



**National Emerging Leadership Summit  
for Health and Aging Services Executives**

**WHITE PAPER**

The 2017 National Emerging Leadership Summit for  
Health and Aging Services Executives:

From “Advancing our Profession, Enhancing Lives” to  
“Developing Solutions to Enrich Lives”

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## KEY CONCLUSIONS

The 2017 National Emerging Leadership Summit (NELS) had three primary outcomes from the work conducted by participants over the three days: to focus on improving **Awareness of the Profession** of health and aging services administration, for those who may consider pursuing this career; to **Enhance Communication** for prior NELS attendees and provide useful resources to NELS participants; and to **Support New Professionals** in the field of health and aging services administration. The Summit finished its last day with each participant speaking personally about the impact NELS had on them and by expressing how inspired they were by the Summit. Many of the participants felt motivated to create a better profession for themselves and for future generations by developing proactive, innovative solutions to enrich lives.

## BACKGROUND

The purpose of the National Emerging Leadership Summit is to provide Generation X and Generation Y leaders in the field of health and aging services the ability to engage in discussions of current best practices with other leaders, meet with representatives of key professional organizations, gain an inside perspective on the legislative and rulemaking processes, and explore solutions for attracting and retaining other Generation X and Generation Y leaders. The NELS Summits also strive to consider participants from multiple long-term care (LTC) organizations and services, such as skilled nursing facilities, nursing homes, assisted living settings, continuing care retirement communities, life plan communities, home- and community-based services, rehabilitation hospitals, hospice, and adult day care services. Many professionals currently in the LTC field recognize there is a need to prepare future LTC leaders to work beyond traditional silos of service and adapt to the changing consumer demands.

Even with the advent of the survey process that started over 50 years ago in nursing home settings to ensure quality of care and quality of life, and even with documentation of improved quality, there has been an increased negative public opinion and more negative publicity of the LTC field and the administrator profession.<sup>1</sup> With a reduction in the number of applications for the nursing home administrator profession, this field is facing an employment cliff. There are currently more people leaving the administrator profession than entering it.<sup>2</sup> Several factors contributing to this turnover phenomenon include a fragile educational field, challenging societal views, a difficult and reactive regulatory environment, and a tendency to focus on management rather than leadership.<sup>3</sup> News media sources have also provided ample coverage of individuals and care settings that have provided less-than-quality care to residents, and there have been multiple legislative hearings on the quality of care and quality of life in LTC settings. As such, from surveys of past NELS attendees, participants have felt that the public at large has a negative, incorrect view of the LTC administrator profession and that the public persona of the profession needs to be addressed, utilizing a positive, proactive approach.

A steering committee composed of leaders from higher education, professional associations, and past NELS alumni tasked itself with addressing the public image and perception challenges

of the LTC administrator profession. To address the many facets of this profession, the NELS Summit continues to bring together today's emerging professionals from various long-term care settings with a group of the most talented Generation X and Generation Y leaders. These uniquely positioned professionals are eager to transform the LTC administrator profession, and also recognize and accept the responsibility to effect and realize the needed change. The LTC administrator profession requires the best and brightest individuals leading these critical human service organizations to provide and coordinate the highest level of care for older adults.

The Summit combines current best practices with a facilitated dialogue to provide a new perspective and voice for both Summit participants and the broader field. The 2017 participants made further strides to advance the foundational work from the previous seven Summits and emphasize their own agenda. The purposes of this white paper include providing evidence and support for the professional field of health and aging services administration to advance positive changes, setting a foundation for planning the 2018 Summit, and serving as an additional reference for the current and next cohort.

## SUMMIT PROCEEDINGS

The National Emerging Leadership Summit (NELS) is a three-day gathering of rising leaders throughout the country in the field of health and aging services administration. Participants at NELS are able to engage in group work with other emerging leaders, discuss current best practices, meet representatives of key professional organizations, explore solutions for the next generation of leaders, and gain insight on the legislative process for health care-related policy. Throughout the summit, participants were able to review the work and progress of past NELS participants, as well as develop their own action plans in order to advance the profession. This white paper reflects the information presented to participants, including insight from a legislative policy forum, a panel session with representatives from partnering organizations, and the action plans formed as a result of participants' work during the 2017 NELS Summit.

During the first day of the Summit, participants were welcomed by **Daniel Schwartz**, Chief Operating Officer for Almost Family, and **Dr. Robert Burke**, Professor, The George Washington University, and given a background on the Summit, but also the profession of health and aging services leadership and some historical information on the District of Columbia. Following this introduction, **Michael Muetzel, MBA**, Mx Marketing Management Solutions, an expert in generational differences, discussed how generational values differ, and highlighted the impact those differences can have on an organizational culture throughout a care community. He discussed differences in values between Baby Boomer workers, Generation X workers, and millennial (or Generation Y) workers.



He concluded his presentation by suggesting practical methods for integrating generational values and expectations into workplaces, while still maintaining a balanced budget. Some of the keys to a successful work culture discussed included trust and employee equity, and feeding the growth of the organization through development and mentoring opportunities, flexibility, transparency, and a willingness to change. Mr. Muetzel also emphasized that change is an inherent part of leadership and is key to building a successful team.



Following lunch at the LeadingAge headquarters building, participants heard from **Dr. Kevin Hansen**, Assistant Professor, University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire, who introduced some of the current challenges and problems facing the health and aging services administration field. Some of these issues included silos of settings, poor societal image, management orientation, and being a reactive vs. proactive profession. There was also discussion involving participants about potential solutions to

these current challenges to the profession. Dr. Hansen then followed with a discussion of the backgrounds of the participants, based off a survey questionnaire completed prior to the Summit. By bringing together participants from multiple long-term care (LTC) organizations and services, such as skilled nursing facilities, nursing homes, assisted living facilities, continuing care communities, life plan communities, home- and community-based services organizations, hospice providers, and more, the group of participants represented many different perspectives and approaches on how to explore solutions to current challenges.

As part of the eighth annual NELS Summit, on the second day, participants were able to listen to a panel discussion on “Enhancing and Expanding University-Based Senior Care Administration Programs Across the Country,” moderated by **Dr. Kevin Hansen**. This panel included several members who were part of the steering committee for **Dr. Douglas Olson**, Professor, University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire, whose sabbatical work laid the foundation for the panel’s content. Panelists included representatives from the following associations: National Investment Center for Seniors Housing and Care (NIC), the National Association of Long Term Care Administrator Boards (NAB), the American Health Care Association/National Center for Assisted Living (AHCA/NCAL), the American College of Health Care Administrators (ACHCA), LeadingAge, and the Wisconsin Department of Health Services Division of Quality Assurance. **Robert Kramer**, CEO of NIC, began the session by discussing the image of the profession and asked attendees what they could do to enhance and attract people to this career. He made the point clear that the need for talented individuals in leadership roles is present, making it an incredibly large demand at all levels to have skilled leaders in health care communities. He discussed the idea of “rebranding” the profession, and emphasized the importance of how the aging population is viewed by the public at large as part of any rebranding effort. **Randy Lindner**, President and CEO of NAB, spoke next, adding that a major disservice is being done by putting people into

“silos” of service lines across the long-term care spectrum of services. He emphasized that all lines of service must work together to provide better care to the residents and clients served by care organizations. From the pre-Summit survey, approximately 40 – 50% of 2017 NELS attendees indicated that they were involved in more than one line of service, demonstrating that this career requires a much broader skillset for today’s executives. Building on what Mr. Kramer mentioned regarding the rebranding of the profession, Mr. Lindner shared information with the participants on NAB’s work to create the Health Services Executive (HSE) qualification, to aid individuals in having skillsets across multiple lines of service as well as promoting portability of licensure between states. Next, **Chris Mason**, Chair of the Board of Directors for NCAL, discussed the “macro” picture of looking past acute care and long-term care as two separate settings, and how professionals in the field need to work to blend the two settings together. The prediction he shared with attendees consisted of hospitals downsizing and the need to have more focus in the health care sector on long-term aging. Currently, there are more accredited schools with public health programs, rather than long-term care or health services, which is disproportionate to the coming need for leaders prepared to provide care and services to an aging population. Following Mr. Mason, **Mark Prifogle**, Board Member of ACHCA, discussed the importance of partnerships and how to strengthen existing partnerships between academic programs and business and industry organizations. With more partnerships and stronger relationships in place, there would also be more mentors in the field for new and emerging leaders. Mr. Prifogle emphasized the importance of reaching out to universities and making the value proposition for them to pursue the creation and support of programs focusing on the long-term care sector. He reiterated the importance of Mr. Lindner’s discussion on the HSE qualification and having well-rounded leaders who are prepared to tackle the coming changes in health care and services.



**Dr. Robyn Stone**, Senior Vice President for Research and Executive Director, Center for Applied Research at LeadingAge, emphasized the importance of utilizing an evidence-based approach when looking at the health and aging services administrator profession that some have called an “accidental profession,” given that many in administrator roles stumbled into their career from other academic or career tracks. She discussed how this career will be in high demand, and various ways that individuals currently in the profession can make it more valued and sought after, rather than merely “accidental.” Prospective administrators often want to see outcome measurements and criteria to show the profession’s value and rate of success, especially for a sector that is very different from others and because it is labor-intensive. The panel concluded with **Otis Woods**, Administrator of the Division of Quality Assurance in the Wisconsin Department of Health Services, who talked about the importance of efficient internal systems for outcome-driven day-to-day operations. As part of the regulatory community, Mr. Woods sees the need for good leaders to increase the focus and help blend care across multiple lines of services. He reiterated that individuals in administrator or executive roles are leaders –

not health care practitioners – thus the importance of having a common core of knowledge for all settings with added knowledge for specific lines of service to that core. Mr. Woods also emphasized the importance of connecting individuals in the profession to students and academic programs to grow interest in the profession of the health and aging services administrator.

Following the panel presentation, participants traveled to the United States Capitol and attended a legislative policy forum led by **Elizabeth Stower**, Legislative Assistant to **Representative Ron Kind (D – WI; invited)**.<sup>4</sup> Ms. Stower discussed Representative Kind’s push for value-based purchasing and a focus on expanding state Medicaid programs (e.g., BadgerCare in Wisconsin) to cover more individuals. She emphasized with participants that Rep. Kind considers the Affordable Care Act (ACA) a success, though it is in need of some very basic fixes, including better reimbursement for health care providers. Much of Rep. Kind’s time



has been spent defending the advances in providing health care to a greater number of individuals at a higher level of quality with the new administration and composition of Congress. Ms. Stower also discussed the new House of Representatives bill to modify the health care system (i.e., the Better Care Reconciliation Act (BCRA)), and explained how it would leave 22 million people without health care coverage. With Medicaid as the primary payer for many long-term care supports and services, Ms. Stower explained the benefits that both federal and state-level expansions could

have. The push to a single payer system leaves the aging population – as well as other individuals – with a minimal number of choices, other than private pay for needed care and services. She emphasized that Rep. Kind’s work approaches many health care issues with roles for both private and public payers. Ms. Stower wrapped up the participants’ time on the Hill by explaining the best ways to get involved, which includes contacting local health care organization chapters (e.g., the Wisconsin Health Care Association, LeadingAge Wisconsin), contacting a representative or senator, and also potentially contacting the health care staffer for an elected member of Congress.

After the two morning sessions and lunch at the AHCA/NCAL headquarters building, Summit participants continued to brainstorm ideas to focus on when working on their action plans on Thursday. **Mike Muetzel** and **Dr. Kevin Hansen** led a fast-paced activity where participants quickly listed both the challenges and the opportunities in the field of health and aging services. Additionally, the participants discussed potential modifications to the current NELS mission statement, or “holy grail,” which was “Advancing our Profession, Enhancing Lives” following the 2016 NELS Summit. The 2017 participants had the opportunity to brainstorm ideas for a new

holy grail in small groups, and eventually collaborated to come up with a new mission statement for NELS, deciding on “Developing Solutions to Enrich Lives.” This suggested change to the mission statement will be shared with the NELS steering committee, to inform their work. After the excellent work by attendees on Wednesday, participants traveled to an evening team-building event at the Spy Museum in Washington, D.C.

On the final day of the summit, participants had the opportunity to attend a panel session, led by **Dr. Keith Knapp**, Associate Professor, Bellarmine University, and featuring representatives from NELS partnering organizations, in order to provide updates about current initiatives from each organization and any work conducted to date on the past NELS Summit recommendations. Panelists included:

- **Christy Kramer, MHA**, Director, LeadingAge DC
- **Randy Lindner, MHA, CAE**, President and CEO, National Association of Long Term Care Administrator Boards and the NAB Foundation
- **Urvi Patel**, Director of Quality Improvement, American Health Care Association/National Center for Assisted Living
- **Cecilia Sepp, CAE**, President and CEO, American College of Health Care Administrators

The panel emphasized the importance of joining professional and provider organizations to benefit the field of LTC and to work toward an improved public image. Following the panel session, participants were divided into smaller groups to have more direct conversations on issues mentioned during the main session with each of the panelists, as well as any other thoughts and questions participants had for the panelists. These breakout sessions allowed participants to have more interaction and networking opportunities with each panelist, and for them to gain a perspective on how NELS action plans have influenced partnering organization decisions and policies, including those on the legislative and regulatory fronts. These sessions also gave participants a sense of how they could work with each of these organizations in the future.



## OUTCOMES

Throughout the three days, participants brainstormed challenges to focus on for their final action plans and for their post-Summit work. On the final day, led by **Mr. Muetzel**, the large group narrowed down the various categories of initiatives to prioritize three different areas of focus. Participants were then able to choose which focus group to join, based off their personal interests. The final three categories chosen to focus on included Awareness of the Profession,

Communication Enhancement, and Supporting New Professionals. These focus groups were then given time to collaborate and come up with final action plans to work on during the coming year, with an emphasis on work that could be completed within the six months following the Summit. These action plans included setting deadlines and assigning duties to members of each group in order to efficiently execute the outlined initiatives. The work discussed by participants included the following:

1. The **Awareness of the Profession Group** focused on the availability of positions within and the awareness of the profession by individuals considering a career in health and aging services. Group members desired to augment the content on the current NELS website to aid individuals in finding this career, rather than having the career be “accidental” as in years past. The group also brainstormed ways to fundraise (e.g., writing grants, reaching out to companies and associations) to support these efforts. Members of this group also wanted to reach out to and survey prior NELS attendees and professionals in executive and administrator positions to gather data on why those individuals enjoy their career, to learn what resonates with these professionals and share that as part of the new content. The group also decided to focus their research on how people are navigating sites in hopes that it would help point out “buzz words,” which could then be used on the website so that the NELS website would be higher on a web search results list.
2. The **Communication Enhancement Group** focused on making a NELS alumni task force by creating a new NELS LinkedIn page, which could be a resource site (e.g., helping NELS alumni find professional connections) and a “sounding board” for NELS alumni to use.



The group also discussed modifying the current NELS LinkedIn page, but ultimately decided to create a new page to help with connections and information for alumni of the Summit. Members in this group were driven by wanting to take what is learned at the three-day NELS summit and have resources to be able to use the people they met and access Summit information easier, including the White Papers. Their hope was to get prior attendees “plugged” back in, and then have discussion boards to create conversation about challenges or opportunities within the field.

3. The **Supporting New Professionals Group** wanted to also utilize the current NELS website and add more content and information about the health and aging services field, providing resources and information from associations and organizations, and having more resources for currently practicing administrators. The concern was that this site would remain a neutral source of information from all sources, but would help support individuals who may have found this career through an educational track that

was not specifically focused on health or long-term care administration. Group members also discussed how to have a “Connect Me With Someone” feature, for newly licensed administrators searching for an Administrator-in-Training experience or for those seeking a mentor.

The Summit concluded with each participant speaking about the impact NELS had on them and by expressing how inspired they were by the Summit. Participants committed to being more involved in legislative processes, to work towards advancing the public image of the LTC profession, and to implement their own action plans in the coming months. Many of the participants felt inspired to create a better profession for themselves and for future generations by developing proactive, innovative solutions to enrich lives.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## 2017 Steering Committee Members:

- **Vani Barry**, Administrator, Good Samaritan Society – Four Corners Village
- **Dr. Robert Burke**, Professor, Health Services Management and Leadership Department, Milken Institute School of Public Health, The George Washington University
- **Stephanie Capelle**, Executive Director, Nine Mile Creek Senior Living
- **Jeffrey Degyansky**, Administrator, Menorah Park Center for Seniors
- **Dr. Kevin Hansen**, NELS Associate Director and Assistant Professor, Health Care Administration Program, University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire
- **Susan Hildebrandt**, Vice President of Workforce Initiatives, LeadingAge
- **Dr. Keith Knapp**, Associate Professor, Department of Health Services and Senior Living Leadership, Bellarmine University
- **Christy Kramer**, Director, LeadingAge DC
- **Brian Lenehan**, Administrator, Life Care Services/Vantage House
- **Elizabeth Liberman**, Healthcare Analyst, National Investment Center for Seniors Housing and Care
- **Randy Lindner**, President and CEO, NAB and the NAB Foundation
- **Anne Montgomery**, Deputy Director, Center for Elder Care and Advanced Illness, Altarum
- **Mike Muetzel**, Founder and CEO, Mx Marketing Management Solutions
- **Dr. Douglas Olson**, NELS Program Director and Professor, Health Care Administration Program, University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire
- **Keri Oviedo**, Vice President of Human Resources, Dycora
- **Urvi Patel**, Director of Quality Improvement, American Health Care Association
- **Emily Rickman**, Administrator, Alden Estates of Evanston
- **Daniel Schwartz**, Chief Operating Officer, Almost Family
- **Cecilia Sepp**, President and CEO, American College of Health Care Administrators
- **Sara Sherwood**, Administrator, Collier's Rehabilitation and Nursing Center
- **Cynthia Thorland**, Vice President and Director of Talent Development, LCS
- **Dr. David Wolf**, Associate Professor, Health Services Administration, Barry University

# SPONSORS AND SUPPORTERS

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# SUMMIT PARTICIPANTS

The following individuals were attendees at the 2017 NELS Summit, representing professionals from a variety of long-term care and health care settings along the continuum of care:

**Spencer Beard**, Administrator and Corporate Compliance Office, The Lutheran Home Association

**Zane Bennett**, Executive Director, Life Care Services/Plantation Village

**Julia Biehn**, Campus Administrator, Crest View Senior Community at Blaine

**Jaclyn Donohue**, graduate student, The George Washington University

**Jaimee Demmon**, Administrator, Alden Valley Ridge

**Angeliza Fontillas**, Director of Campus Recruiting, Ensign Services

**Kaitlen Gerace**, Assistant Administrator and Coach, Otterbein Senior Lifestyle Choices

**Sherri Gunasekera**, Administrator

**Greg Hollingsworth**, Administrator, Marquis Shasta

**Chandler Hulke**, undergraduate student, University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire

**Jennifer Johnson**, Campus Administrator, Marquardt Village

**Kat Kilbane**, Administrator, Life Care Services/Green Hills Retirement Community

**Abe Mathai**, Executive Director, Willcare/Almost Family

**Asa Morin**, Clinical Social Worker, Vermont Veterans Home

**Katelyn Mrozek**, undergraduate student, University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire

**Jana Pauldin**, Vice President of Membership and Chapter Relations, ACHCA

**Donny Pelligrino**, Director of Financial Services, Bridgeway Senior Healthcare

**Tris Rollins**, Chief Executive Officer, Pine Manor Health and Rehabilitation

**Christine Scott**, Administrator, Meridian Subacute Rehabilitation at Wall

**Ranyouri Senia**, Owner and Operations Manager, Behind the Wheel Rehabilitation

**Andy Siegel**, graduate student, The George Washington University

**Sarah Starcher**, Assistant Administrator, Byron Health Center

**Andrew Wolak**, Executive Director, Mountain Top Senior Care and Rehabilitation Center

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<sup>2</sup> The Long-Term Care Workforce: Can the Crisis be Fixed? Problems, Causes, and Options. Report to the National Commission for Quality Long-Term Care prepared by the Institute for the Future of Aging Services. 2007.

<http://www.leadingage.org/uploadedFiles/Content/About/Center for Applied Research/Center for Applied Research Initiatives/LTC Workforce Commission Report.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Dana, B. and Olson, D. (2007). Effective Leadership in Long Term Care: The Need and Opportunity. American College of Health Care Administrators Position Paper.

<http://www.achca.org>

<sup>4</sup> For more information on the health care policy work by Representative Ron Kind (D – WI), please visit: <https://kind.house.gov/issues/health-care> .

<sup>5</sup> Please contact either Dr. Kevin Hansen, NELS Director ([hansekev@uwec.edu](mailto:hansekev@uwec.edu)), or Dr. Douglas Olson ([olsondou@uwec.edu](mailto:olsondou@uwec.edu)) for more information on the policy and legislative forum held during the 2017 NELS Summit.