

**First Annual Spring Symposium and Healthcare Workshop**  
*COVID-19 and Healthcare Resilience: Past, Present, Future*  
April 28, 2022

**Speakers & Moderator Bios**

**Panel 1: Crisis Management: Strategies to Effectively Manage a Healthcare Organization**



**Reginald Blaber, MD**  
**Executive Vice President & Chief Clinical Officer, Virtua Health**

Reginald Blaber is Virtua’s Executive Vice President and Chief Clinical Officer. His responsibilities include providing strategic direction, leadership and accountability for all physician services, and for setting the standards for the highest level of quality and safety throughout Virtua—consistent with our mission and vision. He also serves as liaison between the medical staff, administration and board of trustees. Prior to joining Virtua’s executive team, Dr. Blaber was President of Lourdes Health System. He created the Lourdes Cardiovascular Institute where he led more than 80 employed and affiliated cardiologists, growing the service to become the largest heart program in southern New Jersey. In addition, he created a culture of quality and innovation—resulting in multiple awards for excellence. These include national quality recognition for cardiovascular care and cardiac surgery by leading, independent ratings organizations such as Healthgrades, Becker’s and Truven Health Analytics. Dr. Blaber is a practicing cardiologist who has been affiliated with Virtua Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital in Camden (formerly Our Lady of Lourdes Medical Center) for more than 20 years. There he participated in numerous clinical and

administrative committees, including a term as Medical Staff President. In 2010, he was named President of Lourdes Medical Associates and, in 2011, President of Lourdes Cardiology Services. In 2016, he was appointed to the New Jersey Cardiovascular Health Advisory Panel. The same year, the Diocese of Camden honored him with the Saint Luke Award for Leadership in Catholic Health Care in southern New Jersey. He has served on the boards of The Joseph Fund, the Haddonfield Ambulance Association, the Interfaith Care Givers of Haddonfield, and the Bucknell University Alumni Association. Dr. Blaber came to South Jersey by way of Walter Reed Army Medical Center, Fort Benning, and Fort Meade. He served six years in the U.S. Army as an internist and achieved the rank of major. He received his medical degree from Hahnemann University School of Medicine, where he completed a fellowship in cardiovascular disease. He graduated from Bucknell University with a Bachelor of Science in chemistry and earned a Master of Business Administration from Villanova University.



**John F. Bonamo, MD. MS, FACOG, FACPE**  
**Executive Vice President and Chief Medical and Quality Officer, RWJBarnabas Health**

As Executive Vice President and Chief Medical and Quality Officer of RWJBarnabas Health, Dr. John F. Bonamo leads the System's journey as a high reliability organization, an initiative to secure top-tier clinical outcomes and deliver the highest quality care and safest experience for patients and the RWJBarnabas Health workforce. He has served as the System's leading authority on all aspects of the COVID pandemic. Dr. Bonamo is an exceptional physician executive with a distinguished clinical background in obstetrics and gynecology and a proven track record of excellence in hospital leadership. He assumed his position in 2015, having served as President and CEO of Saint Barnabas Medical Center (SBMC), now Cooperman Barnabas Medical Center.

He joined SBMC's medical staff after completing his residency in 1981. Dr. Bonamo is a Fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives, and the American Board of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and is a member of the New Jersey Obstetrical and Gynecological Society. He is board certified by the American Board of Obstetrics and Gynecology and holds an MD from the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey and a Master of Science in Health Care Management from Harvard's School of Public Health. Since 2006, Dr. Bonamo has been a faculty member of the Beijing University International

Management Program, teaching in the U.S. and China. He serves as visiting Professor at the University of Beijing Master's Program for hospital management.



**Carl Kirton, DNO, MBA, RN, ANP**  
**Chief Nursing Officer, University Hospital**

Dr. Carl Kirton has more than 30 years of professional practice as a registered nurse and advanced practice nurse with an expertise in HIV and AIDS. Dr. Kirton is an accomplished educator holding an adjunct appointment on the faculty at New York University where he currently teaches at the master's and clinical doctorate level. He has published several books on the topic of HIV/AIDS and have author or co-authored more than 50 articles in various publications including many referred journals. Dr. Kirton is the Associate Editors for the *Journal of the Association of Nurses in AIDS Care* and the Associate Editor for *Annals of LGBTQ Public and Population Health*. Dr. Kirton has more than 20 years serving in senior level positions at both outpatient and inpatient service lines. Currently, he is the Chief Nursing Officer at University Hospital in Newark, NJ where he was instrumental in organizing this facility's response and recovery during the COVID epidemic.



**Lewis Rubinson, M.D., Ph.D., FCCP**  
**Chief Medical Officer, Morristown Medical Center, Atlantic Health System**

Lewis Rubinson, M.D., PhD. is the Chief Medical Officer at Morristown Medical Center (MMC), a 735 bed referral medical center within the Atlantic Health System. He has been the physician executive for the clinical response to the COVID-19 pandemic at MMC. In Spring of 2020, MMC had 20 COVID-19

inpatient units (9 ICUs and 11 non-critical care units) caring for a peak of 315 hospitalized patients with COVID-19. By Winter of 2022 MMC had cared for nearly 5000 inpatients with COVID-19 associated illness and the Atlantic Health System had cared for more than 12000 inpatients.

Dr. Rubinson has a passion for integrating clinical technology, best practice clinical workflows together with data and analytics to improve strategic hospital clinical challenges. He is an expert in resuscitation, high risk patient transport, critical care and emergency operations. Prior to joining Atlantic Health, he was Professor of Medicine for the Program in Trauma at the University of Maryland School of Medicine, a unique program dedicated to improving the care of patients with traumatic injuries and critical illness. There he served as Vice President, Deputy Chief Clinical Officer at the University of Maryland Medical Center (UMMC).

Among Dr. Rubinson's many leadership roles, he has served as Disaster Medicine Director for Public Health Seattle King County and Chief Medical Officer (Acting) of the Health and Human Services' National Disaster Medical System (NDMS). At NDMS, he was the federal Chief Medical Officer in the HHS Secretary's Operation Center for major events such as Superstorm Sandy, the Republican and Democratic National Conventions and President Obama's second-term inauguration.

Dr. Rubinson earned his bachelor's degree from the University of Michigan. He received his medical degree from Northwestern University Medical School and completed his residency in Internal Medicine at the University of California, San Francisco. While pursuing his fellowship in Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, Dr. Rubinson also received a Ph.D. in Clinical Investigation from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.



**Elizabeth Sheridan, RN, BSN, MA, NEA-BC, FACHE**  
**Regional Chief Administrative Officer, Inspira Health System**

Serving in leadership roles at several New Jersey health systems, Sheridan joined (what would become) Inspira Health in 1999 as administrator for its hospital in Bridgeton, and the system's Chief Nurse Executive. Today, she is Inspira's Regional Chief Administrative Officer for its hospitals in Elmer and Vineland, and a large multi-service health center in Bridgeton.

At Inspira, Sheridan has overseen the development of dozens of projects and programs. Medical and nursing residencies; multi-million-dollar construction projects, oncology, neonatal, surgical, clinical research, senior emergency services have all flourished under her leadership.

Sheridan has nurtured a culture of excellence that has led to nearly every patient care unit being nationally recognized for excellence. Her mentorship has encouraged Inspira's nurses to undertake projects and original research that have garnered local and national recognition.

In 2008, Inspira became the first in New Jersey to have three facilities earn Magnet Designation at one time. As a testament to her leadership, all three centers have maintained Magnet designation to this day. Only 3 percent of hospitals internationally have maintained designation for this length of time. Additionally, Inspira Medical Center Vineland was named a Leapfrog Top Teaching Hospital in 2017. Inspira Medical Center Elmer received the Women's Choice Award as One of America's Best Hospitals for Orthopedics in 2019, 2020 and 2021; the Women's Choice Award as One of America's Best Hospitals Obstetrics in 2019, 2020, and 2021 and Women's Choice Award as One of America's Best Hospitals for Women's Imaging Center at Vineland in 2020 and 2021. Greater Philadelphia Business Coalition on Health (GPBCH) Hospital Quality & Safety Award.

Amid the pandemic, Sheridan has advocated for staff safety and patient well-being, regularly visiting patient care units to assess evolving needs, check up on her teams and encourage vaccination. She also oversaw the opening of satellite ICUs and the cross-training of re-deployed staff while fostering an environment based on mutual support and resilience. Beyond the walls of Inspira, Sheridan coordinated partnerships and programs to ensure vaccinations were available to the most vulnerable in the community. Her visionary leadership also propelled Inspira's Clinical Research team to study groundbreaking COVID-19 therapies.

For her decades of compassionate patient-centric leadership, Sheridan has earned regional and national awards, including: The College of New Jersey's Distinguished Alumni Humanitarian Award; the Garden State Woman of the Year for Healthcare; Organization of Nurse Executives of NJ (ONE-NJ) Professional Recognition Award; and Nursing Spectrum's Giving Excellence Meaning (GEM) Award for the Philadelphia Tri-State region. Listed as Top 130 Women Healthcare Executives in U.S. to Know by Becker's Hospital Review; recently inducted into the Cumberland County Women's Hall of Fame.

Sheridan has achieved Fellow status in American College of Healthcare Executives and has volunteered to serve in leadership and board positions. Currently Chairperson of the Nurse Executive Constituency Group of New Jersey and HRET Board member with the New Jersey Hospital Association and Community Foodbank of South Jersey board member. Past president of the Organization of Nurse Leaders of New Jersey.



**Daniel Varga, M.D.**  
**Chief Physician Executive, Hackensack Meridian Health**

Daniel Varga, M.D., serves as the Chief Physician Executive at Hackensack Meridian Health. In this position, Dr. Varga leads and oversees the health network's physician enterprise and is responsible for achieving the best possible quality outcomes, co-leads Care Transformation Services, and is responsible for medical management of the clinically integrated network. Dr. Varga previously served as Senior Executive VicePresident and Chief Clinical Officer for Texas Health Resources. Dr. Varga has also recently served as the Senior Executive Officer of Southwestern Health Resources Clinically Integrated Network, an affiliation between THR and University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center. Prior to assuming his position at THR, Dr. Varga served as Senior Vice-President and Chief Clinical Officer of KentuckyOne Health in Louisville, KY; Chief Medical Officer of Saint Joseph Health System; Chief Medical Officer of SSM Healthcare-Saint Louis; and Chief Medical Officer of Norton Healthcare. He is a regular writer on health policy issues and a frequent regional and national speaker on clinical performance improvement, public reporting and transparency in health care, and other areas of health policy. Dr. Varga is a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of the University of Kentucky and an Alpha Omega Alpha graduate of the University of Louisville School of Medicine. He completed his residency in Internal Medicine at the University of Louisville Affiliated Hospitals, where he served as Chief Medical Resident. Dr. Varga is a Board-Certified general internist and a Past President of the Greater Louisville (KY) Medical Society and a Past President of the Kentucky Medical Association.



## **MODERATOR**

**Mark D. Sparta, PT, MPA, FACHE**

**President and Chief Hospital Executive of Hackensack University Medical Center & Executive Vice President of Population Health, Hackensack Meridian Health Network**

Mark D. Sparta, PT, MPA, FACHE, is currently the president and chief hospital executive of Hackensack Meridian's flagship hospital, Hackensack University Medical Center and serves as executive vice president of Population Health of the Hackensack Meridian Health network. Mr. Sparta assumed the roles of president and CHE in 2018 after serving as executive vice president and chief operating officer at Hackensack University Medical Center. From November 2014 to June 2015, he served as acting CEO of Hackensack Meridian Health Pascack Valley Medical Center.

As the President of a \$2 billion organization, Mark heads the 781-bed research and teaching hospital with over 8,000 active employees, over 1,600 physicians, currently ranking #1 in New Jersey and among the top 1 percent of all hospitals in the nation – continuing to set a high bar for New Jersey hospitals. Hackensack University Medical Center is the largest provider of both inpatient and outpatient services in the state. Under his leadership, the medical center has seen exponential growth and transformation including construction of one the largest capital projects in the state, a nine-story, 530,000 sq.ft. patient pavilion.

He joined Hackensack University Medical Center in 1988 as a staff physical therapist. As a licensed PT, Mark offers a unique perspective, applying firsthand direct patient care experience to all facets of decision making and strategic development in our mission to provide the highest quality of integrated and human-centered care for our patients and community.

With more than 30 years of healthcare experience, Mark has seen progressive career accomplishments based on a strong clinical foundation, a high regard for quality, perceptive business analysis, effective communication and passionate strategic leadership. He has achieved superior operational outcomes and effective financial management, in a fluid environment of evolving payment methodologies through focused business strategy development and concept-to-execution expertise, including detailed program planning aligned with the organization's vision and mission.

Mark has been honored with the NJBiz 2020 Healthcare Hero Award, American College of Healthcare Executives Regent's Early Careerist Award, American College of Healthcare Executives Service Award,

and a National Finalist for Advisory Board's Award for Excellence in Healthcare Leadership. Most recently, Mark was included in Becker's Hospital Review's 2022 "58 Population Health Executives to Know" list.

He holds a BS in Physical Therapy from Ithaca College and an MPA in Health Policy and Management from Seton Hall University. Mark is a Fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives and is Board Certified in Healthcare Management. In service to the community Mark sits on several boards including Bergen Volunteer Medical Initiative, Eastwick College, Meadowlands Chamber of Commerce, and the Hudson Farm Foundation.



#### **MODERATOR**

**Huzafa Shakir, MD, MHA, FACS, FCCP**

**Assistant Professor, Rutgers New Jersey Medical School**

Seasoned professional with depth of expertise in a wide range of complex open heart and robotic thoracic procedures, Dr. Shakir is the recipient of the Richard J. Elkort Memorial Award for Excellence in Surgery and a graduate of the Accelerated BA/MD program at Boston University School of Medicine.

He completed his Cardiothoracic Surgery residency at Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School in New Brunswick, NJ. He spent 12 years at St. Mary's General Hospital in Passaic, NJ where he served as Chairperson of both the Quality/Safety Committee and Critical Care Committee, and as Division Chief of Cardiothoracic Surgery.

He joined Rutgers New Jersey Medical School in 2019 as an Assistant Professor where he completed the Rutgers Leadership Academy and most recently an Executive Master's in Healthcare Administration at the Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy. He also has a Certificate in Human Resource Management from The Wharton School of Business and a Certificate in Entrepreneurship from Harvard Business School.

He is a member of the Society of Thoracic Surgeons, Fellow of both the American College of Surgeons and the College of Chest Physicians, and Chair of the Eastern Cardiothoracic Surgical Society. He also volunteers as a member of the Health Advisory Council for East Brunswick Township, NJ.



**Panel 2: Behavioral Health: Approaches to Increase Value for the Organization and Meet Community Needs**



**Tara Chalakani, PsyD**  
**Deputy CEO, Preferred Behavioral Health Group**

Dr. Tara Chalakani (she/her/hers) is a holistic psychotherapist who is passionate about her work. To help people grow, heal, and overcome obstacles brings her great joy.

Dr. Tara's background includes over 30 years in health care with various roles including: Maternal/Child Health, Crisis Response, Inpatient Adult Psychiatric, Community Mental Health, Partial Care, Intensive Outpatient, Behavioral Health Leadership, and Organizational Consulting.

Dr. Tara has undergraduate degrees in Nursing and Psychology, a Masters in Mental Health Counseling, and a Doctoral degree in Psychology. She is also a Reiki Master and Acupressure practitioner. Dr. Tara has had several years of training in Psychodrama and is a certified Sandplay Therapist. She has studied Holistic Health at the Doctoral Level, and is an Approved Clinical Supervisor. Dr. Tara is an adjunct professor at Kean University's Nathan Weiss Graduate College.

Dr. Tara's trauma-informed approach to therapy is warm, gentle, and encouraging. She believes that her clients already possess the capacity to help themselves, but sometimes they need the right environment to foster their true potential. Dr. Tara incorporates her comprehensive knowledge and extensive experience to create a sense of holistic wellness for each client. When mind, body and spirit are balanced, only then can we truly be healthy.



**Frank A. Ghinassi, PhD, ABPP**  
**President and CEO, Rutgers Health University Behavioral Health Care**

Frank A. Ghinassi, PhD, ABPP is President and CEO for Rutgers Health University Behavioral Health Care (UBHC). As CEO, he is responsible for a statewide system of academically based mental health and addiction services across New Jersey, and overseeing 2,200 staff and faculty. UBHC, one of the largest providers of behavioral and addictions healthcare in the country, offers a wide range of clinical services across all diagnosis, and across the lifespan, including inpatient units, partial hospitalization programs, intensive outpatient programming, case management, traditional outpatient treatment, correctional health care, a Certified Community Behavioral Health Center, peer operated helplines for service members, veterans, mothers of children with special needs, law enforcement officers and child protection workers, a statewide suicide prevention hotline and a clinical research and training institute, as well as an array of specialty and peer support services. Dr. Ghinassi is a Professor at Rutgers Graduate School of Applied and Professional Psychology; an Adjunct Professor of Psychiatry at Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School; an Adjunct Associate Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine; and a Core Faculty Member at Rutgers Global Health Institute.

Additionally, Dr. Ghinassi has been appointed as senior vice president of Behavioral Health and Addictions Service Line at RWJBarnabas Health. In this new role, he will strategically direct behavioral health and addictions, fostering synergies between Rutgers Health and RWJBarnabas to enhance high-quality, fully-integrated and interdisciplinary care throughout New Jersey.

Prior to joining UBHC, Dr. Ghinassi was the Vice President for Quality, Patient Safety, Regulatory Compliance and Health Information Management at Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic of the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center Presbyterian Shadyside, where he was a member of the Executive Management Group. Dr. Ghinassi also functioned as an Associate Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine where he was actively involved in the training of Psychiatric Residents and Doctoral Psychology Interns.

In previous positions, he served as Director of Mood and Anxiety Partial Hospitalization and Residential Services at McLean Hospital/Harvard Medical School. While in Boston, he was also an Instructor in Psychology in the Department of Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School and was actively involved in the training of Pre- and Postdoctoral Psychology Interns and Fellows.

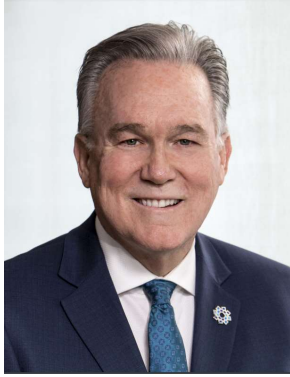
As a frequent invited presenter at national professional meetings and conferences, Dr. Ghinassi has been an active member on SAMHSA planning committees, CMS commissioned technical expert panels, and acted as chairman of the Performance Measurement Committee of the National Association of Behavioral Healthcare (previously the National Association of Psychiatric Health Systems), where he was the 2007 recipient of the National Quality Award, recognized for his leadership on key projects, committees and expert panels aimed at improving the measurement and delivery of behavioral healthcare. Dr. Ghinassi is also the co-chair of the Addiction Treatment Quality Workgroup for the National Association of Behavioral Healthcare.

From 2003 to 2016, Dr. Ghinassi has served as a Player Development Educator and Evaluator for the National Football League and as a psychologist for the Pittsburgh Steelers, the Pittsburgh Penguins and for a number of local college and university departments of athletics. He has also long served as a member of the Adjunct Faculty at the Center for Creative Leadership, an international institute for the enhancement of corporate leadership and executive coaching.



**Russ Micoli, MHA**  
**Vice President, Behavioral Health Services, Virtua Health**

Russ has spent his 30+ year career as a leader in the behavioral health system in South Jersey. Russ is presently working at Virtua Health as the Vice President of Behavioral Health Services, where he is leading strategic planning and business development efforts for the new Behavioral Health Service Line. In his time at Virtua the Behavioral Health has seen steady growth in both patient volume and contribution margin. Additionally, Virtua launched its first-ever Behavioral Health Practice, where Medication for Addictions Treatment (MAT) and mental health and substance use therapies are provided. Russ was recently selected to Co-Chair Virtua' Violence Prevention Steering Committee. Before joining Virtua Health in August of 2019, Russ was with Jefferson Health, New Jersey as the Vice President for Ambulatory & Behavioral Health Services. While at Jefferson in 1989, Russ opened the first hospital-based Children's Crisis Intervention Inpatient Unit in South Jersey and led efforts to expand the child, adolescent and adult services during his time there. Russ is one of the founding members of the South Jersey Behavioral Health Innovation Collaborative and served as the first Chairperson of this group. Russ is an active member and past Chair of the New Jersey Hospital Association Behavioral Health Constituency Group, where he has worked on a number of regional and statewide committees.



**Donald J. Parker, LCSW**

**President, Behavioral Health Care Transformation Services, Hackensack Meridian Health**

Donald J. Parker, a licensed clinical social worker, is president, Behavioral Health Care Transformation Services/Integrative Medicine, for Hackensack Meridian Health, which includes five hospital based general Psychiatric Services in eleven hospitals and multiple Outpatient Services. He also served as president of Carrier Clinic. Carrier Clinic operates an acute care mental health hospital, a residential treatment center for adolescents, a fully accredited special needs school for students grades 7 through 12, the Blake Recovery Center, an inpatient unit focused on addiction recovery, and The Retreat & Recovery At Ramapo Valley in Mahwah, N.J., an outpatient unit focused on addiction recovery that opened in February of this year.

Prior to joining Carrier Clinic in 2013, Parker served as the vice president for physician services and ambulatory care at St. Joseph's Health System, Paterson, N.J. Previously, Parker also served as president/CEO of Atlantic Mental Health for 15 years and subsequently merged into the AtlantiCare Health System. At AtlantiCare, he served in multiple leadership roles, including vice president of business development and president of AtlantiCare Health Services, where he developed and provided leadership to more than 20 ambulatory businesses with 42 locations. Parker's capstone achievement at AtlantiCare was his participation on the leadership team of the Health System as it earned and was awarded the Malcolm Baldrige Award, a Presidential recognition for quality and achievement.

Parker serves as the Chairman of the National Association of Psychiatric Health Systems Foundation, New Jersey Hospital Association, the Somerset County Business Partnership, and for 15 years on the Atlantic Cape Community College board of trustees. He also has served on numerous public and private boards, chairing the New Jersey Association of Mental Health Center's panel for two terms, serving as a founding member and chair of Gilda's Club of South Jersey, and chairing the New Jersey Supreme Court Committee responsible for rewriting divorce regulations for the state. He was recently honored by the Boy Scouts of America with The Toast of Scouting Award, presented for outstanding community service and leadership. Parker has also been recognized by ROI-NJ as a top Influencer in Health Care in New Jersey for the last five years.



**Aakash Shah, MD, MBA, MSc**

**White House Fellow, Department of Health and Human Services**

Dr. Aakash Shah is currently serving as a White House Fellow in the Immediate Office of the Secretary at the United States Department of Health and Human Services where his portfolio includes mental health, overdose prevention, and criminal justice reform. He is also a practicing emergency room doctor who specializes in addiction and behavioral health. During the first wave of the pandemic, he helped care for the first confirmed cases of COVID-19 in New Jersey and assisted nonprofits in adapting their operations to the pandemic.

Prior to his current role, Aakash served as the Director of Addiction Medicine and the Medical Director of Project HEAL (a community violence intervention program) at Jersey Shore University Medical Center (JSUMC) as well as the Medical Director of New Jersey Reentry Corporation (NJRC). In those roles, he helped build programs that reimagined the criminal justice system through a rehabilitative lens. He raised \$7.5 million dollars in federal, state, and philanthropic grant funding over two years for such programs and his work resulted in several statewide reforms (including the elimination of prior authorization requirements for medications for opioid use disorder) that received the bipartisan endorsement of five former New Jersey Governors, several local editorial boards, and major healthcare systems.

Prior to his work with HMH and NJRC, Aakash was the Founder and Executive Director of Be Jersey Strong, which trained students to serve as community health workers. During the third open enrollment period, Be Jersey Strong recruited over 500 students – two-thirds of whom spoke a second language with over 50 languages represented – from over 20 campuses to help inform New Jerseyans of their options for coverage. The initiative represented one of the largest and most diverse efforts to connect the uninsured to coverage in the nation and was honored by then President Barack Obama at the White House for its impact.

Aakash has assisted the Biden-Sanders Unity Task Force on Healthcare, staffed the health policy transition committee for Governor Phil Murphy of New Jersey, served on the health policy councils of three gubernatorial campaigns, and advised the New Jersey Senate Majority Leader and members of the United States House of Representatives. In these roles, his portfolio has included initiatives to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, combat the opioid crisis, determine the health impact of burn pit exposure

during military service, expand paid family leave, secure financing for women's health, establish Medicaid Accountable Care Organizations (ACOs), and implement the Affordable Care Act (ACA).

He has conducted original research in these areas at Rutgers University, Boston Children's Hospital, Brigham and Women's Hospital, Massachusetts General Hospital, Harvard Medical School, and Oxford University. He is the author of several peer-reviewed publications, op-eds, and policy reports as well as the anthology *The Soul of a Patient*. He obtained his MD from Harvard Medical School. He completed his MBA and MSc in Comparative Social Policy from Oxford University as a Rhodes Scholar. He received his BA and BS from Ursinus College. He was awarded an honorary doctorate from Centenary University for his contributions to public health and previously served on the board of trustees for Integrity House, the New Jersey Harm Reduction Coalition, and Ursinus College. He lives with his wife and daughter in DC where they enjoy borrowing one too many audiobooks from the local library.



**MODERATOR**

**Robert Kley**

**Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, Mental Health Association of New Jersey**

Robert Kley is currently the Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of the Mental Health Association in New Jersey. He has worked with MHANJ since 1986 serving in a variety of capacities before assuming the VP/COO role in 2002. Under his innovative leadership the Association led the creation of a broad array of nationally recognized peer recovery support, training programs and MHANJ's statewide Call Center, He directed the organization response to Hurricane Sandy through NJ Hope and Healing, and response to the COVID pandemic. Social demonstration addressing the stigma of mental illness. The shift to virtual support service during COVID resulted in United by Wellness, a virtual wellness and recovery center. Building community partnerships and collaboration are the cornerstone of his philosophy to build a strong social justice foundation in address the racial and cultural inequalities and stigma that limit access to behavioral health services. Kley served as the founding President of Monarch Housing Associates in 1991 and continues today as the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees. Monarch has created over 3500 units of supported affordable housing targeted for persons with mental illness, disabilities, veterans and the homeless across NJ. He is a graduate of Rutgers University.

### **Panel 3: Covid 19: What We Learned: Leadership**



#### **Bill Arnold, MHA**

**President and Chief Executive Officer, Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital  
President, Southern Region, RWJBarnabas Health**

Bill Arnold, MHA, is the President and Chief Executive Officer of Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital in New Brunswick, and President of the Southern Region for RWJBarnabas Health (RWJBH), which spans Monmouth and Ocean Counties. Mr. Arnold has held leadership roles with RWJBH since joining the system in 1994. Prior to his promotion to regional leadership in 2019, he served as President and CEO of Monmouth Medical Center (MMC) and The Unterberg Children's Hospital since April 2016 and as Chief Operating Officer of MMC since 2006. He joined Monmouth Medical Center in 1998 as Administrative Director of Operations and was promoted to Vice President of Operations in 1999. Before joining MMC, he served as Operations Manager with Saint Barnabas Medical Center, Livingston, and Administrative Director of Operations for Barnabas Health, which he has served in various capacities since 1994.

Mr. Arnold earned a B.S from Stetson University, FL, and an M.H.A. from Seton Hall University, South Orange. Bill is a member of New Jersey Hospital Association (NJHA) Board of Trustees, serving as 2021 Secretary in addition to Chair of the Audit and Compliance Committee. He is also a member of the NJHA Executive, Finance and Investment Committees, as well as the Chairman's Advisory Committee on Industry Direction. Bill is also a member of the Board of Directors of Encompass Health Rehabilitation Hospital of Tinton Falls, VNA Health Group, and the RWJBarnabas Health Children's Specialized Hospital Foundation. His prior board memberships have included the Jersey Coast Chapter of the American Red Cross, the Long Branch Federally Qualified Health Center and the Boys & Girls Club of Asbury Park.



**Shereef Elnahal, MD, MBA**

President and Chief Executive Officer, University Hospital

Dr. Shereef Elnahal is the President and Chief Executive Officer of University Hospital in Newark, NJ- a Level I trauma center, the principal academic medical center for Rutgers NJ Medical School, the state's only public hospital, and New Jersey's largest, urban safety net hospital. He has served in the role since the summer of 2019. Prior to his time at University Hospital, Elnahal served as New Jersey's 21<sup>st</sup> Health Commissioner, appointed to the Cabinet post by Governor Murphy and confirmed by the New Jersey Senate, serving during the first two years of the Murphy administration.

Elnahal has led University Hospital through the COVID-19 public health emergency. The hospital has served as a model for urban hospital and regional response efforts, developing protocols for expanding capacity, maintaining PPE supplies, adapting clinical protocols in accordance with the latest evidence, and conducting clinical trials and research. In addition, Governor Phil Murphy tasked the hospital with coordinating regional pandemic response efforts across dozens of hospitals in northern NJ, as well as activating a military field hospital alongside the National Guard to create additional capacity in the face of the surge.

Elnahal also brought his public health background to bear in leading University Hospital through a new vision for the state's only public hospital. He has focused on building coalitions to improve the organization's standing in the Newark community, and has embraced the hospital's legacy as an anchor institution with an obligation first and foremost to the city's residents under the Newark Accords. He has placed significant focus on improving the hospital's performance in quality and safety, restructuring to an evidence-based quality management approach that is quickly reducing infection rates and other adverse outcomes.

During his time as Commissioner, Elnahal left a lasting impact on the State's healthcare system. He expanded the New Jersey Health Information Network, a shared services platform that provides the infrastructure for electronic exchange of patient health information among healthcare providers. He worked closely with New Jersey First Lady Tammy Murphy on her Nurture NJ campaign to help improve infant and maternal health outcomes and reduce health disparities – a mission he has continued at University Hospital, with its top tier maternal health practices. He more than doubled the number of patients and physicians participating in the State's Medicinal Marijuana Program. Finally, he made strides with advancing the Governor's agenda in the opioid epidemic, granting funding to institutions to facilitate



electronic health records, data sharing, and public health reporting, and marked NJ as the first state in the nation to allow paramedics to use buprenorphine in the field.

Before his public service in New Jersey, Elnahal served in the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs in the Obama Administration. He was initially appointed as a White House Fellow under Secretary Bob McDonald, spearheading then- Under Secretary for Health David Shulkin's initiative to identify and spread best practices across the Veterans Health Administration. He was then hired on as the Assistant Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Quality, Safety, and Value, serving as the chief quality and patient safety officer for the largest health system in the United States.

Elnahal holds an MD from Harvard Medical School and an MBA with Distinction from Harvard Business School, and lives with his wife and three children in New Jersey.



**Amy B. Mansue, MS**  
**President and Chief Executive Officer, Inspira Health**

Amy B. Mansue was appointed President and Chief Executive Officer of Inspira Health in August 2020. She has dedicated nearly three decades of service to the health care industry, and has made a significant impact across the state, having worked both in politics and for leading hospitals in New Jersey. In recognition of her expertise, Mansue was appointed Regional Coordinator in Central New Jersey by Governor Murphy amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Prior to her role at Inspira, Mansue served as Executive Vice President and Chief Experience Office at RWJBarnabas Health. She was also the former Chief Executive Officer of Children's Specialized Hospital and the board chair for both the New Jersey Hospital Association and the New Jersey Chamber of Commerce. Mansue earned both her bachelor's and master's degrees in social welfare from The University of Alabama.



**Mark Stauder, MHA**  
**Chief Operating Officer, Hackensack Meridian Health**

Mark Stauder joined Hackensack Meridian *Health* in January 2019. As Chief Operating Officer, he is responsible for the operation and management of 17 Acute Care, Children's, and Specialty Hospitals, Health Ventures (For-Profit Division), Network-wide Institutes, Care Transformation Services, Nursing, Transformation and Integration, Patient Care Services, and Facilities and Construction.

A proven executive with more than 30 years of senior management experience, including large multi-site integrated delivery systems, Mr. Stauder has extensive practical knowledge of health services, health plans, physician leadership relations, health information technology, high reliability quality care initiatives, patient-centered clinical process, clinical and business transformation, and population health, leading senior teams, business development, and mergers and acquisitions.

Prior to Hackensack Meridian *Health*, Mr. Stauder served as president and chief operating officer of Inova Health System, a nonprofit integrated \$3.6 billion net revenue regional multi-campus health system with 2,356 total beds in Falls Church, VA. During his tenure, his team significantly improved the strategic positioning, growth and clinical operational effectiveness of the organization.

Mr. Stauder previously served as chief operating officer of St. John's Mercy Health Care, a 1,166-bed integrated regional multi-campus health delivery system in Creve Coeur, MO. His team led the strategic and operational transformation of the organization. Prior to this role, Mr. Stauder served as chief operating officer of Mercy Health System, an integrated delivery system in Laredo, TX, where he strategically and operationally led the organization to a position of strength. In Mr. Stauder's earlier career, he served as chief administrative officer of Mercy and Baptist Medical Center in New Orleans, LA. He also served as chief operating officer and associate administrator/senior vice president of Mercy Hospital of New Orleans, and vice president of Mercy Regional Medical Center in Vicksburg, MS.

Mr. Stauder holds a Masters of Hospital and Health Care Administration from St. Louis University (St. Louis, MO) and a Bachelor of Science in biology from the University of Missouri-Kansas City (Kansas City, MO).

His professional affiliations include or have included: current board member and secretary of the New Jersey Hospital Association Board of Trustees; board member of the Northern Virginia Technology Council; board member of the Washington, DC Regional Board of Trade; Campaign Committee of the

Greater Washington, DC United Way; Advisory Committee of the George Mason University Graduate Program for Health Sciences; board member of Innovation Health Plan; board member of InTotal Health; board member of Inova Loudon Hospital; chairman of the board of St. John's Mercy Rehabilitation Hospital; chairman of the board of DeBouis Long Term Acute Care Hospital; board member of Mercy Health Plans; board member of Catholic Charities of St. Louis; board member of St. John's Mercy Health System; chairman of the board and Executive Committee of Texas Public and Nonprofit Hospitals; board and Executive Committee of Texas Conference of Catholic Health Facilities; board and Executive Committee of the National Association of Critical Access Hospitals; board member of the Laredo Chamber of Commerce; editorial board member of City Business/Health Care New Orleans; board member of St. Thomas Housing Project Health Clinic; board member of New Orleans Speech and Hearing; New Orleans Metropolitan Leadership Committee member; president of the Mississippi Young Administrators Forum; president of the McAuley Federal Credit Union; and board member of United Way of Warren County.



**MODERATOR**

**Cathleen D. Bennett, JD**

**President and Chief Executive Officer, New Jersey Hospital Association**

Cathleen D. Bennett, Esq., took the helm November 9, 2017, as president and CEO of the New Jersey Hospital Association, a nonprofit trade association representing New Jersey's hospitals, health systems, behavioral healthcare systems, rehabilitation hospitals, psychiatric hospitals, assisted living, nursing homes and other healthcare providers that provides leadership on quality and patient safety, education and advocacy in both Washington, D.C. and in Trenton.

As CEO, Bennett oversees NJHA, the Health Research and Educational Trust of New Jersey, a not-for-profit affiliate that promotes continuing education, patient safety, quality improvement and research; and the for-profit Healthcare Business Solutions, which provides group purchasing and other business solutions for healthcare providers. She co-founded Q<sup>3</sup>HIP, LLC in 2018 with a focus on improving quality of care, patient safety and education and leveraging the collective capabilities of the Hospital Associations of New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Ohio.

Prior to being selected as CEO of NJHA, Bennett served as New Jersey's 20<sup>th</sup> Health Commissioner.