will be opportunities for early careerists in some narrow spaces with broader organizations," he says. "In these changing times, you need to ask yourself, 'What will be my opportunity at a corporate office or service center to service these organizations?'"

For example, a handful of years ago positions in revenue cycle management or supply chain management were not considered desirable paths for career advancement. "They didn't have the magnitude of influence that you might want for your career," says Chastain, who adds today you may want to reconsider those kinds of jobs. "A supply chain officer with a single hospital may not have a significant impact with the organization. But with a multibillion dollar system, he or she can have greater influence on populations and organizations that are much different than they would have been five years ago."

With roles and positions changing, this is an opportunity for you to strengthen your skills to help lead in a transformational field. "You must have the insight, commitment and social skills to network effectively," says Michelle Hornberger, FACHE, chief strategy officer, Crittenton Hospital Medical Center, Rochester, Mich. "Networking will expose you to executives who possess an incredible level of expertise that can help you understand the transformation of healthcare and provide you with first-hand experience, detailing successful strategies that will be essential in the future of healthcare."

Historically, most healthcare management professionals had a specific career path in mind during graduate school, which is unique to the field, Chastain points out. They were mindful of the career steps they wanted to take; for many that meant to the C-suite. "Today, many of you will have to approach your career more like your counterparts in other industries," says Chastain. "This may mean being an expert in a more narrowly defined function rather than wanting to be a CEO. It may mean being really good at operational management such as staffing, labor productivity or the integration of a physician practice."

In these kinds of situations, possessing the ability to collaborate will be paramount, as fundamental reform of the healthcare delivery system will be needed as it moves from a volume-based to a value-based system of care, says Hornberger. "Hospitals and physicians will be directly responsible for the health of a defined population and will receive a bundled payment that is reflective of their ability to manage the care of that population, while achieving higher quality outcomes and reducing costs."

The skills you will need today and in the next few years will require a solid

understanding of a hospital's payment system and how that will change with payment reform, according to Hornberger.

"That means significant emphasis will be placed on quality metrics and core measures, as well as understanding how to keep the patient population out of the hospital's inpatient setting and seeking treatment in outpatient facilities."

Senior Leader Tips:

Bruce M. Elegant, FACHE
President and CEO
Rush Oak Park (Ill.) Hospital

Staying Abreast of Healthcare Trends

Tip 1:

I teach a graduate-level course in strategic planning, and my advice to students is "read, read, read"! Aspiring healthcare executives should carve out time every day to read healthcare-related articles from many sources. With the fast changing world of health reform, keeping current is a core competency.

Tip 2:

I recommend that you sign up for group email lists that collect articles on a daily basis and push them out to you in an email. Examples include state and local hospital associations and established consulting firms.

Tip 3:

Read outside your comfort zone. If you are in nursing, try a supply chain journal; if you work in operations, scan a financial management journal. Expand your horizons. You get the idea.

Tip 4:

Find a good book on management. There are many good business books written every year. Enjoy!

ECN Offerings

Less Than Two Weeks Left for \$200 Board of Governors Examination Fee Waiver Offer

When you submit your completed Fellow application with the \$250 application by June 30, ACHE will waive the \$200 fee to take the Board of Governors Exam once your application has been approved. Make your goal of earning the FACHE® credential in 2013 a reality. If earning your board certification in healthcare management as an ACHE Fellow is part of your career advancement plan, then you will want to act now to save \$200 on the Board of Governors Exam fee. (The waiver is valid for six months.) If you meet the [minimum application requirements](#), take the next step to advance your career by [submitting a Fellow application](#).

ACHE Resources:

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A new look and enhanced features to help you find the position you're looking for faster.

Online Seminar:

["Exceptional Leadership"](#)

Sept 4–Oct. 16, 2013

Webinars:

["Enroll America: Delivering the Promise of Health Coverage for the Uninsured"](#)

Thursday, June 27, 2013

["Conflict Resolution Skills to Increase Collaboration, Patient Safety and Quality of Care"](#)

Wednesday, July 17, 2013

[Networking:](#)

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