

IOWA SOCIETY OF HEALTHCARE ATTORNEYS

May 5



PROGRAM OVERVIEW

As the only statewide organization for health care attorneys, the Iowa Society of Healthcare Attorneys is excited to invite you to its 2026 Spring Conference.

TARGET AUDIENCE

This program is intended for hospital and health care attorneys and compliance professionals.

PROGRAM AGENDA

7:30 a.m. **Registration**

8 a.m. **Welcome, Opening Remarks and Business Meeting**

Becki Brommel, Partner, Dorsey and Whitney, Des Moines, and Abhay Nadipuram, Chief Legal Officer, Iowa Hospital Association, Des Moines

8:15 a.m. **Federal and State Legislative Update**

Sandi Conlin, Contract Lobbyist, Iowa Hospital Association, Des Moines, and Clare Kelly, Chief Government and External Affairs Officer, Iowa Hospital Association, Des Moines

This session will review 2026 state and federal legislative actions and proposals that affect Iowa's hospitals and health systems.

9:15 a.m. **Keynote Panel: The U.S. Attorneys of the Northern and Southern Districts of Iowa – Sponsored by Taft**
Moderator: Pete Deegan, Partner, Taft, and Former U.S. Attorney, Northern District of Iowa, Chicago

Panelists: Leif Olson, U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Iowa, Cedar Rapids, and David Waterman, U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of Iowa, Des Moines

Former U.S. Attorney and Government Investigations Specialist Pete Deegan will moderate a panel discussion with Iowa's two U.S. attorneys. This presentation will address the most-important federal enforcement-related issues facing health care. From opioid and prescription monitoring to enforcement of the federal False Claims Act, panelists will offer insight into how federal law enforcement works in Iowa and elsewhere.

10:15 a.m. **Break – Sponsored by Dentons Davis Brown**

10:30 a.m. **Case Law Update – Sponsored by Finley Law Firm**

Erik Bergeland, Shareholder and Stacie Codr, Shareholder, Finley Law Firm

Case Law Update will review a variety of cases affecting hospitals, including important employment matters, certificate-of-merit decisions, and significant medical malpractice cases. This year, Case Law Update will feature the reversal of a \$97 million medical malpractice verdict in Iowa. Conference registrants will receive summaries of relevant cases.

11:30 a.m. **Lunch**

Noon **General Counsel Panel – Sponsored by Dorsey and Whitney**

Moderator: *Alissa Smith, Partner, Dorsey and Whitney*

Panelists: *Todd Chelf, Executive Vice-President and General Counsel, Great River Health, West Burlington; Ashley Kleemeier, Chief Legal Officer, UnityPoint Health, West Des Moines; and Shari Flowers, General Counsel and Vice President of Compliance, Methodist Health System, Omaha*

This panel discussion will delve into the evolving landscape facing in-house health care general counsel. From navigating regulatory complexities to managing cybersecurity risks, the panel will discuss what worries persist in the minds of general counsels at academic medical centers and hospital systems. Moreover, the panel will explore the expanding role of the general counsel beyond legal matters, engaging in strategic decision-making and advising on nonlegal questions critical to business operations. Despite these responsibilities, concerns arise, particularly about compliance, litigation and alignment with the company's strategic goals. The in-house general counsel continues to be a key strategist, guiding the organization through legal, ethical and operational minefields toward growth and longevity.

1 p.m. **Immigration Policy in Flux: Legal and Operational Impacts on Hospitals and Health Systems**

Beth Carlson, Partner, Faegre Drinker Biddle and Reath, Minneapolis

Federal and state immigration policy and regulations have rapidly evolved during the second Trump administration. This presentation will cover the practical implications of these changes for hospitals and health systems. Carlson will explore how recent changes affect workforce recruitment and retention, patient access and trust, compliance obligations, and interactions with immigration enforcement authorities to offer practical insights into legal risk mitigation, policy development, and operational readiness in an increasingly complex and uncertain immigration environment.

2 p.m. **Break – Sponsored by Husch Blackwell**

2:15 p.m. **AI Session**

Chris Porter, Director, Artificial Intelligence Program, Associate Professor and Co-chair, Department of Mathematics and Computer Science, Drake University, Des Moines; Chris Snider, Associate Professor, Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, Drake University, Des Moines

3:15 p.m. **Legal Ethics: A Review of This Term's Supreme Court Ethics Opinions**

Maggie Hanson, Shareholder and Spencer Willems, Associate, Dentons Davis Brown

During each term, the Iowa Supreme Court issues opinions involving disciplinary actions against Iowa attorneys. This presentation will provide an overview of this term's ethics opinions and offer guidance on how lawyers can remain compliant with Iowa's Rules of Professional Responsibility.

4:15 p.m. **Adjourn**

4:30-6 p.m. **ISHA Reception | JUDGES , 208 Third St., Des Moines – Sponsored by All Sponsors**

SPEAKERS

Erik Bergeland is a shareholder at Finley Law Firm and a trial lawyer focused on the defense of licensed professionals and health care institutions. Bergeland is president-elect of the Iowa Chapter of the American Board of Trial Advocates, a fellow of the Iowa Academy of Trial Lawyers and former president of ISHA.

Beth Carlson has counseled U.S. and international companies on business immigration issues for 25 years and is a recognized leader in complex immigration matters. Carlson takes a pragmatic approach to business immigration. She counsels clients on changes to government policy, including continued heightened scrutiny from government agencies such as U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services and the Department of Labor. Carlson manages immigration matters for Fortune 500 multinational companies and for medium- and small-sized public and private companies. She counsels clients on changes in government policy, including heightened scrutiny of immigration matters following the transition to the Trump administration.

Todd Chelf is executive vice president and general counsel at Great River Health in West Burlington, overseeing corporate governance, regulatory compliance, contract administration, provider compensation and risk management. Before joining Great River Health, Chelf was first assistant county attorney for Des Moines County, where he prosecuted sexually related crimes and other significant felonies. Before his public service, he was a partner in the law firm of Cray, Goddard, Miller, Taylor and Chelf. Chelf earned his bachelor's degree from Marycrest International University and his law degree from Drake University.

Stacie Codr is a shareholder at Finley Law Firm, where she keeps a diverse civil litigation and trial law practice. Codr's practice includes health law, professional liability and malpractice defense, professional licensing, employment law, products and premises liability, personal injury, insurance defense, insurance subrogation and appeals. She dedicates a significant amount of her practice to representing hospitals, physicians, other licensed health care providers and entities in defense of civil litigation, compliance, and in connection with internal and administrative investigations and complaints. Codr received her bachelor's and law degrees from the University of Iowa.

Sandra Conlin is the owner and CEO of Iowa Policy, a government relations consulting firm in West Des Moines. Conlin has worked in public affairs for over 25 years and has been an independent contract lobbyist at the Iowa Legislature for 16 years. She represents IHA at the Iowa State Capitol.

Peter Deegan is a former U.S. attorney and criminal chief for the Northern District of Iowa and is now a partner at Taft. For most of his 22 years with the Department of Justice, Deegan was a federal prosecutor specializing in white-collar and business crimes, including health care offenses. He now practices in compliance, investigations and white-collar defense. Deegan earned his bachelor's degree from the University of Notre Dame and his law degree from Wayne State University.

Shari Flowers is general counsel and vice president of compliance for Methodist Jennie Edmundson. A veteran lawyer with compliance, health care and legal counsel experience, Flowers joined Methodist in 2017, previously providing health care compliance and legal counsel and advice to business partners and corporate leadership. Before joining Methodist, Flowers was vice president of compliance and ethics, chief compliance officer, senior corporate counsel and director of strategic business services at Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska. She is a graduate of the University of Northern Iowa and Creighton University School of Law.

Maggie Hanson focuses on employment litigation, employment practices, liability insurance defense, and daily and strategic advice to employers. Hanson advises and defends employers, managers and human resources professionals in court, mediation, arbitration and administrative forums, including the Iowa Civil Rights Commission, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, Occupational Safety and Health Administration and Iowa Workforce Development. She also advises and counsels employers about minimizing liability and exposure and avoiding litigation by conducting employee training, drafting policies, advising on policy implementation, and reviewing existing policies and procedures for compliance. Hanson received her bachelor's and law degrees from the University of Iowa.

Clare Kelly is IHA's chief government and external affairs officer. Kelly leads the advocacy team's policy development and advocacy strategy at the state and federal levels of government and oversees the association's marketing and communications team. Before joining IHA in August 2023, she was a health policy adviser to Gov. Kim Reynolds and the CEO of the Iowa Medical Society. She spent 12 years in Washington, D.C., working in government affairs and child health policy for children's hospitals. Kelly graduated from the University of Iowa.

Ashley Kleemeier

Leif Olson is the U.S. attorney for the Northern District of Iowa. Before becoming a U.S. attorney, Olson was chief deputy attorney general of Iowa, heading the legal operations of the Iowa Department of Justice under Attorney General Brenna Bird. He previously was a senior policy adviser in the U.S. Department of Labor and the chief of special litigation in the Texas Attorney General's Office. Olson received a bachelor's degree in economics from Trinity University and his law degree from the University of Chicago. He began his legal career as a law clerk to U.S. District Judge Lynn Hughes, then practiced in the private sector for over 15 years. Olson represented clients in state and federal courts of appeals nationwide and tried more than a dozen jury cases and dozens more nonjury cases to final judgment. His work on projects to improve professional education and middle- and high-school curriculum programs has received local, state and national awards. He was director of the Texas Young Lawyers Association, president of the Houston Young Lawyers Association and a director for local chapters of the Federalist Society.

Christopher Porter is the director of Drake University's artificial intelligence program and an associate professor of computer science. Before joining Drake in 2016, Dr. Porter held postdoctoral positions at the University of Paris Diderot and the University of Florida. He received a joint doctorate in mathematics and philosophy in 2012 and an undergraduate degree in mathematics from Gonzaga University in 2003.

Alissa Smith is a partner in Dorsey and Whitney's health group and represents health systems, hospitals, pharmacies, long-term care providers, home health agencies, medical practices, and nonprofit and municipal organizations. Smith's regulatory practice includes interpreting and applying state and federal fraud and abuse laws, Medicare and Medicaid rules, tax-exemption and privacy laws, EMTALA laws, licensing and employment laws, governmental audits and open meeting matters. She also helps with corporate and health system governance issues and hospital-provider relations.

Chris Snider is an associate professor at Drake University. He teaches social media and digital media courses to undergraduate and graduate students. Before joining Drake, Snider was a journalist in Baltimore, St. Louis and Des Moines. He moved to Des Moines in 2005 to start Juice magazine. Snider teaches workshops and presents on topics ranging from social media strategy and personal branding to generative AI. He also writes a weekly email newsletter about new developments in social media.

David Waterman is a U.S. attorney who worked for four years at the U.S. attorney's office for the Middle District of Florida in the appellate and criminal divisions before his appointment. Beginning in 2020, Waterman worked in private practice, focusing on civil litigation, white-collar criminal defense, government regulatory and compliance matters, and appellate advocacy. His legal career began with three federal clerkships for the Southern District of Iowa, the Northern District of Iowa and the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit. Waterman earned a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science summa cum laude and Phi Beta Kappa from The George Washington University Honors Program, where he studied abroad for one academic year at the University of Oxford, a Master of Philosophy in Political Thought and Intellectual History from the University of Cambridge and his law degree from UCLA.

Spencer Willems focuses on general litigation, commercial and criminal defense, and employment and labor law. Willems advises employers on discrimination and other work-related claims and defends them before the Iowa Civil Rights Commission and in court. He also often works with organizations in highly regulated industries, such as health care and higher education, to follow emerging regulations. Willems has experience guiding clients through the remediation process if compliance issues arise. He received his bachelor's degree from the University of Missouri-Columbia and his law degree from Drake University.

REGISTRATION

Register online at www.ihaonline.org | For information about ISHA student membership, email Autumn McGill at mcgilla@ihaonline.org.

- IHA member – \$50
- ISHA member – \$50
- ISHA student member – \$35
- Associate member – \$245
- Non-IHA member – \$245



PROGRAM INFORMATION

IHA Conference Center, 100 E. Grand Ave., Des Moines.

- If you have dietary restrictions or allergies, email iharegistration@ihaonline.org.
- The dress for the conference is business casual. IHA recommends layered clothing for your comfort.
- This is a paperless conference. IHA will email conference materials when available.

CONTINUING EDUCATION

IHA has applied for 7.0 hours of state continuing legal education credits and 1.0 hours of ethics credit in Iowa and Nebraska.

LODGING

IHA offers a discounted corporate rate for overnight accommodation. IHA offers event attendees a discounted rate for “non-last room” availability, meaning it may not be available at times due to high demand. Book early if you think you may need arrangements. When calling, please reference the corporate ID:

[Staybridge Suites Des Moines](#)

Corporate rate: \$139/night plus taxes
515-280-3828
Corporate ID No.: IXNR

[Des Moines AC Marriott East Village](#)

Corporate rate: \$177/night plus taxes
515-518-6060
Corporate ID Code: 3QR

CANCELLATION/REFUND POLICY

- Cancellations and substitutions are welcome anytime. Email cancellations and substitution requests to iharegistration@ihaonline.org.
- IHA will refund cancellations received 10 or more business days before the conference.
- IHA will charge a \$50 administrative fee for cancellations received six to nine business days before the conference.
- IHA will calculate refunds by the date received and the number of IHA business days remaining before the conference.
- IHA will not refund cancellations received five or fewer business days 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 not to exclude, deny services, segregate or treat anyone with a disability differently because of the absence of auxiliary aids and services. If you need auxiliary aids or services found in the Americans With Disabilities Act to attend this conference, call IHA at 515-288-1955 or write to the IHA Education Department.