

24 of the leading women to know in healthcare

Staff - Updated Friday, August 8th, 2014 [Print](#) | [Email](#)

Up to one-third of new CEO appointments at the world's largest companies will be women by 2040, based on findings from the 14th annual [Chief Executive Study](#) from Strategy&.

Strategy&, formerly Booz & Co, has predicted a rise in the number of women in leadership positions across all industries resulting from high education among women, continued entry of women into the business workforce and changing social norms.

A number of highly educated and capable women are already serving in influential positions at hospitals, health systems and other healthcare organizations. Here are 24 leading women to know in the healthcare world. Note: List selections were made through an editorial review process, and leaders could not pay to be included. Women are listed in alphabetical order.

1. Nancy Howell Agee, President and CEO, Carilion Clinic (Roanoke, Va.). At the helm of Carilion Clinic, Ms. Agee oversees a multispecialty physician group, eight hospitals, the Jefferson College of Health Sciences and a joint ventured medical school with Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, Va. She began her career in healthcare as a nurse for Carilion Clinic and served in various leadership roles before obtaining her current position in 2001. She holds degrees with honors from the University of Virginia in Charlottesville and Emory University in Atlanta.

2. Katherine Arbuckle, Senior Vice President and CFO, Ascension Health (St. Louis). Ms. Arbuckle has served as CFO of Ascension since April 2012. Previously, she was CFO and executive vice president for Bon Secours Health System in Marriottsville, Md. She has also served as assistant vice president of finance and assistant CFO at St. Vincent Hospital and Health Care Center in Indianapolis, and she was vice president of finance with Clarian Health Partners (now known as Indiana University Health), also in Indianapolis. Overall, Ms. Arbuckle has more than 30 years of experience in healthcare financial management. She holds a bachelor's degree in accounting from Ball State University in Muncie, Ind.

3. Maureen Bisognano, President and CEO, Institute for Healthcare Improvement. Before obtaining her current position, Ms. Bisognano served as IHI's executive vice president and COO for 15 years. As a prominent authority on healthcare systems, she advises healthcare leaders around the world and frequently speaks at major healthcare conferences. She is also an instructor at Harvard Medical School and a research associate at the Brigham and Women's Hospital Division of Social Medicine and Health Inequalities in Boston. Additionally, she serves on the boards of the Commonwealth Fund, Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center, the ThedaCare Center for Healthcare Value in Appleton, Wis., and Mayo Clinic Health System — Eau Claire (Wis.). Before joining IHI, she was CEO of the Massachusetts Respiratory Hospital in Braintree and served as senior vice president of the Juran Institute, an international training, certification and consulting company.

4. Ruth Brinkley, President and CEO, KentuckyOne Health (Louisville, Ky.). Ms. Brinkley has served as president and CEO of KentuckyOne since January 2012. She also serves as senior vice president of operations at Englewood, Colo.-based Catholic Health Initiatives. Previously, she was president and CEO of Carondelet Health Network in Tucson, Ariz. Ms. Brinkley is a founding member of the Women Business Leaders of the U.S. Health Care Industry Foundation. She has received numerous awards for her leadership, including the National Association of Health Services Executives' Senior Healthcare Executive Award, the Chattanooga Area Manager of the Year Award and the Unbought and Unbossed Award from Girls, Inc. She received a bachelor's and master's degree in nursing from DePaul University in Chicago.

5. Marna Parke Borgstrom, President and CEO, Yale-New Haven (Conn.) Health System, CEO, Yale-New Haven Hospital. Ms. Borgstrom began her career at Yale-New Haven Hospital more than 30 years ago,

progressing from a post-graduate fellowship to her current role as the leader of both Yale-New Haven Hospital and Yale-New Haven Health System. She serves on the boards of VHA Inc., the Council of Teaching Hospitals and the Healthcare Executives Study Society. Additionally, she serves on the Connecticut Hospital Association board and the Greater New Haven Regional Leadership Council. She has received several awards for community involvement, such as the YMCA's Women in Leadership Award and the Connecticut Women in Leadership Award, among others. She earned her master's of public health from the Yale School of Public Health.

6. Sylvia Mathews Burwell, Director, White House Office of Management and Budget. President Barack Obama nominated Ms. Burwell in April to replace Kathleen Sebelius as HHS secretary. In her current role, Ms. Burwell oversaw preparation of the government's \$3.8 trillion annual budget for fiscal year 2015. Previously, she was president of the Walmart Foundation. Before that, she was president of the global development program at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. During the Clinton administration, she served under the direction of several officials, including OMB Director Jack Lew, Chief of Staff Erskine Bowles and Secretary of the Treasury Robert Rubin. She was also staff director of the National Economic Council. She holds a bachelor's degree from Harvard University in Cambridge, Mass., and a bachelor's degree from Oxford University in the U.K., where she was a Rhodes Scholar.

7. Christine Candio, CEO of Inova Alexandria (Va.) Hospital, Chairman, American College of Healthcare Executives. Ms. Candio is in charge of overall management and implementation of the strategic plan at Inova Alexandria. Previously, she served as executive vice president of the Hallmark Health System in Melrose, Mass. She is also the current chairman of ACHE and serves on the ACHE Board of Governors. She is also a member of the Virginia Hospital & Healthcare Association Federal Advocacy Council and previously served as the president of the Healthcare Management Association of Massachusetts, the ACHE chapter that represents the state. She earned a master's of public administration with a focus in healthcare management from Farleigh Dickinson University in Hackensack, N.J.

8. Karen DeSalvo, MD, National Coordinator for Health IT, Office of the National Coordinator for HIT. Dr. DeSalvo oversees all activities at the ONC and promotes the use of health IT throughout the country. Before assuming her current position in December 2013, she was the New Orleans Health Commissioner and New Orleans Mayor Mitchell Landrieu's Senior Health Policy Advisor — a role in which she established an innovative model of neighborhood-based primary care to improve care access following Hurricane Katrina. She also founded 504HealthNet, an organization of safety-net providers in the New Orleans area. The Louisiana Legislative Women's Caucus has recognized her as a "Woman of Excellence in Health Care." She earned her medical degree and master's in public health from Tulane University in New Orleans, and she also holds a master's degree in clinical epidemiology from the Harvard School of Public Health in Boston.

9. Teri Fontenot, President and CEO, Woman's Hospital (Baton Rouge, La.). As president and CEO of the 350-bed Woman's Hospital, Ms. Fontenot oversees the largest birthing and neonatal intensive care facility in Louisiana. She was also the 2012 chair of the American Hospital Association board of trustees and has chaired the Chief Executive Officers Committee of the American College of Healthcare Executives. Additionally, she served a six-year term on the National Institutes of Health advisory committee on research for women's health. She holds a bachelor's degree in accounting from the University of Mississippi and an MBA from Northeast Louisiana University in Monroe.

10. Diana Hendel, PharmD, CEO, Long Beach (Calif.) Memorial Medical Center, Miller Children's Hospital Long Beach, Community Hospital Long Beach. Dr. Hendel leads three Long Beach hospitals, which are all part of Fountain Valley, Calif.-based MemorialCare Health System. She previously served as COO of MemorialCare's Long Beach hospitals, among other administrative roles. She began her career at Long Beach Memorial as a clinical pharmacy resident. Overall, she has been with MemorialCare for more than 20 years. During her time in the healthcare industry, she has received numerous leadership awards, such as the Women Making a Difference CEO Award from the Los Angeles Business Journal and the Riveter Foundation's "We Can Do It" award in healthcare. She serves on various boards, such as the boards of the Hospital Association of Southern California, the California Children's Hospital Association, the Greater Long

Beach Chamber of Commerce and the California Council on Equality and Justice. Dr. Hendel earned her doctor of pharmacy degree from the University of California San Francisco.

11. Karen Ignagni, President and CEO, America's Health Insurance Plans (Washington, D.C.). Ms. Ignagni holds one of the most influential positions in the healthcare industry, lobbying policymakers on behalf of health insurance companies. She has authored more than 90 articles on healthcare policy issues for publications such as The New York Times, USA Today and Health Affairs. Before joining AHIP, she was president of the American Association of Health Plans, which merged with the Health Insurance Association of America in 2003 to form AHIP. She holds an executive MBA from Loyola University in Baltimore and graduated from Providence (R.I.) College in 1971 as part of the first class of women to attend the school.

12. Catherine Jacobson, President and CEO, Froedtert Health (Milwaukee). Ms. Jacobson has led Froedtert Health since June 2011. Previously, she served as Froedtert's executive vice president for finance and strategy/chief financial and strategy officer. Before joining Froedtert, she was CFO and senior vice president for strategic planning and finance at Rush University Medical Center in Chicago. When she arrived at Froedtert, she had just completed a one-year term as national chair of the Healthcare Financial Management Organization. Ms. Jacobson has received national recognition for her healthcare leadership.

13. Donna Katen-Bahensky, President and CEO, University of Wisconsin Hospital and Clinics (Madison). Ms. Katen-Bahensky has led University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics — one of the nation's leading academic medical centers — since February 2008. Previously, she was CEO of University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics in Iowa City and the senior associate vice president of medical affairs at University of Iowa Health Care. She also served in various leadership positions at the University of Nebraska Medical Center in Omaha, where she started as director of strategic planning and marketing before advancing to the position of hospital chief operating officer. In January 2012, Ms. Katen-Bahensky was elected to serve on the American Hospital Association board. She holds a master's degree in public health administration from the University of Missouri in Columbia.

14. Sister Carol Keehan, D.C., President and CEO, Catholic Health Association of the United States (Washington, D.C.). Since 2005, Sister Keehan has led the CHA, a ministry of the Roman Catholic Church that includes more than 600 hospitals and 1,400 long-term care and other health facilities in all 50 states. Before joining CHA, she was the board chair of Ascension Health's Sacred Heart Health System in Pensacola, Fla. She also served for 15 years as president and CEO of Providence Hospital in Washington, D.C. She has been a representative to the International Federation of Catholic Health Care Associations of the Pontifical Council for Pastoral Health Care and has also been a member of several health, labor and domestic policy committees of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, among other influential leadership roles. She earned her bachelor's degree in nursing from St. Joseph's College in Emmitsburg, Md., and holds a master of science degree in business administration from the University of South Carolina in Columbia, S.C. She is a member of the Daughters of Charity of Saint Vincent de Paul.

15. Barbara Martin, President and CEO, Vista Health System (Waukegan, Ill.). Ms. Martin has led Vista Health System since 2006, overseeing two hospitals (Vista Medical Center East and Vista Medical Center West) with a total of more than 400 beds, as well as a campus in Lindenhurst, physician practice offices and more. She began her career in healthcare as a registered nurse at Ingalls Memorial Hospital in Harvey, Ill., where she eventually advanced to director of nursing. She has served in various leadership roles, including that of vice president of hospital operations and ambulatory services at Provena Saint Joseph Medical Center in Joliet, Ill., and system vice president of clinical operations and system improvement for Provena Health. She holds a bachelor's degree in nursing and a master's degree in business administration from Lewis University in Romeoville, Ill.

16. Elizabeth Nabel, MD, President, Brigham and Women's Health Care (Boston). Dr. Nabel has served as president of the Harvard-affiliated Brigham and Women's Hospital since 2010. She is also a cardiologist and distinguished biomedical researcher, as well as a Harvard Medical School professor. During her years in the field, she has established herself as a champion for global health and an advocate for broadening access to care. As director of the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute from 2005 to 2009, Dr. Nabel established pioneering

programs in genomics, stem cells and translation research. She also started the Red Dress Heart Trust campaign, which raises heart awareness in women. She is an accomplished physician-scientist — her work on the molecular genetics of cardiovascular diseases has produced 17 patents. She has received numerous awards for her work, such as the Willem Einthoven Award from Leiden University in the Netherlands and the Amgen-Scientific Achievement Award, among others. She is also the editor of *Scientific American Medicine*. Dr. Nabel attended Weill Cornell Medical College in New York City and did her internal medicine and cardiology training at Brigham and Women's.

17. Paula Lovell, Founder, Chairman and CEO, Lovell Communications (Nashville, Tenn.). Ms. Lovell founded Lovell Communications in 1998 and develops strategic communication plans, works with the media and manages crisis communication for clients nationwide, including healthcare organizations. She spent a decade as a journalist, working for the *Nashville Banner*, contributing to city and consumer magazines and writing and producing for WSMV-TV, ESPN, ACTS, The Nashville Network, National PM Magazine and WTBS in Atlanta. She has earned numerous awards, including her designation as 1997 Woman Business Owner of the Year by the National Association of Women Business Owners. She is a member of various organizations, including the Nashville Healthcare Council, the American Hospital Association and the American College of Healthcare Executives. Ms. Lovell holds a bachelor's degree from Vanderbilt University in Nashville.

18. Ora Pescovitz, MD, Former CEO, University of Michigan Health System (Ann Arbor); Future Senior Vice President, Eli Lilly & Co. (Indianapolis). In May 2009, Dr. Pescovitz became the University of Michigan's first female executive vice president for medical affairs and health system CEO. She is a nationally recognized pediatric endocrinologist and researcher who has published 184 books and papers. She was elected to the Institute of Medicine in 2011, and she has received numerous awards, such as the Northwestern Alumni Association Merit Award and the Endocrine Society's Robert H. Williams Distinguished Leadership Award. Before joining U-M, she had an extensive career as executive associate dean for research affairs at Indiana University School of Medicine, president and CEO of Riley Hospital for Children and interim vice president for Research Administration at Indiana University, all based in Indianapolis. She received her medical degree from the Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine in Chicago. She stepped down from her positions with U-M on June 1. In October, she will become senior vice president of the pharmaceutical company Eli Lilly & Co., according to a [Crain's Detroit Business](#) report.

19. Edith Ramirez, JD, Chairwoman and Commissioner, Federal Trade Commission. Ms. Ramirez was sworn in as FTC commissioner in April 2010 to a term that expires in September 2015. President Barack Obama designated her to serve as FTC chairwoman effective March 2013. Previously, she was a partner in the Los Angeles office of Quinn Emanuel Urquhart & Sullivan, LLP, where she handled business litigation issues such as antitrust, unfair competition and Lanham Act matters. A Harvard Law School graduate, she serves as one of the most powerful regulatory figures in the realm of healthcare industry consolidation. Under her leadership, the FTC has challenged several major transactions, such as the highly followed case of [Phoebe Putney Health System](#) in Albany, Ga., which reached the Supreme Court.

20. Nancy Schlichting, President and CEO, Henry Ford Health System (Detroit). Ms. Schlichting joined Henry Ford in 1998 as senior vice president and chief administrative officer. She became executive vice president and COO in 1999 and assumed the role of president and CEO in 2001. She has received numerous awards in healthcare, such as the American Lung Association's Lung Health Champion Award (2009), the Rhonda Walker Foundation's Powerful Woman of Purpose Award and the American Hospital Association's Grassroots Champion Award, among many others. Prior to joining Henry Ford, she was executive vice president and COO of Summa Health System in Akron, Ohio. She holds a bachelor of arts degree in public policy studies from Duke University in Durham, N.C., and an MBA from Cornell University in Ithaca, N.Y.

21. Rachel Seifert, Executive Vice President, Secretary and General Counsel, Community Health Systems (Franklin, Tenn.). Ms. Seifert is responsible for the oversight of all legal aspects within CHS, including acquisitions/development, management of the legal department, litigation, and SEC and corporate governance. Before joining CHS, she was vice president and associate general counsel for Columbia/HCA. Previously, she spent seven years in private law practice. She earned her law degree from the University of Maryland in College Park.

22. Pamela Stoyanoff, Executive Vice President and COO, Methodist Health System (Dallas). As executive vice president and COO of Methodist, Ms. Stoyanoff has operational accountability for IT, materials management, quality case management, health information management and graduate medical education programs. Before joining Methodist, she was senior vice president and CFO for St. Vincent Health System in Little Rock, Ark. The *Dallas Business Journal* has recognized her as one of its 2010 Women in Business, and she was named one of the North Dallas Corridor's 2012 Top Female Executives by *ADDISON Magazine*. She holds an MBA from the Lake Forest (Ill.) Graduate School and a bachelor's degree in business administration/accounting from Valparaiso University in Indiana.

23. Marilyn Tavenner, Administrator, CMS. Ms. Tavenner is responsible for leading CMS — a \$820 billion federal agency ensuring healthcare coverage for 100 million Americans — as it implements the insurance market reforms and health insurance exchanges included in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. Previously, Ms. Tavenner spent four years as the Commonwealth of Virginia's secretary of health and human resources in the administration of former Gov. Tim Kaine. Before that, she spent 25 years working for Nashville, Tenn.-based Hospital Corporation of America, where she began as a nurse at Johnson-Willis Hospital in Richmond, Va., and rose through the ranks to obtain the position of group president of outpatient services. She has worked with various community and professional organizations and served as a board member of the American Hospital Association and president of the Virginia Hospital Association. She holds a bachelor's degree in nursing and a master's degree in health administration from Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond.

24. Rhoda Weiss, National Healthcare Consultant, Speaker, Author and Editor (Santa Monica, Calif.). Dr. Weiss leads Rhoda Weiss & Associates, which specializes in strategy, business development, marketing, public relations, branding and communications. Dr. Weiss has earned recognition as an innovator in marketing, branding, public relations and healthcare delivery. She is the former president of the American Hospital Association Society for Healthcare Strategy & Market Development, past president of Women in Health Administration and American Society for Healthcare Public Relations and Marketing Association and former national chair and CEO of the Public Relations Society of America. She is also the editor of the book *"Managing Health Care Reform: Ideas for Leaders"* and was named distinguished faculty at UCLA Extension. She leads many management and board retreats, holds a PhD in Leadership & Change, teaches health care marketing and is considered the nation's expert in hospital and health system name changes and brand architecture, having led many organizational name changes as well.

Copyright © 2021 Becker's Healthcare. All Rights Reserved. [Privacy Policy](#). [Cookie Policy](#). [Linking and Reprinting Policy](#).