

# Rural Hospital Leadership Forum

June 17, 2025  
Hotel Fort Des Moines



IOWA HOSPITAL  
ASSOCIATION®

## CONFERENCE OVERVIEW

One of Iowa's largest annual rural health conferences, this event is for people involved in the strategic direction and operations of rural hospitals.

## INTENDED AUDIENCE

- American College of Healthcare Executives members
- CEOs
- Fiscal management professionals
- Human resource professionals
- Nursing leaders and managers
- Physician leaders
- Senior executives
- Trustees

## PRE-CONFERENCE LEADERSHIP WORKSHOP | JUNE 16

Iowa Hospital Association, 100 E. Grand Ave., Suite 100, Des Moines

*American College of Healthcare Executives qualified credits and nursing contact hours are available.*

### 1-4 p.m. **Leveling Up in Leadership: Navigating Your Career Ascent**

*Laurie Baedke, MHA, FACHE, FACMPE, Speaker and Author, Omaha, Nebraska*

The journey from emerging leader to influential executive requires more than technical expertise. It demands a mastery of often-overlooked key behavioral competencies. Leveling up in leadership requires clarity, credibility, commitment and community. This interactive session reviews evidence-based research and tactics about the factors that drive outstanding leadership and delivers tips to elevate your performance. Whether you're preparing for your next promotion or striving to lead with greater impact, this session will equip you with the mindset and strategies to navigate your career ascent with clarity and confidence.

Learning objectives:

- Apply new evidence-based practices to help advance your career
- Appraise personal leadership performance against short-, mid- and long-term career goals
- Describe four key components of leadership success

## WELCOME RECEPTION | 5-7 P.M. – Sponsored by ServiShare, AssuredPartners and AblePay

In Confidence, Hotel Fort Des Moines, 1000 Walnut St., Des Moines

## CONFERENCE AGENDA | JUNE 17

8 a.m. **Registration and Breakfast**

8:30 a.m. **Welcome**

**8:45 a.m.**

### **Unstoppable Leadership**

*Alex Weber, American Ninja Warrior Host and Competitor, Los Angeles*

Are you focused on leadership? If so, this is the keynote for you! Unstoppable leadership begins with your unwavering commitment to yourself, your vision and everyone you touch. But with this immense hunger for success comes immense pressure, challenges and internal adversity. Weber shares lessons and empowering stories from being one of the youngest coaches ever to win U.S. Lacrosse Coach of the Year recognition to incredible stories from leaders worldwide. He will candidly discuss the challenges we face as leaders in both our careers and personal lives. Weber shows you how to navigate external and internal roadblocks, as well as interpersonal dynamics. There's no single archetype for a leader, and he will help you identify, cultivate and channel your inner unstoppable leader.

Learning objectives:

- Describe how to build a meaningful bond with your teams, align goals to maximize performance and progress even in the most-challenging times
- Determine how to foster and sustain strong mental health as a leader for consistent and long-lasting success
- Discuss a nuanced approach for dealing with difficult personalities while creating an "us" mentality

**9:45 a.m.**

### **Break**

**10 a.m.**

### **Policy and Prose: Using Storytelling to Advocate for Your Hospital Effectively**

*Clare Kelly, Chief Government and External Affairs Officer, and Heather Nahas, Senior Vice President, Marketing and Communications, Iowa Hospital Association, Des Moines*

Medicaid-directed payments have become an important revenue source for Iowa's hospitals, and IHA is leading advocacy efforts to highlight the benefits of and protect this critical funding. This session will connect advocacy and storytelling to help hospitals effectively communicate to policymakers, boards of directors, and the community how the Iowa Medicaid Hospital Directed Payment Program enables them to invest in initiatives that improve access and quality.

Learning objectives:

- Discuss the importance of advocacy in ensuring hospitals receive adequate funding and support
- Review the basics of the Iowa Medicaid Hospital Directed Payment Program
- Share strategies for engaging with policymakers and effectively communicating the value of hospitals to them

**11 a.m.**

### **Break**

**11:15 a.m.**

### **Total Town Makeover: Strategic Ways Rural Hospitals Transform Communities**

*Andrew McCrea, Radio Host, Farmer and Author, McCrea Farms/McCrea Multimedia, St. Joseph, Missouri*

McCrea will open your mind to ways your health care organization can make a positive, long-lasting impact on all people. It's a novel approach he witnessed as chair of the Heartland Foundation (Mosaic Life Care), which has produced tangible, long-term results affecting people beyond their physical health. McCrea's extensive travels provide him with examples of how communities find ways to attract businesses, raise their standards of living and create places a new generation would want to call home. Learn the small, profound steps people and hospitals can take to make positive "makeovers" where you live.

Learning objectives:

- Determine how to position hospitals as community leaders in more than health care
- Develop a plan to better engage with local citizens and inspire the next generation to consider working and living in the area
- Identify ways to improve the health of the communities we serve
- Implement strategies to attract businesses and provide a strong future workforce

**12:15 p.m.**

**Lunch – sponsored by Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield**

**1:15 p.m.**

### **Breakout Option 1: A Comprehensive Approach to Improving Hospital Quality**

*Moderator: Elly Shaw, Director of Organizational Excellence, Knoxville Hospital and Clinics, Knoxville*

*Panelists: Holly Crowell, Quality Improvement, Montgomery County Memorial Hospital and Clinics, Red Oak; Rayne Premo, Quality Improvement/Infection Prevention Manager, Iowa Specialty Hospital, Clarion; and Kari Sorenson, Director of Clinical Services and Quality, Avera Holy Family Hospital, Estherville*

Health care is constantly evolving, and hospitals must adapt to meet new challenges and improve patient outcomes. This session will bring together leaders from various Iowa hospitals to discuss their quality programs and how they've developed comprehensive quality departments that focus the attention of their organizations on quality metrics, patient outcomes and the patient health care experience. By examining these areas, we can identify best practices and areas for improvement to enhance the quality of hospitals.

Learning objectives:

- Explore high-functioning quality departments, discussing how a well-defined structure correlates with exceptional quality outcomes and metrics
- Detail communication tools quality departments can use to share quality outcomes and move the quality metrics needle
- Examine opportunities for increased efficiencies in organizations' quality departments

**1:15 p.m.**

### **Breakout Option 2: Innovations in Rural Recruitment and Workforce**

*Moderator: Corey Martin, Senior Vice President, Education Services, Iowa Hospital Association, Des Moines*

*Panelists: Jen Nutt, DNP, RN, CENP, Vice President, Nursing and Clinical Services, Iowa Hospital Association; Amanda Bireline, MSA, BSN, RN, Chief Operating Officer, Cass Health, Atlantic; Tori Schuessler, Director of Business Development; and Tim Sheley, Executive Vice President, Business Development, Jackson Physician Search, Chesterfield, Missouri*

Growing the workforce pipeline has always been a top concern for every hospital leader. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated the situation. Now more than ever, hospitals need to focus on recruiting to meet the needs of their organizations. In this session, panelists will discuss innovative ways they affect the workforce needs of their hospitals. Panelists will share new and exciting tools available to boost interest in health care professions, ways to fully engage with the state's registered apprenticeship programs and strategies to reduce rural bias when recruiting providers.

Learning objectives:

- Discuss the new Iowa Health Education Portal and how schools can use it to increase awareness in health care careers, starting with nursing
- Discuss ways organizations can build their workforce through apprenticeship programs and partnerships with state agencies
- Explore how to remove rural bias from physician recruiting, making rural markets destination sites for providers

**2:30 p.m.**

**Break – sponsored by Integritas Providers**

**2:45 p.m.**

### **The Innovator's Edge: Building a Future-ready Organization**

*Adam Braun, CEO, Clarasight, New York City*

In a world characterized by rapid change and uncertainty, the ability to anticipate future trends is a critical leadership skill. This examines the strategies and techniques that the most-successful leaders use to gain a competitive advantage. Braun will delve into the art of foresight, discussing how to identify trends, analyze potential disruptions and assess future scenarios. He'll then explore the importance of cultivating a culture of innovation and experimentation, which allows organizations to adapt and thrive in a dynamic environment. Through storytelling, science and audience engagement, every attendee will gain valuable insights into how to develop their foresight skills and inspire their organizations to build for the future, today.

Learning objectives:

- Discuss how to convert early wins into enduring progress
- Describe how to engage others to build a movement around your ideas
- Describe how to discover your next groundbreaking idea
- Identify tactical steps to bring your ideas to life

**3:45 p.m.**

**Adjourn**

## FACULTY

**Laurie Baedke** is the founder and CEO of Growth Edge Leadership. Baedke is a well-regarded keynote speaker at international conferences, an executive coach and the host of The Growth Edge, a weekly leadership podcast. She holds a master's degree in health care administration. She is a board-certified fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives and the American College of Medical Practice Executives. Gallup has certified her as a Strengths Performance Coach. She has written two books, "The Emerging Healthcare Leader: A Field Guide" and "Mentor Coach: Lead to Peak Professional Performance," and contributed a chapter titled "The Clinician Entrepreneur" to "The Handbook of Private Practice."

**Amanda Bireline** is the Chief Operating Officer for Cass Health in Atlantic. Bireline also has clinical and leadership experience in a for-profit residential substance use disorder treatment center, a nonprofit hospice home, rural health clinics and critical access hospitals. She received her bachelor's degree in nursing, a master's degree in administration and a certificate in organizational leadership, all from the University of South Dakota.

**Adam Braun** is an award-winning entrepreneur, a New York Times and Wall Street Journal bestselling author, and a world-renowned keynote speaker about leadership and innovation. People have watched his talks more than 3 million times, and the businesses he has founded and led have raised over \$100 million by leveraging his unique approach. Braun's talks are rooted in authentic, firsthand lessons learned through successes and struggles in building pioneering companies with acclaimed leaders at the frontline of industry innovation. His journey has taken him to 75 countries to identify how the best leaders navigate uncertainty to shape the future. The White House, Stanford University, Harvard Business School, Fortune 500 companies and industry associations have featured Braun as a guest speaker. His book, "The Promise of a Pencil: How an Ordinary Person Can Create Extraordinary Change," is an international bestseller that reached the No. 1 spot on the What Corporate America Is Reading list. Business Insider named him to their 40 Under 40 list, and Wired identified him as one of its 50 People Who Will Change the World. Braun received the Tribeca Disruptive Innovation Award and the United States' most-prestigious award for public service, the Jefferson Award.

**Holly Crowell** is the quality improvement/infection prevention manager at Montgomery County Hospital and Clinics in Red Oak. Crowell has worked in quality for 35 years and in infection prevention for 25 years. She's a registered nurse and a certified professional in health care quality.

**Clare Kelly** is the chief government and external affairs officer at the Iowa Hospital Association. Before joining IHA, she was a health policy adviser to Gov. Kim Reynolds. Before her state service, Kelly was executive vice president and CEO of the Iowa Medical Society and was also executive director of government and external affairs for Children's National Hospital in Washington, D.C. She's a native of Fort Dodge and received her bachelor's degree in English and political science from the University of Iowa.

**Andrew McCrea** is a farmer, rancher, author and nationally syndicated radio and TV broadcaster. McCrea's traveled the nation producing "American Countryside," heard on radio stations coast-to-coast. He shares his blend of humor and real-life strategies for living purposefully with audiences worldwide. McCrea is a past board member of Heartland Hospital, now Mosaic Life Care, in St. Joseph, Missouri, and was chair of the hospital's foundation, which undertakes extensive and innovative work in building rural communities within its service area.

**Heather Nahas** is the Senior Vice President of Marketing Communications at IHA. Nahas was communications director for Gov. Kim Reynolds from August 2019 to September 2024. Previously, she was system communications director for UnityPoint Health for a decade, and has worked in communications, public relations and marketing roles throughout her career.

**Jennifer Nutt** is the vice president of nursing and clinical services for the Iowa Hospital Association. Nutt leads the hospital-based nursing profession in advocacy and education, facilitating workforce development, clinical research, quality and patient safety for IHA member hospitals and health systems. She coordinates with various national and state nursing organizations, including the Iowa Organization for Nursing Leadership, and is the IHA spokesperson on workforce and clinical service issues. In this role, Nutt develops workforce solutions and clinical education programs, participates in statewide quality and patient safety initiatives, and interacts with various clinical and quality-related organizations. She received her doctoral degree in nursing practice with a focus on health systems in 2015 and her Bachelor of Science in Nursing in 2004 from the University of Iowa. Nutt has worked at IHA since 2015.

**Rayne Premo** is the Quality Coordinator at Iowa Specialty Hospitals, where she plays a pivotal role in advancing health care quality and operational excellence. With a background as a medical laboratory technician and certifications in patient safety and health care quality, Premo brings a comprehensive understanding of clinical processes and quality management to her work. As the program chair for the Iowa Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society, she works to share knowledge and best practices among health care professionals, fostering an environment of continuous improvement. Premo advocates data-driven decision-making and believes in the transformative power of quality metrics to enhance patient experience and operational efficiency.

**Tori Schuessler** has spent her career in sales development and marketing. In 2022, Schuessler joined Jackson Physician Search's Midwest Division, where she works exclusively with hospitals, clinics and medical practices in Missouri and Iowa. Born and raised in St. Louis, she understands the culture in these areas and the importance of finding physicians, dentists and advanced practice providers who are an enduring fit for the community. Collaborating closely with a team of Midwest recruiters, Schuessler aims to establish a trusted long-term partnership with clients facing challenges in provider staffing and retention, or those with urgent and critical staffing needs.

**Elly Shaw** is the Director of Quality, Compliance and Risk at Knoxville Hospital and Clinics. As a certified professional in health care quality, Shaw has 12 years of experience in data collection and analysis, process improvement, quality program planning and evaluation. She holds a bachelor's degree in human services from Grandview University and a Master of Science degree in Healthcare Leadership from Waldorf University. Shaw is a member of the Iowa Association for Healthcare Quality.

**Tim Sheley** has devoted his career to addressing the growing needs of the health care community. Sheley's introduction to physician search began 30 years ago, and he has been part of the Jackson Physician Search team since 2003. As Executive Vice President of Business Development, he enjoys contributing to the company's continuous growth in the rapidly evolving health care recruitment marketplace. Leveraging his health care business development expertise at the C-suite level, Sheley frequently shares insights through industry articles and speaking forums, focusing on generating a return on investment in the recruitment and retention of physicians and advanced practice providers.

**Kari Sorenson** is the director of clinical services and quality at Avera Holy Family Hospital in Estherville. Besides quality, Sorenson oversees the medical-surgical and emergency departments, utilization review, social services, compliance, risk and privacy. She received her bachelor's degree in nursing from South Dakota State University and her master's in health administration from Louisiana State University, Shreveport.

**Alex Weber** is an international keynote speaker, award-winning host for NBC and the only person to host and compete on NBC's American Ninja Warrior. Weber helps leaders and organizations be relentless, gain their competitive edge and unlock new levels of achievement.

## REGISTRATION

Register online at [www.ihaonline.org](http://www.ihaonline.org).

- IHA member — \$75
- IHA associate member — \$350
- Pre-conference leadership workshop — \$25

The first 100 registrants will receive a copy of "The Promise of a Pencil: How an Ordinary Person Can Create Extraordinary Change" by Adam Braun - *sponsored by INVISION*.

IHA is limiting registration to one person per associate member company to allow more members to participate in this signature event.

## CONTINUING EDUCATION

**American College of Healthcare Executives-qualified education:** IHA is authorized to award 5.0 hours of preapproved American College of Healthcare Executives-qualified education credit toward advancement or recertification in ACHE. Participants who wish to have the continuing education hours applied toward ACHE-qualified education credit should indicate their attendance when submitting their application to ACHE for advancement or recertification.

The pre-conference leadership workshop is authorized to award 3.0 hours of qualified credits toward ACHE advancement or recertification.

**Hospital board certification:** Board members participating in IHA's Hospital Board Certification Program can earn 5.0 hours of face-to-face education toward certification for the Rural Hospital Leadership Forum.

The pre-conference leadership workshop is authorized to award 3.0 hours of credits toward advancement or recertification in the Hospital Board Certification Program.

**Nursing:** IHA (Iowa Board of Nursing provider No. 4) will award 5.0 nursing contact hours for this conference. Iowa nursing contact hours will not be issued unless you provide your Iowa license number on the day-of-conference certificate. You must attend the entire conference to receive contact hours or a certificate of attendance. IHA will not grant partial credit.

The pre-conference leadership workshop is authorized to award 3.0 nursing contact hours.

## CONFERENCE LOCATION

Hotel Fort Des Moines, 1000 Walnut St., Des Moines. - *Wi-Fi sponsored by Paramount Health Options*

- If you have dietary restrictions or allergies, email [iharegistration@ihaonline.org](mailto:iharegistration@ihaonline.org).
- Dress for the conference is business casual. Layered clothing is recommended for your comfort.
- This is a paperless conference. IHA will email conference materials when available.

## LODGING AND PARKING

IHA has a discounted corporate rate that attendees can use for overnight accommodation. The discounted rate is offered to IHA event attendees on "non-last room" availability, meaning there are times when this rate will not be available because of high demand. Book early if you think you may need arrangements.

### HOTEL FORT DES MOINES

Corporate rate: \$184 per night plus taxes  
515-528-7733

### PARKING - *sponsored by Graham Construction*

Parking is available at the Nationwide Parking Ramp at 1100 Walnut St. IHA will provide validation tickets for ramp parking only.

Other options:

- Valet: \$36 overnight and \$18 per day
- Metered street parking: Use the DSM Park application

## CANCELLATION/REFUND POLICY

- Cancellations and substitutions are welcome anytime. Email cancellations and substitution requests to [iharegistration@ihaonline.org](mailto:iharegistration@ihaonline.org).
- IHA will refund cancellations received 10 or more business days before the conference.
- IHA will charge a \$50 administrative fee to cancellations received six to nine business days before the conference.
- IHA will not refund cancellations received five or fewer business days before the conference.
- IHA will calculate refunds by the date received and the IHA business days remaining before the conference.
- IHA may cancel the conference because of low enrollment. If so, IHA will notify preregistered participants and provide full refunds.

## ADA POLICY

IHA does not discriminate in its educational programs based on race, religion, color, sex or disability. IHA wishes to ensure no one with a disability is excluded, denied services, segregated or treated differently than others because of the absence of auxiliary aids and services. If you need auxiliary aids or services identified in the Americans With Disabilities Act to attend this conference, call IHA at 515-288-1955, or write to the IHA Education Department.

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