

Healthcare Executive Forum (HEF) of Western New York

An ACHE Chapter

“Leading Through Crises”

In This Issue:

- Interviews with Kurt Calman & Shari McDonald
- ACHE Tips for the New Reality
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Spotlight:

Being a healthcare leader in 2022

– Kurt Calman, Rochester Regional Health VP of Operations and ACHE Regent for Northern & Western New York

“It continues to be challenging and is something none of us will ever forget...” [Page 3 or Go To Video Link](#)



Plus:

In the eye of the storm

– Shari McDonald, Catholic Health’s Mercy Hospital VP of Patient Care Services / Chief Nursing Officer

“The biggest challenge is our local and national nursing shortage...” [Page 4](#)



A Message From Our Leader

Brittney Carothers, MHA

Happy Holidays from the Healthcare Executive Forum!

Resiliency has been a term at the forefront of my mind as I reflect on the progress made over the last year. 2021 has been a year filled with challenge and change, yet Western New York has continued to prove its ability to navigate adverse times. Although we are experiencing some setbacks in our community, as we move onward and upward into the New Year it's important to remember:



- **We can lean on each other (metaphorically, of course)**
- **It costs nothing to be kind**
- **You are stronger than you think!**
- **Inviting gratitude into your daily routine can improve your mood (speaking from first-hand experience)**
- **When cultivating compassion, don't forget about yourself**

In the New Year, Michael Ayanbadejo, MPH will be taking over as President. Michael has been a part of the Healthcare Executive Forum for years; most recently he has dutifully served as Committee Chair for the Diversity Equity and Inclusion Committee, President-Elect, and has been an active and integral part of the Programming Committee. Michael has proven his commitment to healthcare management excellence through his volunteer work, his professional career, and personal experiences. It has been an honor to work alongside Michael, and I will 'pass the torch' with confidence, as I know he will continue to uphold the values and mission of the American College of Healthcare Executives (ACHE) and the Healthcare Executive Forum (HEF).

The Programming Committee has already begun planning our events for 2022, so please be sure you are signed up to receive our e-mails. If you are not receiving e-mails from HEF and would like to, please visit <https://mailchi.mp/6fcb54067221/mailling-list-subscription>. Lastly, I want to say that it has been my pleasure to serve as President of the Healthcare Executive Forum for the last two years. THANK YOU to our Board of Directors for their unrivaled support and encouragement, this was not an easy road for any of us, and THANK YOU to our membership for sticking with us through unprecedented times, (I can't believe I'm still saying that)!

What It Takes to Be a Healthcare Leader in 2022

An Interview with Kurt Calman, VP Rochester Regional Health and ACHE Northern & Western New York Regent

The following is a video interview conducted by HEF Board Member, Alan Kahn, with Kurt Calman, MBA.

In this fascinating, in-depth interview, Kurt discusses his headaches, lessons, and takeaways in helping to lead a healthcare system through crises like the Pandemic. A true role model for WNY healthcare leaders, Kurt touches on how to best support employee needs while maintaining a strong focus on patients, how to guide staff through emotional times, how technology is rapidly changing the future of care, and what leaders need to consider in the new reality.

To access and watch the full video, click directly on the picture below, or go to the [HEF website](https://www.hef.ache.org).



In the Eye of the Storm

Q & A with Shari McDonald, Mercy Hospital of Buffalo's Vice President of Patient Care Services and Chief Nursing Officer, who was integral to meeting the challenges brought by the double whammy of a once in a lifetime Pandemic and a massive employee work action.



HEF) Being in a leadership position within your organization, what have been your main lessons learned and biggest takeaways from the two major crises you just faced--the Pandemic and the Worker Strike?

Shari) The Pandemic has changed the whole landscape of nursing, and we need to do things differently. Now more than ever, we have all learned the significance of the nursing profession. Nurses are the heartbeat of our healthcare system and are at the core of patient care. In order to sustain quality healthcare throughout the rest of this Pandemic and into the future, we need to find ways to attract more young people to the profession. We need to entice them with higher wages, a safe and desirable workplace environment, and possibly free or low-cost education and training. Without enough nurses, quality and safe patient care is impacted, as well as access to vital healthcare services.

HEF) What were the biggest headaches / stresses / challenges you faced throughout the two crises?

Shari) The biggest challenge is our local and national nursing shortage. The lack of proper staffing has forced us to cut down on patient care beds and temporarily close services. We needed to compete with other healthcare facilities for nurses, both locally and nationally, which is very challenging and also significantly drives up costs to the hospital. It is a balancing act paying for high-priced travelers and pausing surgeries. I am concerned how healthcare will survive in the future in such a state and how the delivery of care will be affected. I worry every day for our community and our staff.

Another challenge is the distress and exhaustion our staff have experienced as a result of the Pandemic, then finding ways to rebuild that resiliency while reigniting that passion of being a caregiver. We are constantly searching for ways to motivate and inspire our team members during this long tempestuous struggle. I can understand the nurse's frustrations with staffing, the Pandemic and unstable supplies. The pandemic has caused supply shortages, lockdowns, and financial stresses. Our team members have lost family members, and we have lost team members to COVID-19.



In the Eye of the Storm

Q & A with Shari McDonald - Continued

HEF) What would you suggest young aspiring healthcare leaders learn to best help them prepare to lead in a crisis? What things do you think maybe can't be learned before really experiencing a crisis as a healthcare leader?

Shari) Good communication and transparency are key. Keeping lines of communication open throughout the continuum of care is vital during a crisis. Daily meetings with representatives from across the hospital were crucial and effective for all of us to stay focused, prioritize issues at hand, and come up with collaborative solutions to any problems or challenges that arose. Taking care of yourself in times of crisis is important too so that you can stay strong and healthy to care for others. Everyone also needs to remember to be kind.

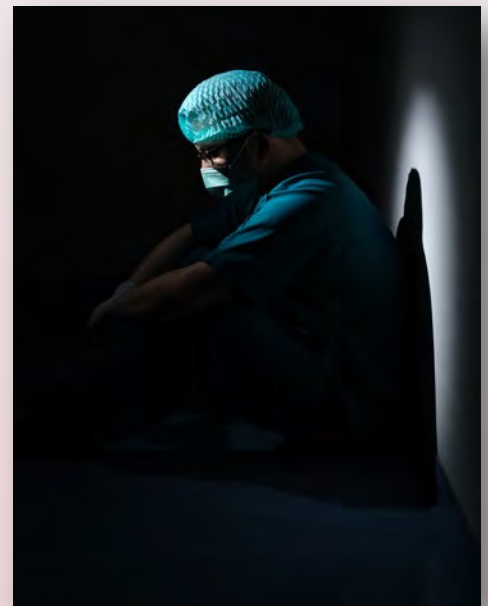
HEF) Having gone through such difficult staffing issues, if things continue the way they are, what trends do you foresee for the future of healthcare staffing and how can healthcare leaders best deal with them?

Shari) The increased use of telemedicine technology during the pandemic will continue to grow. I feel that we will be incorporating "virtual nursing" into bedside nursing even more as technology is quickly evolving. I also foresee changes in how we educate our nurses by creating more pathways and more individualized programs. I also see a need to support our local colleges and universities where we are experiencing a shortage of nurse educators, finding ways to attract more nurses into that field.

HEF) If you could go back in time and give one piece of advice to your former self when you were just starting out in healthcare, advice that is also applicable to others hoping to be healthcare leaders one day, what would that advice be?

Shari) I would stress the importance of listening to your staff with intent and presence, providing them with forums to share their ideas and concerns, empowering and engaging them, proposing collaborative solutions to implement plans, and then following up to make sure concerns were properly addressed. The goal is to create a pleasant, comfortable and safe workplace for all. It is also essential to offer support to our staff such as counseling services and other outlets to de-stress, keeping minds and bodies healthy.

Most important, we need to recognize and thank employees for their dedication and hard work, especially those who go above and beyond. People want to feel appreciated and know they are respected and valued members of the team.



Tackling Important Conversations Virtually

Suggestions from ACHE for the new reality



Regardless of the circumstances, executives are always seeking effective, efficient methods of communication. These days, executives need virtual ways to communicate that are just as effective and meaningful as face-to-face encounters. For many, communicating in the virtual space is now the preferred method of doing business. Following are strategies for getting the most out of day-to-day work communications, engaging with remote employees and having meaningful virtual conversations.

Good Manners Equals Great Communication

Many of us have been working remotely for months; however, we can't let our guard down and forget virtual meeting etiquette. Recommendations for maintaining good virtual meeting manners include:

- **Have an agenda and stick to it**

If possible, send out an agenda a day or two before the meeting. An accurate agenda not only lets everyone know exactly what will be discussed but also gives meeting participants the opportunity to ask or answer questions prior to the meeting.

- **Punctuality matters**

When participating in a virtual meeting, a tardy host is almost as frustrating as the recurring chime that announces the addition of a latecomer. Arrive a few minutes early and have the meeting program running in the background of your computer while you are working on other tasks. Finishing a meeting on time is just as important as arriving on time.

- **Remove potential distractions**

Silence your mobile phones, block time on your shared calendar, close the window to unnecessary websites, and let others who are working or living in your virtual office space know you're in a meeting and are not to be disturbed, if possible.

- **Mute yourself**

Unless you're presenting, be sure to mute yourself. It's amazing how much background noise microphones pick up.

- **Dress for success**

Although many bedrooms currently are doubling as home offices, loungewear is never acceptable office attire.

Can You Hear Me Now?

Suggestions from ACHE for the new reality

We all want to be heard. And when communicating in the virtual space, it's often difficult to know if we're being heard or seen or even understood. Prior to 2020, most of us took for granted those little acknowledgements that let us know when we had successfully connected with another co-worker.



Today, most of us aren't able to give our co-workers an encouraging pat on the shoulder, provide a hug to someone who might be grieving, or even onboard a new employee with a tour of the office and traditional meet-and-greet welcome lunch. With remote work and the use of virtual platforms the norm for the time being, finding connections with each other is critical to preserving our mental health and ensuring a necessary standard of production to remain successful. Here are simple ways leaders can preserve connections with their teams:

- **Prioritize daily face-to-face check-ins**

A quick, 10-minute “huddle meeting” with your team at a set time each day can foster an atmosphere of collaboration and teamwork. Ask all participants to turn on their video, if possible. We all communicate much more effectively when we can be heard and seen.

- **Celebrate milestones and accomplishments—regardless of size**

Though we might not be physically together, that shouldn't stop us from getting together in the virtual space to celebrate each other and our accomplishments. Continue celebrating birthdays, work anniversaries and team wins—big and small.

- **Collaborate and educate**

As an executive, you're part of a senior leadership team. Being a good team member includes sharing helpful information with other leaders. When meeting with your peers, include time on your agenda for ongoing training, best practice sharing and problem-solving. “What are you currently reading?” is a great question to spark an information-sharing session.

- **Do lunch**

Remember how nice it was to get out of the office for a bit and share a bite to eat? It's still possible to create that same atmosphere of connection and conversation, even when working remotely. Consider sending lunch via food delivery apps to one person or your entire team.

When an In-Person Meeting Is Needed

All executives are tasked with performing duties such as delivering difficult news, negotiating contracts or disciplining an employee. Meetings related to these situations are best conducted in person. Face-to-face interactions allow meeting participants to share a common space, where distractions are minimized and technological issues eliminated. Unlike virtual meetings, an executive can control the environment of the in-person meeting and keep distractions and interruptions to a minimum. In-person meetings allow for a fuller sense of connection and trust over virtual meetings. Because of our experience navigating 2020, we are all much better equipped to work in this new, virtual space. And now that we know better, we can all do better.

- PP 6 & 7 are adapted from “[Tackling Important Conversations Virtually](#),” Healthcare Executive, Jean Willey Scallon, FACHE, regional vice president, operations, Signature Healthcare Services LLC, Corona, Calif., and an adjunct professor at Indiana University in the O'Neill School.



The Impact of Remote Work on Reading Body Language

Suggestions from ACHE for the new reality

Many people are fully aware of how their body language can communicate their feelings and emotions to the outside world, whether intentionally or not. For instance, crossed arms might signal defensiveness or hostility, consistent eye contact can relay a sense of confidence, leaning forward can suggest engagement and interest.

But with the widespread shift to remote work in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, millions of Americans have shifted to remote work, and for many that remote work is likely to remain a feature of employment for the foreseeable future, even as the pandemic subsides. This means, among other things, that common visual cues around body language are more difficult to pick up in the new remote world. There is widespread use of video conferencing tools, but these don't fully mimic the nuances of in-person body language.

There are many relevant cues that can be picked up through various aspects of digital communications in a manner similar to how body language is read. The ability to read that language is important for creating a positive work environment in remote and hybrid settings.

Something as simple as including a smiling emoji on an email or text can help set a friendly, disarming tone with colleagues and subordinates and change an email requesting a status update of a project from something that could be taken as demanding and impatient to a casual, friendly check-in.

The fact that millions of Americans have shifted to a remote work setting means that it's more important than ever to be conscious of how communication is received. While working in-person in an office allowed coworkers to rely on body language to communicate more effectively, that becomes more challenging in a remote setting.

Nevertheless, digital body language can help bridge the gap as long as employees understand how to leverage it. It's another form of communication that companies should be alert to as they help train their employees for success in the new world of work.

- P 8 adapted from "[The Impact of Remote Work on Reading Body Language](#)," by HR Daily Advisor, a sibling publication to HealthLeaders, July 19, 2021.



ACHE Resources

Click the links below to unlock a world of useful information

Connect With Your Peers

We are pleased to offer members three free online communities for physician executives, Asian healthcare leaders and LGBTQ healthcare leaders. The communities platform makes it easier than ever for peers to connect in real time, tackle issues together and ask important career-related questions. Members can participate in discussion threads, share resources and best practices, and crowdsource innovative ideas and solutions.

To join, follow these steps:

- Log in to my.ache.org.
- Under “Helpful Links” on the right-hand side, click the last option, “My Communities.”
- Click the “Add” button to choose the online communities you wish to join. (*Note: An MD or DO degree is required to join the Physician Executive Community*).
- Watch your inbox for your welcome email and instructions to access your new community! The email will arrive within 24 hours.
- We hope you will join these communities. If you have any questions, please email communitymanager@ache.org.

Our Exclusive On-Demand Content Library Can Help Advance Your Career

Did you know that as a member, you have access to guided presentations to assist with your healthcare management career development? Our Career Resource Center has compiled a [library](#) of member-only, on-demand sessions that provide information and resources for healthcare leaders at all stages of their careers. Whether you are a student entering the field, a leader aspiring to a position in the C-suite, or a clinician transitioning to an administrative role, there’s something for everyone. All sessions within the CRC’s [On-Demand Content Library](#) were recorded at the 2021 Congress on Healthcare Leadership. We encourage members to explore the On-Demand Content Library and other resources and tools available just for them in the [Career Resource Center](#).

Healthcare Consultants Forum Member Directory: Connecting Execs to Consultants

The [Healthcare Consultants Forum Member Directory](#) offers a robust search functionality to help you identify a consultant who meets your needs. This directory will also be available in the upcoming September/October issue of *Healthcare Executive* magazine. If you are a consultant looking to gain visibility with decision-makers, consider joining the [Healthcare Consultants Forum](#). The forum also offers resources tailored to a healthcare consultant’s specific career development needs.

ACHE Blog and Podcasts

Gain best practices and learn from your peers through our [blog](#) and the [Healthcare Executive Podcast](#). Both the blog and podcast provide up-to-date content on the issues most pressing to healthcare executives. Be sure to share these with your colleagues. Follow the Healthcare Executive Podcast wherever you access podcasts.

volunteers needed

Are you interested in getting involved with the Healthcare Executive Forum?

Volunteers have the opportunity to collaborate with Board members on upcoming events and chapter strategies, to better serve our members and the WNY community.

Contact Phyllis Gunning at
Phyllis.Gunning@gmail.com
for more information.

<http://hef.ache.org>



Helpful Links



ConnectLife has a number of Buffalo Bills Promotions in their Blood Drives.

- Make an appointment with [ConnectLife to donate blood](#) today.

Make sure to get your annual screening done and let others with limited access know about mobile screening in Buffalo. Check the schedule for:

- [ECMC Mobile Mammography Unit](#)
- [Windsong Mobile Screening](#)

Erie, Niagara and all Western New York County Health Departments are continuing to update rules on healthcare worker vaccinations, masking, and more. An updated list of vaccination clinics can be found [here](#), but to find out more about rules in your area, go to your local county health department website:

- [Erie County Department of Health](#)
- [Niagara County Department of Health](#)
- [Genesee/Orleans County Departments of Health](#)
- [Chautauqua County Public Health Department](#)
- [Cattaraugus County Department of Health](#)
- [Allegany County Department of Health](#)
- [Wyoming County Department of Health](#)



About Us

Healthcare Executive Forum, Inc. (HEF) is an independent chapter of the American College of Healthcare Executives (ACHE) in the Western New York Region. The chapter territory includes the following counties in New York State: Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, Niagara, Orleans, and Wyoming.

Our Mission

The mission of the Healthcare Executive Forum, Inc. (HEF) is to advance healthcare management excellence through education and networking services, that meet or exceed the expectations of our members. The Healthcare Executive Forum will uphold and promote the mission and values of ACHE.

Chapter Officers



President

Brittney Carothers, MHA



President-Elect

Michael Ayanbadejo, MPH



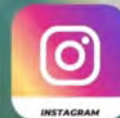
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