



LOUISIANA

CHAPTER OF HEALTHCARE EXECUTIVES

SPRING 2024 LCHE NEWSLETTER

President's Message



Dear All,

As you read this, Congress is wrapping up in Chicago. So many of our members were able to attend and support Michele Sutton, President/Chief Executive Officer, of North Oaks Health System who was elected the 2024-2025 the Chair-Elect of the American College of Healthcare Executives. We are proud of Michele and the leadership she will provide during the next few years.

Our chapter was acknowledged during the Congress on Healthcare Leadership at the Malcolm T. MacEachern Memorial Lecture and Luncheon for earning the Award of Merit as part of the 2024 ACHE

Chapter Management and Awards Program. The chapter achieved the "Education & Networking" performance standard, which is a testament to the hard work and initiatives completed by our 2023 board.

Lastly, I want to congratulate Dr. April LaFontaine who was appointed to the Council of Regents, the legislative body of the American College of Healthcare Executives and sincerely thank Ken Cochran for his service as Regent for the past three (3) years.

Have you heard? The 2025 Congress will be held in Houston, Texas. Block March 24-27, 2025, on your calendar now, where Michele will be installed as the chair.

We have several exciting programs developing for 2025, including education and FACHE exam review. Watch for emails and LinkedIn updates as these plans solidify!

Tatsy Jeter
LCHE President

Final 2024 Dues Reminder

ACHE will release members starting in April who have not paid their 2024 dues. You can pay in a lump sum, enroll in Membership Auto Renewal, or request a dues installment plan (billed in 3 payments). Any questions about the installment payment plan can be directed to ACHE's Customer Service Center at contact@ache.org or call (312) 424-9400, Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. CT.

2024 Education

Shreveport will once again be the site of our spring education event on **Friday, May 5**. Check our website and chapter LinkedIn page for details in the coming weeks.

Board Member Kristina Gray has offered to lead “Coffee and Quizzes” weekly virtual sessions at 7 am to assist those studying for the FACHE exam. She brought this idea from a previous chapter so much of the content has already been created and put into practice. There is a poll on LinkedIn if you are interested, or you can reach out to Kristina directly at kgray2@wkhs.com.

2024 FACHE Exam Prep

Stay tuned for an announcement regarding a 2024 Fellow Advancement Session conducted by Tulane professor, Richard Priore, ScD, FACHE.

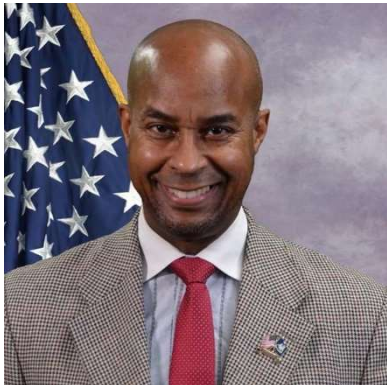
- Information will be released in mid-April.
- There will be an informational session in mid-May.
- Participants will start weekly one-hour “lunch and learn” sessions through early August, with the goal of taking the exam in September or October to advance in the current calendar year.

From ACHE: Join LinkedIn Groups

Starting Jan. 1, the [Asian Healthcare Leaders](#), [LGBTQ+ Healthcare Leaders](#) and [Physician Executives](#) online communities were moved to LinkedIn groups. In these groups, members can still connect directly, peer-to-peer in real time to network, ask questions and share resources. These LinkedIn groups are only for ACHE members, and they will remain private and require permission from ACHE to join. Members will continue to need to have a MD/DO degree noted in their ACHE profile to be part of the Physician Executives group. ACHE hopes the new LinkedIn groups will be a valuable engagement tool for chapter members.

And of course, we hope you are already a member of the [LCHE LinkedIn Group](#).

Commentary on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion



From Peter Dancy, Jr., MBA MHA, FACHE

Medical Center Director/CEO, Alexandria VA Health Care System

As healthcare organizations continue to strive to be a healthcare employer of choice for talented executives, I believe we must establish our organizations as desirable places for diverse leaders to work and provide quality care to our diverse communities.

In a 2023 article published in *Healthcare Executive* entitled [Differing Perceptions of DEI Efforts in Healthcare Leadership](#),

ACHE surveyed over 9,000 ACHE members in 2022 to gain their insights on diversity, equity and inclusion in their organizations. With a 26.8 percent response rate, the survey respondents were asked to determine how much they agreed with a series of statements such as “My organization does a good job of ensuring racial/ethnic diversity of their workforce.” The survey results revealed how responses “differed significantly between members of the different racial/ethnic groups.”

As healthcare organizations continue to make workplaces more diverse, equitable and inclusive, I thought it was important to hear the perspectives of C-Suite healthcare executives. I asked three (3) executives where their organizations were in their DEI journey and how will they know when they have arrived.

Mr. Monte Wilson, FACHE, President/CEO, CHRISTUS Health System, Central Louisiana, shared his views on the DEI journey at CHRISTUS. He stated that “because of CHRISTUS Health’s mission of extending the healing ministry of Jesus Christ, all Associates are equity and inclusion advocates who nurture belonging and amplify the voices of communities and patient-consumers. Through our collaborative relationships and investments, we are woven into the

fabric of our communities. We are catalysts who create sustainable solutions that improve the health and social conditions for the common good.”

Mr. Chris Okezie, FACHE, Vice President, Harris Health (Houston, TX) shared that Harris Health System established a DEI Department in 2022. This department is led by a Vice President - Dr. Jobi Martinez. He considers Harris Health to be at an early formation phase of a structured DEI program. In addition, Mr. Okezie confidently stated that Harris Health is very intentional and understands the importance of creating a diverse and inclusive workplace where all employees feel valued and respected. As a safety net health system that provides healthcare to mostly uninsured and underinsured citizens of Harris County, Texas, Mr. Okezie believes that a diverse and inclusive workforce greatly compliments the demographics of the community they serve.

He further emphasized that the Harris Health DEI department is dedicated to promoting diversity within their organization through various initiatives and programs. More specifically, he stated “we are committed to fostering a culture of inclusivity and belonging for all employees, patients and community members.” Together, they are working towards creating a more equitable and inclusive healthcare system for all.

Finally, whereas the Harris Health DEI program is fairly new, Mr. Okezie concluded by stating that they have employed some strategies and metrics to measure the success of their DEI program – to include but not limited to employee feedback and engagement surveys, tracking representation of diverse groups within their organization, retention and promotion, other external recognitions and partnerships.

Ms. Claire Hick, FACHE, formerly the Market CEO for Acadia Healthcare, and now Principal Consultant, Healthcare Management Associates/HMA, also shared her views based. Specifically, she stated, “As a healthcare consultant, I understand the value for employees to be seen, heard, and understood. When the cost of healthcare continues to rise from a salaries and wages perspective as well as other operational costs, companies are looking for ways to reduce costly turnover as well as creating environments that are more inclusive to meet patient and employee needs for the highest satisfaction possible. Employee turnover has been proven to be attributed to employees having a sense of belonging. As an internal example, HMA holds monthly DEI trainings and listening sessions as the start of a conversation in how we all come together to form excellence in care. As an external example, we help companies meet their DEI goals by providing consulting expertise in the space with defined goals. The purpose of DEI efforts is to have different voices and making decisions at the leadership table together.”

I was fortunate to attend the ACHE 2024 Congress on Healthcare Leadership in Chicago this week and attended a thought provoking and inspiring panel discussion entitled “Leadership Insights: *What’s Needed and What’s Next in Health Equity*”. I believe one of the three panelist, Dennis W. Pullin, FACHE, President and CEO of Virtua Health, an academic health system in New Jersey, amply shared, in two words, an expression for health equity that resonated with many of the attendees to include myself. Mr. Pullin shared that the expression “everybody always” meaning that “everybody” in the organization represents the commitment to health equity and nobody gets left behind. He further shared that the “always” speaks to their striving for consistency – that they will provide healthcare, not just when it is convenient, but always as it is a critical part of their core belief.

As a starting point for organizations who are on the DEI journey, all the panelists suggested [The Health Equity Roadmap](#) published by the American Hospital Association. According to the roadmap, one of the six levers of transforming an organization’s health equity strategies is “diverse representation in leadership and governance” which is designed to create leadership pathways that are reflective of the population and communities served.

As we continue to make strides in the DEI space, I believe that we are moving in the right direction based on the perspectives of these senior leaders. As you expand your knowledge on DEI, in addition to the Health Equity Roadmap, I encourage you to also check out an article by Marcus Sawyerr entitled [“Diversity, Equity & Inclusion: It Starts with the Four “Cs”](#)”. It a quick read that I believe you will find useful for your DEI toolkit.

After serving as a hospital CEO for a number of years, Ken transitioned to Principal Consultant at Health Management Associates last year. He also serves as adjunct faculty for the MBA program the University of Louisiana at Lafayette.



What do you feel is the value of the FACHE designation?

Becoming a FACHE isn't just about adding letters after your name; it's an emblem of dedication and growth. I'll try to summarize by emphasizing the following points:

- **Journey:** It signifies a continuous quest for knowledge—a journey where you embrace challenges, learn, and evolve.
- **Lifelong Learning:** The pursuit of excellence doesn't end with a degree; it's a commitment to staying informed, adapting, and improving.
- **Networking:** FACHE connects you with a vibrant community of like-minded professionals. It's a bridge to shared insights and collaborations.
- **Giving Back:** By giving back—mentoring, volunteering, sharing expertise—you enrich others' paths. And in return, you gain wisdom and fulfillment.

What is one thing that has or continues to surprise you in your career?

Reflecting on my career, three things continue to surprise me:

- **Resilience:** Our ability to find the solutions to what seemingly appear to be insurmountable obstacles never ceases to impress and challenge me.
- **Dedication:** Our peers “run into the fire” to save the patients. We do this collectively (both clinical and non-clinical) on a daily basis. We are called to this profession.
- **Love:** Yes, love. Love holds the world together. Our leaders love each other and our patients. It is a deeply personal profession. Love fuels our work, connects us, and reminds us why we're here. It's the heartbeat of our careers.

What are your recommendations for early careerists?

Chose to be a learner, not a complainer. You will need to actively seek information throughout your career. It is through learning we bring new ideas and better solutions.

Be prepared to sacrifice.

You will give time, money, and energy to the cause. It will not be an easy journey, but it can be very rewarding if you always connect purpose and passion to your role.

Tell us a fun fact about yourself.

I started competing in 2 different martial arts at the young age of 46. Two of my children and I are 1st Degree Black Belts in TaeKwonDo. I'm also a blue belt in jujitsu.

Chapter Website:

<https://louisiana.ache.org/>

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