



FAITHSEARCH  
PARTNERS

---

HOW

---

FAITH-DRIVEN  
LEADERS ARE CHANGING  
TODAY'S  
HEALTHCARE  
LANDSCAPE

Faith-driven leaders know healthcare is about more than just healing illness. It's as much about spiritual, emotional and mental health as it is physical health; true wellness is multi-faceted. As the healthcare landscape is beginning to adopt the same philosophy, faith-driven leaders are impacting the industry now more than ever. Their leadership is shaping the direction of many large health systems and hospitals as many organizations shift their focus from services rendered to population health.

Leaders compelled by strong faith convictions are primed to operate from a missional perspective, which includes sharing their faith, but also simply caring for patients with excellence and keeping in mind a vision that extends beyond treating a patient's next ailment into cultivating long-term wellness.

One leader who is championing such whole-person wellness is Terry Shaw, CEO of Adventist

Health System. The organization partnered recently with Duke University to conduct a study across 12 of its hospitals, surveying 520 providers to discover their experiences assessing patients' spiritual needs over the course of one year. The resulting data was powerful, though not altogether unexpected for a faith-driven leader like Shaw.

**“THE FINDINGS OF THIS STUDY SHOW THAT SPIRITUALITY IS NOT ONLY IMPORTANT TO MANY PATIENTS, BUT THAT PROVIDERS ALSO SEE PATIENTS’ SPIRITUAL NEEDS AS AN IMPORTANT ASPECT OF THEIR OVERALL HEALTH AND ARE OPEN TO ADDRESSING THOSE NEEDS,”**

he said. “I am proud that our organization is helping lead the way in this important aspect of care delivery, and in doing so, we can better meet the needs of the patients we serve.”

The study also indicated that with proper training, providers are even more willing to provide spiritual care for patients. This research not only validates the idea that patients and providers are open to including spiritual care in the overall patient experience, but gives further support for the importance of spiritual care in healthcare, validating previous research indicating that people who are more spiritual or religious tend to have better overall health and adapt more quickly to health problems compared to those who do not.

Joyce Newmyer, president of Adventist Medical Center in Portland, keeps relationships and genuine care for each patient top-of-mind when it comes to her leadership philosophy, and she does it in a tangible way with the organization's "First Fridays" initiative. The program is an open invitation for people in the community — patients, doctors, neighbors and all — to gather once a month to share a meal, fellowship and worship with one another in a safe, welcoming "community of hope."

**"IT'S NOT JUST ABOUT 'SICK CARE,'" SAYS  
NEWMYER. "IT'S ABOUT RELATIONSHIP, IT'S  
ABOUT BELONGING—AND WE WANT  
OUR COMMUNITY TO KNOW THAT  
WE LOVE AND CARE ABOUT  
THEM, WHETHER OR NOT  
THEY'RE ILL."**

Another way faith-driven leaders are impacting healthcare is with their strongly held convictions. Having a strong commitment to one's beliefs is a valuable leadership asset across the board. Even in secular institutions, a confidence in one's ideas and beliefs is critical to inspire confidence in others and to make change happen<sup>1</sup>. For faith-driven leaders this is especially true. These executives are willing to stand up for those beliefs and take action on their behalf to live out their mission personally and professionally. At times, this means engaging the public or even government entities to solve widespread health issues.

Glenn Robinson, president of Baylor Scott & White Medical Center - Hillcrest in Waco, Texas, was honored with the Grassroots Champion Award in 2016 by the American Hospital Association for his efforts engaging the local chamber of commerce, business and city groups on key healthcare issue as well as testifying regularly before the Texas legislature. Baptist Standard reports that under Robinson's leadership, the Hillcrest facility "invests in the community by collaborating with other healthcare providers, physicians, community groups, area employers and others to enhance the value of the healthcare services."

Faith-driven leaders are making tangible differences in the lives of the people their organizations serve, going beyond providing excellent patient care — though also important — to truly change their communities for the better.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.forbes.com/sites/brentgleeson/2016/11/09/10-unique-perspectives-on-what-makes-a-great-leader/#134fd12a5dd1>

