The Opportunity

The Secretary of Health and Human Services for the State of Rhode Island, former Lieutenant Governor Elizabeth Roberts, is overseeing new investments in the Eleanor Slater Hospital (ESH) which include the recruitment of a new senior leadership team: new Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Chief Nursing Officer (CNO), Chief Financial/Operating Officer (CFO/COO), and Chief of Quality Assurance and Risk Management (CQO). The new CNO will oversee all nursing and designated patient care functions and services, and will develop infrastructure and systems of accountability to address weaknesses in the existing structure and operations of this multi-site Long Term Acute Care Hospital, which provides essential care and services for many of the State’s most vulnerable citizens with severe mental and medical disorders.

This is an opportunity for a seasoned and talented nursing leader with a strong sense of mission to work with a dedicated staff to assure the delivery of high quality, safe, efficient, and appropriate care to some of the state’s most vulnerable patients. A leader with vision, tenacity and extraordinary people skills who can advocate effectively for people with profound physical, mental and social challenges will create a vital legacy that will have a significant impact on the well-being of Rhode Island’s communities. The new CNO will have the opportunity to participate in a strategic planning process early in their tenure at Eleanor Slater Hospital.

Historic and ongoing challenges ESH has faced include ineffective senior leadership, the lack of necessary information technology and systems, poor staffing ratios, highly structured labor environment with multiple bargaining units, and a financial system that runs through the state government.

There are several important factors supporting this turnaround effort and making this an excellent opportunity for both the organization and its next CNO. This effort has the personal support of Governor Gina Raimondo. The dynamic Secretary of Health and Human Services, Elizabeth Roberts has a strong background in health care, and will be very involved with and actively supportive of efforts to improve conditions for the patients and staff of Eleanor Slater Hospital. The Hospital’s Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Elinore McCance-Katz is an immensely talented and well known leader in behavioral health, and seeks to strengthen academic ties by creating and expanding existing healthcare professional training programs including opportunities for resident physician training in psychiatry, psychiatric subspecialties and rehabilitative medicine. Middle management is for the most part capable, dedicated, and driven by the mission of serving this special population. The quality of care rendered by a very caring and highly dedicated staff is excellent.

“Eleanor Slater Hospital is an absolute treasure for health care practitioner education. This is an institution that cares for the most ill among us — in terms of both physical and mental illnesses. Our current initiatives include reaching out to our Rhode Island advanced educational institutions to establish training experiences at Eleanor Slater Hospital in a number of clinical areas. As a teaching institution, Eleanor Slater Hospital will further enhance the care of patients, stimulate our staff to provide the best care possible and prepare the next generation of clinicians to provide excellent and empathic care. These are exciting times for us and we welcome the idea of continuing to add qualified candidates to our already outstanding staff.”

Dr. Elinore McCance-Katz, MD, PhD, CMO

While this CNO and other leadership searches are being conducted, the state has brought in an interim leadership team through Applied Management Systems, a national consulting firm with expertise in hospital operations, which reflects the State’s commitment to strengthening Eleanor Slater Hospital.
The Organization

In the late 1800s Rhode Island opened two hospitals – the State Hospital for Mental Disease and the State General Hospital— in what is now known as the Pastore Complex in Cranston. In 1905 the RI State Sanatorium opened in Burrillville to treat tuberculosis patients. The General Hospital and State Hospital for Mental Disease merged to become the Rhode Island Medical Center in 1962, with the name change to the Eleanor Slater Hospital taking place in 1994.

Today, the Eleanor Slater Hospital System is still located on two campuses, Cranston and Burrillville. It is the state’s only Long Term Acute Care Hospital (LTACH) with 284 beds and is operated through the State of Rhode Island’s Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities, and Hospitals (BHDDH). The hospital provides long-term acute and post-acute hospital level of care to patients with complex medical and psychiatric needs. For more information, see www.bhddh.ri.gov/esh/.

ESH strives to provide a treatment environment in which dignity, individuality, and respect are emphasized. In addition to diagnosis and treatment, the hospital focuses on issues of recovery and quality of living. Staff are dedicated to working with patients and their families using an interdisciplinary-approach to care, and they aim to recognize each patient’s individuality and to provide high quality care in a dignified manner.

There is a very active performance improvement effort at ESH. Leadership, physicians, nurses, and rehabilitative staff collaboratively review all processes associated with operations and quality of care. When needed, processes are modified or redesigned with the goal of providing even better care for ESH patients along with improved operations. At ESH, everyone works to provide a seamless system of care.

The Position

The Chief Nursing Officer provides strategic leadership as the senior executive responsible for all nursing and other designated patient care functions and services within the hospital organization on both campuses of Eleanor Slater Hospital. The CNO is responsible for assessing, planning, coordinating, implementing and evaluating nursing practice on a facility level. The CNO has 24/7 responsibility and accountability to ensure high quality, safe and appropriate nursing care, competency of clinical staff, and appropriate resource management related to patient care. The CNO represents nursing concerns on the governing board and at medical staff leadership meetings.

The new CNO must be able to drive organizational change in a challenging setting; be able to navigate the complex political, legislative, labor, regulatory, and operational environments that govern LTACHs, and to position ESH to meet its goals through this period of rapid change in health care. This requires a CNO with political savvy, tenacity, and the capacity to be relentless in pursuit of a strategic vision. The CNO must also have an appreciation of the culture of the workplace and staff experience in the hospital landscape. The CNO must be able to engage staff and work with them collaboratively in pursuing the goals of the strategic vision for Eleanor Slater Hospital.

The CNO reports to the Chief Executive Officer and will be a member of the new senior leadership team for ESH, charged with transformational change. Overall responsibilities include, providing direction and supervision for all nursing service staff, employment actions, such as coaching, candidate selection, training and development, performance appraisals, work assignments and disciplinary actions. The CNO is responsible for the financial management of the nursing operating budget. Responsibilities and activities such as the following fall under this rubric:
• To establish and maintain policies and procedures to assure patient care excellence and safety. To initiate and monitor quality control measures to insure these standards of care are achieved and maintained.
• To integrate nursing services on both campuses.
• To implement and maintain a staffing model that meets state regulations in the most productive manner.
• To serve as a member of the hospital’s executive management team, with responsibilities for Planning, policy development and administration of the entire hospital.
• To collaborate with the Chief Medical Officer and medical staff in planning, implementing and evaluating patient care programs.
• To oversee a comprehensive performance appraisal program and ensure availability of related staff development.
• To chair or serve on a number of nursing services and hospital committees, task forces and work groups.
• To maintain a current knowledge of new developments in nursing and related fields and investigate the applicability of these developments to patient care services at the hospital.
• To promote the use and implementation of technology in the workplace in order to streamline operations, facilitate communications, and optimize work processes.
• To manage nursing expenditures and staffing resources for improvement activities, ensuring the efficient delivery of cost effective services to patients, physicians, and hospital departments.
• To assist in the development of programs for the education of professional and non-professional patient care staff.
• To work collaboratively with bargaining unit leadership around issues related to labor relations in the hospital setting.
• To maintain nursing skills through participation in continuing education and maintenance of certification activities in the appropriate specialty/subspecialty.

The Candidate

The ideal CNO candidate will be a proven nursing leader with significant facility operational experience in long term and/or acute care. S/he will have the ability to serve as a role model and advocate for the professional discipline of nursing, while providing administrative leadership and accountability for the quality and appropriateness of care delivered to patients. In addition, s/he will have the ability to effectively and efficiently organize patient care to promote optimal outcomes, patient safety, and patient, physician and employee satisfaction. The CNO will have proven success in recruiting, retaining and developing staff and have demonstrated the ability to effectively mentor and develop staff, encouraging professional growth and achievement.

Additionally, the CNO will have the proven ability to identify the need for change, anticipating, recognizing and creatively solving resistance to change; working with others to view change as a challenge and opportunity for growth. S/he will be a calculated risk taker and assume the role of change agent while understanding the importance of collegiality, collaboration and team spirit. S/he will be a credible nurse leader who utilizes communication, coaching, sponsorship and training to successfully manage the human aspects of change in order to realize successful outcomes of a business change.
Based on his/her background and experience, the new CNO should be able to establish immediate credibility with peers in senior management, medical and clinical staff, and with the BHDDH Director and other State leaders. That prior experience should include successfully championing a change agenda while operating within a unionized environment. The CNO must be focused and have the requisite perseverance and tenacity to drive the change agenda over time.

As part of the senior management team, the new CNO will need to possess a strong understanding of the business aspects of healthcare and have the acumen to play a substantive role in developing strategies, budgets and business plans. S/he will need to be financially astute, with a solid understanding of cost issues and drivers, and the programs and initiatives to manage costs effectively. S/he will also need to take the lead in complying with regulatory standards, rules and the law.

Personal characteristics of the optimal candidate include:

- The highest personal and professional integrity and principles; that capacity to earn respect and support when making difficult decisions and choices.
- A collaborative operations manager who will give employees a voice and encourage full participation of all team members.
- Excellent interpersonal skills; a dedicated listener, comfortable in a variety of settings dealing with diverse constituencies; a broad thinker.
- A confident leader, but not pretentious; knowledgeable, but open to other view points
- The ability to communicate clearly and effectively both verbally and in writing.
- A calm, caring and reassuring leader in the face of unsettling change; unflappable in the face of adversity.
- A leader who will inspire confidence and establish a sense of common direction and vision for the medical and nursing staff; a team builder.

The next CNO must have a graduate degree and broad management background, ideally including experience in hospital facility operations (psychiatric facility preferred), long-term care, and work in the public and/or governmental/legislative sector.

**Critical Success Factors**

Goals of the CNO’s first year include:

- Recruit and retain high quality nursing and support staff decreasing the use of “temporary help”, improving care continuity, and managing down the cost of overtime.
- Develop and implement strong professional education programs and supports for clinical staff and line managers.
- Work hand-in-glove with new CEO, BHDDH Director, and the Secretary of HHS advocating for needed legislative and labor contract changes to promote and ensure patient safety and the delivery of high quality, affordable care.
- Implement other policy and programmatic changes that shift the ESH culture toward one of being more professional with strong underpinnings of accountability.
The Location

Cranston, Rhode Island, with a population of over 80,000, is adjacent to and considered part of metropolitan Providence, the capital of the state. Providence, with a population of over 180,000, is the home of Brown University, several other academic institutions, and many cultural attractions.

From Benefit Street's "Mile of History" on the East Side to festive Federal Hill, Rhode Island's own "Little Italy," the capital city of Providence is known and loved for its abundance of historic and cultural attractions. Three-and-a-half centuries of history are alive and well on the streets of Providence, as evident in the scores of immaculately preserved Colonial, Federal, Greek Revival and Victorian houses located throughout the city. The Rhode Island State House, Arcade, John Brown House and the Meeting House of the First Baptist Church in America are among the many historic buildings which are open to the public year-round.

In addition to magnificent architecture, Providence offers a host of attractions for connoisseurs of the arts. Tony Award-winning Trinity Repertory Company, the Rhode Island Philharmonic and the Museum of Art/Rhode Island School of Design offer acclaimed theatre, fine arts and orchestral music. Other exciting entertainment options include the seasonal "Broadway" series at the Providence Performing Arts Center and numerous alternative theatre and dance productions.

Providence is also home to the Rhode Island Convention Center, New England's newest convention facility, which is in the heart of Capital Center and just footsteps away from spectacular Waterplace Park and the blue-ribbon restaurants for which the city is renowned. See www.pwcvb.com.

Compensation

A compensation package will be constructed commensurate with the background and experience of the selected candidate. Most significant is the opportunity to have significant short- and long-term impact in a unique organization that serves an important public health mission.

For More Information

We welcome applications, nominations, referrals, and suggestions. Interested parties please send resume and cover letter to ESlaterCNO2167@ZurickDavis.com. For additional questions please contact Julie DeSorgher (Julie.Desorgher@zurickdavis.com) or Jeffrey Zegas at 781-938-1975. All contact with ZurickDavis will remain confidential.

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