

SPEAKER INFORMATION

Brock Slabach, Chief Operations Officer, NRHA

Brock joined NRHA in 2008. He is NRHA's Chief Operating Officer. He was a rural hospital administrator for more than 21 years and has served on the board of the National Rural Health Association and the regional policy board of the American Hospital Association. Brock specializes in rural health system development that encompasses population health and the varied payment programs moving rural providers into value-based purchasing models. He serves on the Board of Directors of Accreditation Commission for Health Care (ACHC). Brock is the 2015 recipient of the Calico Quality Leadership Award of the National Rural Health Resource Center, received the American Society of Healthcare Pharmacists (ASHP) Board of Directors' Award of Honor for 2018 and the NRHA's President's Award in 2023. Brock earned a master of public health degree in health administration from the University of Oklahoma and is a fellow in the American College of Healthcare Executives.



Joe Schindler, Vice-President, Finance policy and Analytics, MHA

Joe Schindler has over 30 years of experience providing Minnesota's hospitals and health systems with financial analysis and support in the areas of reimbursement, financial policy and legislative issues. His expertise includes policy analysis, Medicare and Medicaid reimbursement, hospital financial analysis, wage index and cost comparison projects. He oversees MHA's key data programs and endorsed business partners program.

Erik Therwanger, Keynote Speaker

Erik is the founder of Think GREAT and draws from his experiences as a U.S. Marine, executive business leader, sales professional, and entrepreneur to help organizations achieve new levels of success. He uniquely combines leadership development, team building, sales training, and goal-setting into strategies and techniques that empower team members and leaders to exceed expectations. Erik's interactive and entertaining style engages audiences as he empowers them to open new possibilities in their personal and professional lives. As a trainer and speaker for the spouses of armed services personnel, Erik is deeply aware of their challenges and sacrifices. To help support their education and career goals, Erik founded the Think GREAT Foundation, which is dedicated to awarding scholarships to military spouses.



Mary Ellen Wells, C-Suite Resources

Mary Ellen Wells is the CEO of Meeker Memorial Hospital and Clinics. She has been a partner at C-Suite Resources since 2019, and prior to then she served as a senior executive and CEO of several independent and affiliated hospitals, clinics, and skilled nursing facilities. Mary Ellen served as the program director, dyad leader and senior lecturer for the University of Minnesota's MHA Program and remains involved as an adjunct faculty member. She was the first recipient of the Minnesota Hospital Association's Stephen Rogness Distinguished Service Award, the 2019 ACHE Regent's Award winner, and was recently awarded the Greg Hart Alumni Service Award for the University of Minnesota. Mary Ellen also serves on numerous nonprofit boards and enjoys time with family, Gopher Women's sports, and any outdoor activity.

CONTINUE SPEAKER INFORMATION

Ben Bache-Wiig MD, Executive Medical Director of Lifespark

Dr. Ben Bache-Wiig serves as the Executive Medical Director for Lifespark, a company dedicated to providing care to seniors in a value-based model. He started his career as an Internal Medicine and Critical Care Physician at North Clinic. After more than 20 years of practice and taking on progressive leadership roles at North Clinic and North Memorial Medical Center, Ben moved to full time leadership with Allina Health in Minneapolis. There he served as VPMA at Abbott Northwestern Hospital, President of Abbott Northwestern, Chief Clinical Officer for the system and Executive Vice President for the system. In addition to his roles at Allina he also served as a Board Member for Medica Health Plan and Allina Health/Aetna Health Plan.



Chris Thompson MD, Medical Director, CentraCare in Central Minnesota

Chris Thompson, MD is a practicing family physician with CentraCare in central Minnesota and serves as Medical Director for Primary Care Innovation and Transformation. Leading change in healthcare delivery for the good of the healthcare team, patient and system has long been a passion. Chris has been facilitating the training of physician and administrative leaders through CentraCare's Performance Leadership Program and personal and corporate culture-shaping program for 7 years. He has also served as chief resident, a physician informaticist and on numerous advisory boards and councils with focuses ranging from change management to strategic planning to population health.

Doug Hanson

Doug Hanson has more than 40 years' experience in health care and organizational leadership. He holds a master's degree in public administration with an emphasis in health care. Doug has experience in private and public/teaching hospitals. As CEO, he developed and lead two large specialty and primary care physician networks. Hanson created and was principal for a rehabilitation company in Minnesota and Florida and was CEO for a large multi-specialty practice with ambulatory surgery center in the twin cities of Minnesota. He served a CEO for a Federally Qualified Health Care Center that provided medical and dental care for underserved communities. Doug is a past president of the Minnesota Medical Group Management Association. In 2020 he was elected one of 100 most influential health care leaders by Minnesota Physicians. He has served on numerous boards including health insurance, professional business associations, and community outreach.



Joe Wivoda, HIPAA Trek

Joe has been a Healthcare IT consultant and Chief Information Officer for organizations across the care continuum. He has performed Security Risk Assessments for critical access hospitals, rural health clinics, FQHCs, behavioral health providers, and homecare agencies across the country. He speaks at rural health conferences nationwide about HIPAA Security and Cybersecurity and has consulted with associations, Health Information Exchanges, and healthcare organizations on HIT for over 20 years.

CONTINUE SPEAKER INFORMATION

Sarah Badahman, HIPAA Trek

Sarah Badahman has spent over 18 years in the Healthcare Compliance field, particularly, on HIPAA Compliance and Risk Management. Sarah possesses a deep understanding of the unique challenges of HIPAA administration and developed HIPAAtrek as a solution to guide healthcare administrators through the complex world of HIPAA.



Dan Prokott, Faegre Drinker Biddle & Reath LLP

Dan Prokott is a Labor and Employment partner at Faegre Drinker Biddle & Reath LLP and leader of the firm's Labor and Employment Compliance, Training and Transactions team. Dan focuses his practice on advising businesses regarding complex workplace matters across a variety of subject matters, including leave management and disability accommodations, workforce reductions and restructurings, drafting executive employment and restrictive covenant agreements, and advising on employment issues in mergers and acquisitions.



Amy Fajardo, MedCycle Solutions

Amy is a valued member of MedCycle Solutions. In her role as client manager, she effortlessly manages multiple clients, as well as our internal staff to ensure that our clients receive the very best of MedCycle. Amy has over 25 years of experience as a medical billing and credentialing professional. She has a vast range of knowledge in all aspects of Revenue Cycle Management, and Provider Contracting and Credentialing. Amy has worked alongside physicians in all stages of their practice from startup, through growth and sale. Amy has extensive experience in Medical Administration, Provider Education, Contracting and Credentialing, and Billing Compliance. Amy is adept at building custom workflows for specific practice needs and educating staff on the tolls and processes they need to know to successfully do their jobs.



Meredyth Lacombe, Senior Manager, Healthcare Consulting, Eide Bailly LLP

Meredyth has over 13 years of healthcare experience focused on operations and strategy. Over her career, she has led projects spanning strategic planning, build-buy-partner assessments, clinical utilization management, new facility activation, and productivity management. Before joining Eide Bailly, Meredyth worked at several large academic medical centers in operations and finance-based roles. Meredyth is passionate about collaborating with clinical and administrative leaders to set strategic priorities, drive efficiencies, reduce costs and improve patient outcomes.



CONTINUE SPEAKER INFORMATION

Michael Anderson - President and Chief Investment Officer, Hi-Line Capital Management LLC

Michael Anderson serves as President and Chief Investment Officer for Hi-Line Capital Management. Anderson worked as Chief Financial Officer for Prairie Lakes Healthcare System, an independent 501c3 in Watertown, South Dakota, beginning in 2000. He soon expanded his traditional responsibilities to include improving investment processes and outcomes, evolving into a Chief Investment Office role from 2007 to 2018. This transition into a specialized executive-level position allowed subsequent CFOs the ability to focus solely on financial operations, and ultimately led Michael to develop an outsourced Chief Investment Officer (OCIO) position. As OCIO, he built the Hi-Line Capital Management team and began to offer other healthcare providers OCIO and investment advisory services, creating opportunities for them to increase resources, expand research capabilities, and further improve institutional investing processes.



Mike Wilbert, Senior Vice President, Gallagher

Mike is a Senior Vice President and Lead Strategic Consultant, assisting Healthcare employers with every facet of human capital - particularly in the pursuit of solutions for attracting, retaining and engaging a motivated workforce. Mike works to uncover needs and identify opportunities for improvement in cost savings, efficiencies and employee engagement. Mike approaches his work enthusiastically with a focus on strategy and most importantly innovation. Working with some of the largest and most complex Healthcare systems across the country, Mike and his team are at the forefront of industry trends. Mike and his team serve as thought leaders in the world of Healthcare Human Resources, viewing everything through a lens of creativity and modernization. They see Human Resources as one of the most critical areas in

driving the direction and vision of an organization.

Jason Jodlowski, Area Vice President, Gallagher

Jason Jodlowski is an Area Vice President with over 15 years of experience in the employee benefits industry. In this role, Jason is responsible for business development as well as consulting with his clients. He works strategically to evaluate a full suite of benefit programs by designing unique solutions that increase value and provide innovative cost-containment results that protect and enrich the workforces with whom he consults. Jason is a thought-leader in employee benefits consulting and tactically advises clients on plan direction and development – all with the employer and employee in mind. He believes our clients are our partners and deserve a partnership that asks tough questions in the spirit of high standards and a top-notch benefit program.



Reneé Rongen, Keynote Speaker

Reneé is an award winning humorous and inspirational speaker, author and business consultant. She is one of the most in-demand and top-rated speakers in the U.S. and Canada. Combining her stage presence, with her award-winning business background, topped with her complete authenticity, she delivers an experience like no other to organizations who want to inspire and grow their culture to be the best in the industry. Reneé's specific areas of focus are rural communities, healthcare and entrepreneurial organizations where she can bring clarity, focus and connect organizational culture with community. A champion for wearing pajamas as much as she can get away with, Renee is the founder of the Ultimate Pajama Party, an ongoing campaign responsible for inspiring the donation of over 1 Million pairs of pajamas to domestic violence shelters

across the country, impacting the lives of women and children every day.