

Culture and People

A Commitment to Culture

**An Interview with Michele Cusack,
Senior Vice President and Chief Financial Officer, Northwell Health**

**An Interview with Maxine Carrington,
Deputy Chief HR Officer, Northwell Health**

INSTITUTION BRIEF *Northwell Health (northwell.edu) delivers world-class clinical care throughout the New York metropolitan area, pioneering research at the Feinstein Institute for Medical Research, and a visionary approach to medical education, highlighted by the Donald and Barbara Zucker School of Medicine at Hofstra/Northwell and the Hofstra Northwell School of Graduate Nursing and Physician Assistant Studies. Northwell Health is the largest integrated healthcare system in New York State with a total workforce of more than 68,000 employees.*



Michele Cusack

EDITOR'S NOTE Michele Cusack oversees Northwell Health's day-to-day finance operations, in addition to managing various corporate financial operations and operational teams across the organization. Previously, she was deputy CFO. Cusack is a CPA and also has an administrative role on the Finance and Audit Committees of Northwell's Board of Trustees. She is a member of Hofstra University's Zarb School of Business Dean's Advisory Board. Prior to Northwell, Cusack worked at Deloitte & Touche. She holds a B.B.A and an M.B.A. from Hofstra University.

Will you discuss the CFO role at Northwell Health and how critical is it today that this role is deeply engaged in business strategy?

The environment is changing quickly and that makes every strategic decision today that much more important to position us for success in the future. The CFO role provides the rapidly changing financial dynamics associated with all of the various options and opportunities we wish to pursue and ensures that the strategic road we are on is a financially viable one.

Is it more challenging today to plan long-term given the transformation taking place in the industry?

Yes. The long-term planning behind our vision and strategy hasn't changed. It's just the steps we're taking along the way that are challenging and require us to think differently about how we approach things.

The overall strategy is also impacted by elements like government reductions in how we get paid, new regulations or compliance requirements that we have to put in place, and other such factors.

Will there only be a handful of very large health systems as you look to the future?

I do believe there will mainly be large health systems because they have to be able to deal with regulation and compliance, and also be able to leverage the scale and cost efficiencies across the organizations. For instance, we have one IT department that is able to function across all our platforms and facilities – and leverage that IT cost.

In the long run, as the environment continues to change with further care coordination, new market entrants and pressure on price, achieving economies of scale and the use of technology to improve efficiency will be critical to succeed. The inability to take advantage of this will pressure independent and local hospitals.

Northwell Health is known as an industry leader and is regularly recognized with awards. What makes Northwell Health so special?

The culture and the people. It gives us a tremendous advantage. The collaboration that it helps inspire and allows us to innovate has been something that has kept me here and brings industry top talent here.

When we have a dynamic leader like Michael Dowling, it keeps everyone energized and following the path. ●



Maxine Carrington

EDITORS' NOTE Maxine Carrington oversees human resources operations and is responsible for the design and implementation of strategic human resources initiatives and programs at Northwell Health. Additionally, she serves as an adjunct instructor at the Center for Learning and Innovation, Northwell Health's corporate university. In 2013, she was awarded Human Resource Executive magazine's Rising Star in HR Award. Carrington holds a bachelor's degree in political science and Africana studies and a master's degree in educational administration and policy studies from the University at Albany in New York. She also obtained her J.D. from New York Law School and is a licensed attorney.

Will you discuss your previous role as Western Region HR Officer for Northwell Health?

Our Western Region is comprised of our sites in Manhattan, Westchester and Staten Island, some of which joined Northwell only a short time ago.

A primary function of my role has been helping our teams in these geographies to further connect and integrate. We're ensuring they have access, not just to internal resources within the region, but also to our Northwell shared services resources to help drive aligned and effective human capital strategies in key areas such as employee experience, talent management, recruitment, and workforce planning.

This alignment in strategy and experience is critical to powering our collective success and competitive advantage in the industry.

As you transition to your new role as Deputy Chief HR Officer, will you discuss the focus Northwell Health places on culture?

We have a truly amazing and unique culture, intended to reflect our mission and values, and enable us to achieve our goals. We do work hard, however, to continually evaluate its effectiveness and alignment with the needs and desires of our workforce and customers.

My new role will facilitate an even greater focus on key cultural drivers such as employee experience, organizational development, internal mobility (how our team members access and transition into opportunities in our organization), diversity and inclusion, and corporate social responsibility. In all of these areas and especially in how we think about diversity and inclusion, we want to leverage and maximize the contributions of all members of our workforce in addition to continuing to demonstrate our investment in them.

How critical is having a diverse and inclusive workforce to the continued success of Northwell Health?

It has long been proven that diverse workforces and inclusive operational practices add value and lead to better working conditions and organizational outcomes.

Fully realized, the insights and contributions of a diverse workforce enable us to fulfill our mission and values, grow and evolve, and assure our reputation as a best place to work and receive care – for all. ●

Ensuring Employee and Patient Safety

**An Interview with Lorraine Chambers Lewis,
Vice President of Employee Health Services (EHS), Northwell Health**



Lorraine Chambers Lewis

EDITORS' NOTE Lorraine Chambers Lewis provides vision, direction, and oversight for the 17 Northwell Health EHS offices that provide comprehensive occupational health services to its more than 68,000 team members. Her career with Northwell Health began in 2002 as the Supervising Physician Assistant of LIJ Medical Center's Emergency Department. In 2007, she was appointed Northwell's Corporate Director of EHS. In 2012, she led the development of Northwell Health's first Injury Management and Prevention team. She graduated with distinction from Hofstra University with an M.B.A. Lewis has also earned the distinction of board certification in healthcare management by becoming a Fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives. A long-standing member of the Association of Occupational Health Professionals in Healthcare, Lewis now serves as President of the New York Chapter.

Will you provide an overview of Employee Health Services at Northwell Health?

Employee Health is ultimately about impacting the health and safety of our workforce and ensuring a safe patient care environment. As we bring new team members into our organization, we make sure that they don't have any specific issues that might be a danger to our patients.

We also want to be sure that team members are protected as they work in healthcare settings. By doing those two things, we help keep all the team members healthy and productive.

For instance, we provide immunizations and training on respiratory protective equipment for our staff to help them maintain their health by protecting them from certain pathogens they may be exposed to in the work environment.

How critical is it to develop and maintain engagement with your team members after they join Northwell?

It's critical for us to stay engaged with all team members throughout their careers at Northwell Health. There are multiple services that we provide that will be required of them in the future for patient safety reasons as well as other recommended services that help keep them safe and healthy. We need to establish this relationship early.

We want them to understand that we are here for their occupational health needs and as a resource for information regarding various services that are available throughout the organization. Whether it is a referral to the Employee and Family Assistance Program or the smoking cessation program, we can help. We make sure that all the EHS managers across our organization are aware of these services so that we can be effective resources for the team members.

One of our primary tasks is to provide treatment and support should a team member have an inadvertent exposure to an infectious disease. We follow up on vaccinations and treatments to make sure that they're protected as effectively as possible. Then we partner with Infection Prevention and Safety departments to review cases carefully and identify the source of any safety concerns, with the goal of eliminating them.

We are also here to assist with employee fit-for-duty assessments. If there is a concern regarding a team member's ability to return to work or continue working, due to a medical concern, we play an important role. We work with the employee, the provider treating them and human resources to find solutions that support the employee's best interest and organizational needs.

Our objective is to provide great occupational healthcare and ensure we do everything possible to ensure employee and patient safety. ●

Women's Health

**An Interview with Stacey E. Rosen, MD,
Vice President, Women's Health, Katz Institute
for Women's Health (KIWH), Northwell Health**



Stacey E. Rosen

EDITORS' NOTE Stacey Rosen has been a practicing cardiologist for more than 25 years and served as Associate Chair of the Department of Cardiology and Director of the Cardiovascular Disease Fellowship Program at Northwell Health before she joined KIWH. She is a professor of cardiology and Partners Council Professor of Women's Health at the Zucker School of Medicine. She is a long-time volunteer for the American Heart Association with leadership positions at the local, regional and national levels and recently received the AHA's Women in Cardiology Mentoring Award. She serves as a member of the Scientific Advisory Council for WomenHeart: The National Coalition for Women with Heart Disease and is a co-author of the recently published book, Heart Smart for Women – Six STEPS in Six Weeks to Heart-Healthy Living. Rosen is a graduate of the six-year medical program at Boston University School of Medicine and is a fellow of the American College of Cardiology, the American College of Physicians and the American Heart Association.

Will you provide an overview of the Katz Institute for Women's Health at Northwell Health?

As physicians, we have known for decades that women's health needs are unique. Historically, women were treated like men and "women's health" was defined as issues related to reproductive organs only. By the 1990s, the National Institutes of Health and the Institute of Medicine made a "call to action" that we must appreciate that sex and gender do matter.

We began to discover that most medical research studied only men (even most lab animals were male). We learned that every cell in the body has a sex and that we need to get past our assumptions that men and women are the same when it comes to health and illness.

If drugs aren't tested on women, for instance, we shouldn't assume that they are safe or effective for them. We work on expanding research initiatives that are gender focused and address questions critical to women.

Women's health, as a field, started from disparities in care related to the assumption that men and women were the same, which resulted in poorer outcomes for women. The Katz Institute is focused on that from a biologic, physiologic and clinical perspective.

We also know that women make the healthcare decisions for their families, so aligning the Katz Institute with women's needs allows us to improve the health of families in our communities. Finally, we provide extensive community-based education in a manner that is culturally respectful of the varied communities we serve.

When it comes to the awareness around women's health issues, is it a priority for the Katz Institute to be a leader in providing that education?

The mission of KIWH is based on four pillars: clinical programs that prioritize a woman's unique health needs; gender-based research; community partnerships; and education (both professional and for the community).

Empowering women with the education to make wiser health decisions for themselves and their families is at the center of our work. ●