

# A HARD WORKING, HONEST LEADER

**BUSINESS OUTLOOK**  
**TOP 10 INFLUENTIAL WOMEN LEADERS** USA-9 **2022**

**Gateway Rehab's Mission Is To Help All Affected By Addictive Diseases To Be Healthy In Body, Mind And Spirit. Gateway Rehab's Vision Is To Provide Effective Long-Term Treatment For Addictive Disease By Offering A Continuum Of Clinical Practices, Recovery Support, Education And Research.**

Karen Vula, Chief Financial Officer of Gateway Rehab, leads by example in her work ethic and dedication to Gateway Rehab's mission. There is no task too big or too small for Karen if it means supporting the mission. When working with each department in the organization, Karen listens without judgment, considers all opportunities, and supports every effort to achieve goals alongside those respective departments. Being in the non-profit sector, funding can be challenging. But with Karen's knowledge and expertise, Gateway Rehab has experienced a positive shift in budget performance and other available funds for reinvestment in patient experience and service.

Karen has built her career on her own experience and perseverance. She has and will continue to encourage others to find similar success in their professional goals by openly sharing her victories, challenges, and growing pains.



The pioneering leader has inspired and empowered team members to become great leaders of tomorrow. Empowerment from Karen comes in many shapes and sizes. She emphasizes challenging team members for professional development, supporting independent thinking, fostering problem-solving skills, and encouraging ownership. Despite c-suite appointments in the organization, Karen remains accessible and supportive to all team members. It has been a great example to set. No matter how challenging, every opportunity has been celebrated as a success. Like many others, Karen worked while raising a family, and that perspective has helped her to mentor others throughout her career. Reflecting on decades of experience, Karen shares, "Work hard and work honestly. There are no shortcuts to long-term success."

She adds, "It can be difficult to find your voice whether you are new to the workforce or a specific position. However, by letting fear get in the way of asking questions and sharing ideas, you stand in the way of your growth." Karen found that by prioritizing learning, she could contribute to the organization's goals and success, ultimately positioning herself as the best candidate for CFO.

With this unique mindset, Karen has been taking the company to new heights. Gateway Rehab is a nationally recognized, private, not-for-profit organization that provides treatment for adults, youth, and families with alcohol and other drug dependencies. Gateway was founded in 1972 by Dr. Abraham J. Twerski, an internationally recognized authority on addiction treatment. More than 100,000 individuals have received treatment within the Gateway system, which extends throughout western Pennsylvania and Ohio.



Just a year and a half ago, Gateway Rehab was approached by a community hospital to acquire their addiction treatment division under the name Greenbriar Treatment Center to maintain service integrity for their community. Hospital leadership recognized Gateway's reputation and impact. Karen worked very closely with Gateway Rehab CEO, James Troup, to make this acquisition a reality for the organization, the hospital, and the community at large. As of July 1, 2022, this transaction was completed, and Gateway Rehab went from being a \$33 million organization to a \$50 million organization with 24 locations across western Pennsylvania.

Karen, along with other members of leadership, puts the mission first. Gateway Rehab set out 50 years ago to serve all affected by addictive diseases; today, the team stays committed to the task. Looking ahead, the goal is to continue to serve everyone. Telehealth has become a permanent modality for addiction treatment since the pandemic, and the organization is now working towards expanding its telehealth services which helps to eliminate common barriers. There is also a recognized gap in adolescent services, so Gateway Rehab has secured funding and contracts to build an adolescent residential treatment program.



**Karen Vula**

Another focus is launching a co-occurring residential treatment unit tailored to the needs of individuals diagnosed with substance use and mental health disorder.

Karen sees her future dedicated to the patients of Gateway Rehab. One of the many priorities for Karen is to have patients feel welcomed and comfortable in their surroundings. The future of Gateway Rehab is busy but bright. The organization is currently developing a strategic plan in addition to developing and delivering the new programs previously shared. Karen has and will be at the forefront of this whole process and welcomes, yet again, the opportunities, challenges, and growing pains to come.

Karen has worked for Gateway Rehab for over 25 years, welcoming all that comes with service to her community through the organization's mission. Karen shared how humbling it has been to watch patients go through Gateway Rehab's program and live a new life in recovery. She hopes that those with substance or alcohol use disorders will find Gateway Rehab their place of success!