

Touching Lives

An Interview with Laila Gurney, Senior Vice President, Chief Quality and Regulatory Officer, GE Healthcare

EDITORS' NOTE *Laila Gurney leads the Global Quality, Regulatory, Medical, Clinical and Research team. She joined GE Healthcare in 2008 as Director, Regulatory Affairs in Canada. Since then, she has held positions with expanded responsibility and scope in the Quality and Regulatory organization, spanning across the regions, products and central teams. Prior to joining GE Healthcare, Gurney spent 10 years focused on in vitro diagnostics with PreMD Inc., where she was responsible for Quality, Regulatory and Clinical Research and played a key role in partnerships with McNeil Consumer Healthcare and AstraZeneca. She holds bachelor's and master's degrees in biochemistry from McGill University in Montreal.*



Laila Gurney

COMPANY BRIEF *Every day, millions of people feel the impact of GE Healthcare (gehealthcare.com) intelligent devices, advanced analytics and artificial intelligence. As a leading global medical technology and digital solutions innovator, GE Healthcare enables clinicians to make faster, more informed decisions through intelligent devices, data analytics, applications and services, supported by its Edison intelligence platform. With more than 100 years of healthcare industry experience and approximately 50,000 employees globally, the company operates at the center of an ecosystem working toward precision health, digitizing healthcare, helping drive productivity and improve outcomes for patients, providers, health systems and researchers around the world while embracing a culture of respect, transparency, integrity and diversity.*

How do you describe GE today and how has GE transformed its business?

GE has built significant momentum in its transformation over the last few years, marked most recently by the announcement that we plan to form three public companies focused on the growth sectors of healthcare, aviation and energy. The progress we've made in strengthening our financial position and improving our operations through a lean and more decentralized business model puts us in a position of strength to take this important next step.

Our businesses are in markets with compelling missions like advancing precision health, shaping the future of flight, and leading the energy transition, and as independently run companies, they will be better

positioned to deliver long-term growth and create value for all stakeholders.

Will you highlight GE Healthcare and what have been the keys to its strength and leadership in the industry?

GE Healthcare is a \$17 billion business that operates in over 160 countries. Our products range from contrast agents, to imaging devices like Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI), Computed Tomography (CT), mammography and ultrasound, to infant care products, and life support devices such as ventilators.

As a company, we have amazing reach with innovative technologies:

- 300 million lives touched per year with the GE Voluson, which is a Women's Health Ultrasound device.
- 2 billion+ scans generated per year by GE Healthcare's imaging devices.
- 1 million+ patients use a GE Healthcare monitor every minute of every day.
- 10 million+ babies use GE Maternal Infant Care beds as their first bed every year.
- 3 patients are imaged every second with a GE Healthcare imaging agent.
- 4 million+ imaging, mobile diagnostic and monitoring units are in our installed base.

The most amazing part of what I do is knowing that our products touch so many lives and therefore what we do matters. It's what motivates and inspires me to come to work every day.

GE Healthcare's strengths are our people, our innovation, our curiosity, and our clinical expertise. We are passionate about problem-solving and the clinicians we serve. We put patient safety first which is why quality is at the center of everything we do. This, together with our culture of humility, transparency and focus, positions us as a leading medical technology provider that clinicians trust to deliver innovative technologies that are used every day to improve patients' lives around the world.

What are the ways your team is ensuring the quality and reliability of GE Healthcare products throughout the product life cycle?

Our team partners with product development to gather evidence to substantiate product safety and effectiveness and prepares regulatory submissions that are reviewed by regulators around the world such as US FDA, Health Canada, China NMPA, etc. for market approval.

Our team also provides leadership and guidance throughout the product life cycle to ensure that

products that we design and manufacture meet all safety, quality, regulatory and customer requirements in countries around the world. Through post-market surveillance, our team monitors the performance of GE Healthcare devices in the field and works with the relevant businesses to take appropriate actions, which may include field product corrections where necessary, and input to product development teams to ensure continuous improvement of new product introductions.

Do you feel that there are strong opportunities for women in the industry?

Absolutely. I believe there are strong opportunities for women to grow and lead in all industries. As a huge proponent of the GE Women's Network and an executive sponsor of the GE Healthcare African American Forum, I am hopeful that the goals we have set for ourselves at GE regarding Inclusion, Diversity and Equity and the commitments we have made as a company to measure ourselves is moving the needle in this regard, and that we hold ourselves accountable to our employees, customers and communities to be the best version of ourselves.

To quote a November 2016 Harvard Business Review article on Diversity and Inclusion: "non-homogenous teams are simply smarter. Working with people who are different from you may challenge your brain to overcome its stale ways of thinking and sharpen its performance." I have found this to be true through experience – diversity in all ways – cultures, backgrounds, thought, gender, ethnicity, etc. truly makes us better and that is good for our business as well as the customers and patients we serve.

As a woman in a leadership position, I am very passionate and deliberate about making sure that women have equal opportunities and the right support structure for professional development to be promoted into leadership roles. I stand on the shoulders of both women and men who believed in me, gave me opportunities and as I proved equal to the task, advocated for me to be promoted. I believe that we all must do our part to ensure that deserving employees have equal opportunities to advance and grow.

As a mother to both a daughter and a son, I want to do my part so that they always have the same opportunities to advance into leadership roles if they work just as hard and perform equally. We can get there, and I am excited for accelerated evolution in this area. I do hope, soon, we won't have to highlight "women leaders" or "diverse leaders," because it will be common to have women and diversity in leadership positions. ●