

# Healthcare Executive Forum (HEF) of Western New York

An ACHE Chapter

## A Healthcare Executive's Journey

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### Spotlight:

## A Young Health Executive's Journey --

– An Interview with Nicole LoCascio

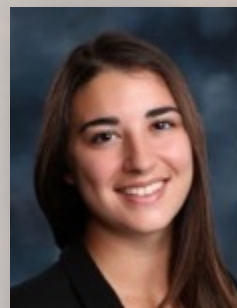
*“Many fellows said it would all work out... and it couldn't be more accurate.”* [Page 3](#)

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– Thoughts on moving forward from May 14, by Alan Kahn

*“What it did was bring out the best of Buffalo for all the world to see.”* [Page 7](#)



# Exploring Health Inequalities

A message from HEF Preseident Omoniyi Michael Ayanbadejo, MBBS, MPH



Dear HEF Members,

I am happy to report that HEF is going strong with continued virtual and in-person programs, and a revamped sense of community, that will serve us well as we aim to expand our membership. As the dust begins to settle underneath my feet, I am glad to be working with such incredible colleagues to plan a course forward for HEF that all members can appreciate, serving you while also serving this great WNY community of ours.

This issue of the HEF Newsletter holds something for everyone. Like many who came out, I was pleased to be able to finally spend time in person with members at our recent HEF Summer Networking event highlighted inside. We also had an absolutely incredible virtual forum on HR and staffing takeaways from the Pandemic, which is now online for all to review. The discussion was deeply insightful, with WNY leaders like Niagara U's Christine Verni, UB's Gregory Cherr, and Dharshan Jayasinghe, the CEO of bizWin Strategies and Triad Healthcare Recruiting, telling it like it is. We have a great look into a junior healthcare executive's journey and future plans as Nicole LoCascio shares here experiences for those seeking an upwardly mobile path in healthcare. We also have some poignant thoughts from our Communications Committee Chair Alan Kahn on how the tragedy at the Jefferson Avenue Tops affected us all, and how we might move on to turn reaction into action for change in how we care for our community. I know you will enjoy it all.

We are really planning some wonderful programming, with an upcoming virtual panel on "What COVID Taught Us about WNY Health Disparities and What To Do About Them" on August 25<sup>th</sup> at 1pm. Make sure to sign up at the link enclosed. We also will likely try to have another in-person networking event late summer if the health situation allows, so please stay tuned by frequently checking out our [HEF Website](#) for the latest news and events, follow us on [LinkedIn](#) and [Instagram](#), and try to attend one of our upcoming events so that I can get to know you better and serve to support you along your healthcare career. I wish everyone a joyfully warm summer of family, friends, community, and peace.

# A Health Executive's Journey -- An Interview with Nicole LoCascio



*Nicole LoCascio, currently Administrative Fellow at Allegheny Health Network, joined HEF a few years back, greatly supporting the Board and several committees, while winning over friends with her sincere dedication and infectious personality. In an effort to better understand a young WNY healthcare executive's journey, we sought out Nicole to get her views and tips on how to gain valuable experience along the way.*

## What drove you into medicine?

For as long as I can remember, I have always wanted to pursue a career in medicine. My mother is a RN and when I was little I would visit her workplace and I remember feeling excited and at peace. At that moment I knew I wanted to devote my career in medicine, I initially thought to help people would require being a physician. After my undergraduate studies, I began working locally as a certified clinical hemodialysis technician (CCHT) and found myself becoming my patients' advocate. It was in this role interacting with my patients that I now was witnessing disparities in healthcare firsthand. Until that point I had only read about inequities of the American healthcare system. My experience ignited a fire which allowed me to realize I want to have a broader impact than direct patient care. I decided to pursue my Master in Public Health - Health Service Administration at the University at Buffalo.

## What have you done to secure your fellowship?

I remember the first week of my graduate classes receiving an email from my department about job opportunities for after graduation, and one of them listed an Administrative Fellowship. After further research, I knew this was exactly what I wanted. I wanted to continue learning in a mentor-mentee relationship, able to ask questions and make mistakes while learning how it could have been done better while figuring out exactly where I want to be. So with this new goal on my horizon, I then looked into what would make me a competitive applicant. I joined ACHE as a student member and began attending webinars for areas of interest. I reached out to my Academic Advisor at UB for soft introductions to Alumni and ensured my course schedule was aligned with my goals. I met with two alumni, who gave me advice and direction on where to turn next. From one of those phone calls, I secured an internship for the 2021 Summer season. Securing an internship was my topmost priority; until then, I only had clinical experience in healthcare and needed to experience the management/business side.

# *An Interview with Nicole LoCascio -- continued*

As for extracurriculars, I only joined those I was interested in and worked my way into leader board roles. I wanted to have an active presence enhancing, broadening my skills. After feeling as though I was a competitive applicant, I began researching what institution I wanted to belong to. I view the Administrative Fellowship as an opportunity to grow within an organization where I have the potential to significantly impact the community I serve. I reached out to programs I was interested in and requested to attend webinars, set up informational interviews with current fellows, and looked at the organization's 990s. I am grateful for my working experience, for it gave me the knowledge to look for what type of culture I want to belong to. After narrowing my list from 20 to 4 organizations, I submitted my applications, received invites to interview from 3 of the 4, and accepted at Allegheny Health Network (AHN). Many fellows said it would all work out where you're meant to be during the process, and it couldn't be more accurate. From the very beginning, I was drawn to AHN, truly a gut feeling. After researching the details and visiting Pittsburgh, I knew this is where I am meant to be.

## **Long-term goals?**

I am not sure where my career may take me, but I am sure I want to be a continuous learner who stays humble and is always looking for ways to broaden my skill set. I hope to grow within Highmark/AHN, tackling SDOH impacting the care of the communities we serve with the quadruple aim in mind.

## **Advice for other early careerist?**

To be humble and never stop asking why. Never say no to new projects you have no experience with. I am grateful for my experiences so far, even tackling projects I previously had no experience with has broadened my skills and I am able to apply it to other areas of my life. You never know what will happen or what you will learn when you step out of your comfort zone.

Do not be afraid to put yourself out there, the worst that happens is you get a no. I have found if you are honest with your intentions people in our field genuinely want you to succeed and will help you however they can.

Also, look for mentors or sponsors in your life to help put your name in the right spaces. I was fortunate to have sponsorship in one of my roles that allowed me to enhance my leadership and managerial skills through the organizations internal programs.

# 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](https://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](mailto: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.

# HEF Networking is Back...and Full of Fun

This following are just a few of the scenes from the Healthcare Executive Forum's networking event that took place on May 4 at the Seneca one Tower Lobby Bar in downtown. In this ever-changing environment, HEF encourages all members to come out to networking events when you can to learn, share, and grow with your peers. Keep an eye on your inbox and the [HEF Website](http://hef.ache.org) to learn about all upcoming events.

Healthcare Executive Forum Inc. (HEF)  
Presents  
**SPRING NETWORKING  
EVENT**  
Wednesday May 4, 2022  
5:30 - 7:30 PM  
Seneca One Tower  
1 Seneca St,  
Buffalo, NY 14203

Please join us for an evening of food and drinks where you will get the opportunity to meet local healthcare leaders, or simply catch up with the ones you already know!

Admission is \$5 and includes open bar and appetizers.



# A Home Filled With Love

-- *Alan Kahn*



Buffalo has been challenged like never before. As many of our representatives have said, evil was brought into our community from the outside. It could have divided us further. It could have tainted each one of us like the wick of an oil lamp, spreading quickly to the core in ways that make us ready to ignite at the faintest spark. It could have brought violence begetting violence in a biblically charged pitched struggle the likes of which this community has never seen. It could have brought lessons of hate's bent truths to be passed on to progeny for generations to come, leaving a once proud reliance on clear scientific fact and community bonds forged from love, in a twisted heap of metallic ruin, now melted away in the chemical bonds that become rusted with the cold lake effect of fear and prejudice. I could have...but it didn't!

The unimaginably tragic events of May 14 and the deep suffering of the families of the 3 wounded and 10 now deceased individuals that were, really, you and me on any given Saturday at Tops, will never be forgotten. We are forever changed; but can we, are we, will we be changed in ways that will make for a glimmering future? Our brave healthcare workers and first responders saw the worst of what human can do to human, likely with horrifically unthinkable images now burned forever in their inner eyelids when they try to sleep. What the events of that day uncovered was the very opposite effect from the purposeful paranoid theory-laden manifesto that pure hate spewed forth from the mind and mouth of a teen onto a blank white sheet of paper, just before it made its way to our neighborhood toting its high-speed lightning strikes. What it did was bring out the best of Buffalo for all the world to see; with heaps of flowers, food handouts by our beloved sports teams, multi-colored hugs and rejuvenating music flashing in the background as global newscasters kept up their 24-hour live vigil seeking bitter details of hate. While Western New Yorkers rushed to do what they do best in times of adversity—give and give some more—in an empathetic frenzy unlike any other metropolitan community, the world might have unfortunately missed it in a blink or two as the news cycle moved on to the next horror.



# A Home Filled With Love -- continued

What they missed is the essence of what we know and have known all along. This special WNY community of ours has problems...but it also always has solutions that lie in the love of a good neighbor. It has disparities that make us fall behind; especially health disparities due to issues of access that lie in the legacy of hate this community has tried to stamp out since the very days it became the world's first electrified city. The Tops on Jefferson Ave. is very much a product of the recent love deposited towards counteracting those access disparities borne of hate. Yet, it also possesses people of action-oriented integrity. The Pandemic certainly brought out the statistics for all to see, even if we didn't want to admit it, that care, (not just healthcare), is very different for different Buffalonians, when it really does not need to be. Like an oily river downtown, a rotting steel mill, a decaying grain elevator, or a battered old train station, these issues often stick out right in front of our eyes like the streaks of light in our heads right after a fireworks display that we can't instantly dissipate no matter how hard we shut our eyes to them. What we have learned is that opening our eyes wider, moving forward together, and taking the right actions with our newfound clarity is what has finally made Buffalo a destination for so many, young and old, seeking a uniquely unmatched quality of life that comes from the goodness of human neighborly love.

By looking soberly and clearly at determinants of health, such as access to food, distance to pharmacies, and yes, the quality of care received, only then can we rebuild into a safe place for our children's children. Now is exactly the time to begin planning our future Harborcenter of good health for all, our Riverworks of nutritional fountains, our Canalside of unified community love. We merely need look at the past couple decades, and to forever hold on to that nebulous but powerful spirit ejected in the tragic wreck on the East Side, which was instantly felt by us all, to begin to where we can soon be. As healthcare executives constantly striving for the logic of order over what are normally emotionally chaotic days, we must reach deeper than ever before, perhaps tapping into that emotional vein this time around. It matters to us, to those who will be here long after we are gone, because each one of us even doing the minimum for our community's health can make it a landing place of love. Whether one can say they possess it or not, whether single or surrounded, isn't a love-filled home the twilight-lit shimmering destination that ultimately every healthy human being seeks?

--[Alan Kahn](#) is Marketing Director for NOVAIR USA / OGSi and a Member of The Bounceback Group.

*"When evil men plot, good men must plan. When evil men burn and bomb, good men must build and bind. When evil men shout ugly words of hatred, good men must commit themselves to the glories of love. Where evil men would seek to perpetuate an unjust status quo, good men must seek to bring into being a real order of justice."* ~Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.





# What COVID Taught Us About WNY's Health Disparities & What To Do About Them

Join Us for a **FREE**  
**VIRTUAL PANEL DISCUSSION**

**Thurs., August 25,**  
**1 – 2:30pm**

**(Earn 1.5 ACHE Face-to-Face Ed Credits)**



Individuals on this expert panel are unmatched in their ability to provide a comprehensive picture of Western New York health disparities and the root causes. With direct experience addressing Buffalo's neighborhood health issues, further clarified by COVID and the recent TOPS shooting tragedy, attendees will be treated to a highly insightful discussion on how best to move forward towards positively impacting the health of our community.

**Myron Glick, MD**  
Chief Executive Officer,

**Jericho Road  
Community Health  
Center**



**Jason Daniels, JD,  
MBA**

Senior Associate Legal  
Counsel, Physician  
Enterprise & Corporate  
Operations

**Catholic Health**



**MODERATOR:**

**Lorene Walker-Ibeka,  
MBA**

Asst. Director of Operations,

**Jericho Road  
Community Health  
Center**



Brought to you by



<https://hef.ache.org>

Attendance by Zoom is **FREE** and open to the public. You **DO NOT** need to be an ACHE member to attend, but you must create a [www.ache.org](http://www.ache.org) username if you don't have one. Register directly at:

**<https://tinyurl.com/2nh8z74j>**

or scan QR Code->



# What we Learned From the Pandemic About HR and Staffing – Recording Now Available

HEF's virtual event was so good, we have opened it up to be shared with all our members and the wider community. With incredible healthcare leaders from across a broad spectrum, all the important lessons that every healthcare executive should know about staffing in WNY came to the fore. Replay it at your convenience at this link:

[HEF VIRTUAL FORUM, WHAT WE LARNED ABOUT HR & STAFFING](#)

**Christine Verni,**  
Ed.D, FNP-BC, APRN  
Dean, College of Nursing,  
Niagara University



## Lessons Learned-

### #Metoo and Workplace behaviors

- Clear policies and expectations
- Redundant reporting mechanisms
- Report back after investigations of unprofessional behaviors
- Consequences for unprofessional behaviors



**Gregory S. Cherr, MD**  
Sr. Professor of Surgery  
(Vascular), Associate Dean for  
Graduate Medical Education  
Designated Institutional Official  
**Univ. at Buffalo Jacobs  
School of Medicine**



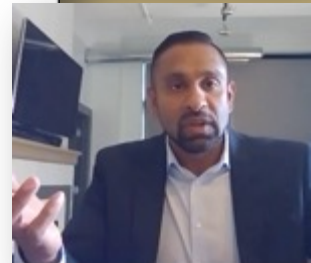
## The good, the bad, and the ugly during COVID

- Actual clinical experiences are critical to pre-licensure students
- Some students finished clinical rotations having infrequently touched a patient
- Virtual learning was unavoidable
- Inequities related to student resources worsened
- Shift in clinical options



## By April of 2022, from a national and WNY perspective:

- A lot more attention is given to employee engagement, retention, and recruitment.
- Major adjustments are made to compensation and benefits plans, and sign-on bonuses and bonus incentive plans are offered regularly.
- Compensation plans have been increased in all categories by 10% to 40%.
- Some organizations are struggling to keep up.
- Insurance reimbursements have not changed to support increases in operational expenses.
- News agencies and social media publish content on the "new salaries" raising employee salary expectations.
- Healthcare systems are partnering with search firms, staffing agencies, and travel nursing companies to alleviate staffing problems.
- A high number of employed frontline workers and healthcare administrators are actively looking for a better job opportunity.
- Candidates are open to relocating across the country for the right job opportunity.
- Hybrid work opportunities, telemedicine, and work from home opportunities have changed how employees envision the modern workforce. They are seeking a different relationship with their employer.
- Technology is used more efficiently and effectively to build a high-functioning "remote workforce" across geographical borders allowing employees to work for companies from out of area and earn more.



**Dharshan Jayasinghe**  
Chief Executive Officer,  
**bizWin Strategies,**  
and at **Triad Healthcare  
Recruiting,**  
Univ. at Buffalo Alumni  
Association President

# 2022 Healthcare Executive Forum (HEF) Event Sponsorship Opportunities

Directly Communicate with WNY's Top Healthcare Leaders and increase your exposure by becoming a HEF event sponsor!

## 2022 HEF Event Sponsorship Packages (Note: Most Upcoming Events are Virtual at Present)

Sponsorship Benefits	Platinum Sponsorship	Gold Sponsorship	Silver Sponsorship	Bronze Sponsorship	Friend of HEF
Company presented as sponsor in opening and closing remarks	★	★	★	★	★
Company logo on all promotional materials	★	★	★	★	
Company will be given 4 complimentary tickets to event	★	★	★		
Company logo on main backdrop for entire event (or on zoom background for virtual events)	★	★			
Up to 10 minute company presentation during event	★				
Support Amount	\$2,000	\$1,000	\$750	\$500	\$250

**Interested? Questions? Ready to sponsor some or all of HEF's great events?**

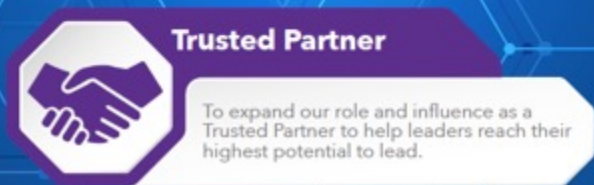
Please contact Alan Kahn at (716) 260-6809 or [alankahn716@gmail.com](mailto:alankahn716@gmail.com), or send in your name, phone, email, and other contact info together with a check payable to

**Healthcare Executive Forum:**  
Healthcare Executive Forum, c/o Treasurer, Roger Leising  
PO Box 395, West Seneca, NY 142224

# ACHE's New 2022 – 2024 Strategic Plan



ACHE.org



**ACHE's Strategic Plan is the roadmap used to realize the above ambitions and direct focus from 2022–2024.**

**As Catalyst, ACHE will commit to leading for equity and safety.** In doing so ACHE will:

- Be a thought leader and champion to drive solutions that advance equity. As priorities, we will:
  - Leverage organizational partnerships, including chapters, to drive DEI efforts.
  - Create essential resources for leaders to advance the creation of diverse, equitable and inclusive environments.
  - Grow the number of diverse member leaders.
- Champion and amplify the importance of safety, providing the tools and strategies needed to drive toward zero preventable harm.

**As Connector, ACHE will commit to growing our professional community across the healthcare continuum by leveraging our partnerships with chapters and other organizations.** In doing so ACHE will:

- Identify new ways to enhance the ACHE-chapter partnership and better leverage the role of chapter leaders and volunteers in providing value to members.
- Strengthen our interprofessional community by making ACHE the professional home for healthcare leaders across the care continuum

**As Trusted Partner, ACHE will commit to deepening engagement with members and the healthcare community through education, networking and career services to inspire and cultivate leaders to advance health.** In doing so ACHE will:

- Grow the membership community to enhance opportunities for leaders to learn and grow.
- Accelerate the adoption of board certification (FACHE ) as the gold standard for leading.
- Expand partnerships with CEOs/C-suite/employers by supporting their efforts to develop a strong, resilient leadership workforce.
- Educate, engage and inspire those newer to leadership roles, including early careerists, to fulfill their highest potential in the profession throughout their careers.
- Accelerate the use of technology to proactively meet the challenges of a rapidly changing environment and create unparalleled digital experiences for leaders.

For more, see: <https://www.ache.org/about-ache/strategy>

# ACHE Announcement and Upcoming Events

(Note, some links require a [www.ache.org](http://www.ache.org) account to access)

## Announcements:

### ACHE Call for Nominations for the 2023 Slate

- ACHE's 2022–2023 Nominating Committee is [calling for applications for service](#) beginning in 2023.

## Upcoming In-Person & Virtual Education Opportunities:

### Register for the ACHE New York Cluster on July 25–28

- Don't miss the opportunity to attend interactive seminars, gain best practices from subject matter experts and network with your healthcare leader peers. You can earn up to 24 ACHE Face-to-Face Education credits toward achieving or maintaining your FACHE® credential.

### --Attend one or both of the following seminars:

- [Hospitals and Health Systems of the Future: Transforming to Thrive](#)

Prioritize your strategic resources to thrive, selecting the right innovations in a dynamic healthcare environment.

- [Applying Design Thinking to Healthcare's Most Pressing Challenges](#)

Learn how to use design thinking to assess current leadership and healthcare industry challenges and brainstorm plausible solutions.

### Monthly Membership Perk: [Strategies for Combating Health Disparities Today](#)

To recognize National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month, we are offering "Leadership Insights: Strategies for Combating Health Disparities" free of charge for a limited time.

### Run for [Regent-at-Large](#)

The ACHE Board of Governors is calling for applications to serve as Regent-at-Large in Districts 1, 4, 5 and 6 beginning in March 2023.

### Recent Grads Can [Upgrade to Full Membership for No Additional Cost](#)

Now through Aug. 30, Student Associates can upgrade to full membership for no additional cost and experience all of the benefits of being a Member.

### Build Your Expertise With [Digital Self-Study Courses](#)

ACHE's Digital Self-Study Courses allow participants to set their own pace while developing the leadership and management skills needed to advance

# 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**

Michael Ayanbadejo, MPH



**Immediate Past President**

Brittney Carothers, MHA



**Treasurer**

Roger Leising, AEMT, RRT, MHA



**Secretary**

Kathleen Curtin, MBA, EdD

