



January 2021

**BE THE BEST  
VERSION  
OF YOU!**

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## From the Desk of Our President



**Sharese Hogan**

*BCBSM LDA President, 2020-2021*

Greetings BCBSM LDA members,

It's still appropriate to say Happy New Year, right? Well, 2021 is underway...make it happy!

I hope the year has started off well for each of you. As I think about what this year has to offer, I encourage you to consider a few things to improve your personal and professional development:

- Be your best you – take time for self-love and focusing on your well-being.
- Challenge yourself – don't be afraid to take on new opportunities to enhance your KSAs (knowledge, skills and abilities).
- Lead differently – leading has various meanings. 1. Being first place or transcending norms. 2. Guiding others physically and/or mentally. 3. Having a tip or suggestion about a topic or situation.
- Share your knowledge – I know it feels like you're securing your position by being the subject matter expert but being the only person with the full competence in a particular area of interest may cause you to work harder (not smarter) and remove the opportunity for others to help enhance the value of the subject.

When thinking of our theme "Lead Outside the Box", the 2020-2021 executive team planned for a roster of speakers to share the messages of how they each contributed to their respective roles and organizations by leading in one or more ways that were listed above. We've had a diverse selection of speakers share their stories of ingenuity and anomalous leadership, including Tony Michaels (Parade Company), Darcy Kerr (SVP at Emerging Markets), Faith Fowler (Cass Community Social Services – Tiny Homes Detroit and more), Qunita Williamson and Jason Loepp (Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan), Jon Reusch (Keller Williams Realty) and so many others. Presenters like them help inspire professionals like us to do better in our current box, then take a leap to be better outside that box.

As you know, we will remain virtual the remainder of the 2020-2021 BCBSM LDA chapter year. Please use your lunch times to join a Monthly Meeting, BlueNights<sup>SM</sup> Mixer or Professional Development event to continue to hear messages to help you grow, learn and ascend. Watch for emails from the NMA Chapter 141 mailbox to register for future events.

Thanks,

Sharese Hogan,  
2020-2021 President ▪ BCBSM Leadership Development Association ▪ Chapter #141

**BE THE BEST  
VERSION  
OF YOU!**



## New Member Corner

Welcome OUR NEW TEAM MEMBERS



*Sandra Ayotte  
Kenneth Hayward  
Shankar Madhavan  
Enjoli Ray*

*As a member of BCBSM LDA you are now a part of a great group of leaders, striving to live out our theme, "Leading Outside the Box." We encourage you to connect with our members and learn something new about the organization.*



### Member Benefits

- Networking through monthly meetings and mixers
- Professional development through workshops and "lunch and learn" sessions
- Community involvement through events like Bowl for Kids' Sake, walks for cures and causes, Adopt-a-Highway and more!

We have many upcoming events to begin networking and meeting other BCBSM LDA members. Check them out on the *Calendar of Events* page.

We also perform various community involvement services throughout the year. We'd love for you to take part.

For more information about all other upcoming events, please visit BCBSM [LDA's site](#).

**We look forward to seeing you at the next event!**

Get Acquainted

# New Member Spotlight

By Jennifer Pakkala, specialist human performance technology

Lori Aronson is a woman on the move, most of the time by design...and sometimes a bit by chance.

"I wasn't looking for a new role," Lori said of her joining Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan in October 2020 as the vice president of the newly created Care Delivery Solutions department, which focuses on new and different approaches to outcomes-based reimbursement.

Lori had always worked on the provider side of health care administration, most recently at a company that helps health systems in their transition to value-based reimbursement. However, the pandemic made it challenging for her company, as hospitals had more pressing concerns.

"It would have been a hard move to make if I hadn't experienced the culture (at Blue Cross)," she said. "The feeling I get is everyone tries to support each other, and everyone is very genuinely pleasant. It's nice to be mission-focused and work collaboratively across departments with genuine support across the organization."

When she's not at work being passionate about getting win-wins for payers and providers—and ultimately patients—you'll find her being active one way or another every day.

"I walk, ride my Peloton, jog and I've even done triathlons and marathons," Lori said from her sit-stand office in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Once the restrictions of the pandemic lift, Lori will be on the move again, this time to relocate near her Detroit-based office.

## Lori Aronson



### More about Lori



*The Aronson family*

- Her family includes her husband, Eric, two sons, a daughter and two pups.
- If Lori weren't in health care administration, she could see herself as a hotel bartender. "I'd get to meet and talk to people from all over the world, I'd be moving throughout my shift, and since it's a hotel, it's not the typical crazy bar scene."
- She prefers traveling to "anywhere with a beach" for warmth and relaxation, and favorite destinations include Belize and Hawaii.
- Lori and Eric love watching TV dramas like "Breaking Bad" and "Ozark" together.



*Lori's dogs meet for the first time*

# NMA 2020 Board of Directors Nominations

BCBSM LDA Chapter 141 Members,

BCBSM Leadership Development Association is now accepting nominations to fill six outgoing board of director positions.

As a reminder, in July 2020, Blue Cross' two National Management Association chapters became a single, united chapter to develop leaders throughout the enterprise. With that, we are looking for nominations from every corner of our membership with the goal of having representation from all regions on the board.

- Three positions will serve the board for a three-year term
- Two positions will serve the board for a one-year term
- One position will serve the board for a one-year term (elected At-Large Director)

The BCBSM LDA Board of Directors encourages you to consider serving or nominating someone to serve your fellow BCBSM LDA members while gaining an invaluable rewarding experience of serving on the board of the second largest chapter nationwide. Our chapter has earned prestigious awards due to:

- Numerous community involvement events
- Networking opportunities of learning leadership skills
- Lunch and learn sessions with highly recognized industry professionals
- Bi-monthly mixers that are ever more creative
- Sponsoring a speech contest for young leaders
- Award winning communications like *blueprint*
- And above all, serving BCBSM LDA members with unprecedented commitment to help our members grow professionally

While the most important qualifications to become a BCBSM LDA Board of Director includes confidence, dedication, and commitment to serving our members, the Chapter bylaws require that eligible candidates meet the following qualifications:

- 1) Must be a member of the BCBSM Leadership Development Association.
- 2) Must have served as a committee chairperson or vice president for at least one year prior to taking office as a board member.

## At-Large Director:

- 1) Must be a current member of the BCBSM Leadership Development Association for at least two years.
- 2) Must have participated in the last 12 months in a minimum of two chapter sponsored activities. Activities may include the following but are not limited to these events. A variation of these events is preferred:
  - Monthly meeting
  - Networking event
  - Volunteer event
  - Professional development course
  - Volunteered on a committee
- 3) Must fully demonstrate the leadership competencies by delivering results, leading people, and building for the future. For additional details reference the Human Resources Leadership Competency Framework.

We encourage all potential candidates to seek approval from their leadership since it involves time commitment to participate in monthly meetings and other related activities. You may nominate yourself, or a qualified BCBSM LDA member to run for the available positions on the board.

 [CLICK HERE TO EMAIL YOUR NOMINATION](#)

**The deadline for nominations is Friday, February 12, 2021.**

If you have any questions regarding the process, please contact Mitchell Pike [MPike@bcbsm.com](mailto:MPike@bcbsm.com) or Karema Bobbitt [KBobbitt@bcbsm.com](mailto:KBobbitt@bcbsm.com).

For full details regarding board responsibilities, see [Article IV, section 2 of the Bylaws](#) found on the chapter website.



# Leading from the outside

By David Shelby Jr. – coordinator

Leading outside the box. This idea I was tasked with expounding on caused me to pause and think. What lead Dr. King to thinking outside of the box. It was clear he was a visionary, but you had to understand the process in which he went through to get to that point.

If you know anything about Dr. Martin Luther King Jr you understand the necessity of that level of thinking. He was going to be a Baptist minister and a leader in the Civil Rights Movement during a time when the country was heavily divided. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. literally lived the idea of leading outside of the box. His educational background for a young black man is in stark contrast to the negative portrayals of black men regarding their education of that time and today.

It is believed that you graduate high school at age 18 and college at the age of 22. A standard educational practice that has you in the white-collar workforce still relatively young. Dr. King found himself graduating high school at the tender age of 15. The age that most high school aged males are when they are freshman. He finished his bachelor's degree from Morehouse College at the age of 19, the age of the average freshman male in college. He attended Boston University where he would earn his doctoral degree at age 26. That was after a few years in seminary school. That is unquestionably impressive and placed him in a position of leadership and respect within the black community just based on his academics alone. Even more so in the church in which he preached. He took a non-traditional route to get an education at the highest level that would be tested by the short life he lived.

This practice would be commonplace for Dr. King. His approach to civil rights became controversial because of its optics. He chose a non-violent route. This was unpopular with other Black leaders who found the approach impractical and weak. The non-violent approach required Dr. King as a leader to think outside the box to successfully operate change within the community and the nation. He had to choose a method that was outside of the box because the "box" he and the Black community was placed in was flawed and designed for them to suffer and fail. In order to achieve victory thinking differently or outside of the box was required. He had to trust in ways that he had never done before. It required for a young pastor to have a confident display of faith for the world to see.

That ability to recognize the box that his community was placed in required a level of thinking that traditional education was not providing. It was intentional because the box the community was in was meant to contain and keep the country segregated. At each turn Dr. King was given an opportunity to be violent and to be typical but instead he continued with his non-violent approach. Taking physical abuse from the police, being locked in jail and constant calls on the phone from FBI agents attempting to tame Dr. King into getting in line, ideologically going back into his box, remaining dedicated to their cause and their willingness to think in a way that is not traditional if what they needed was nontraditional results.



# 2021 New Year Resolutions from the BCBSM LDA Leadership Team

The New Year is traditionally the time for resolutions. Hence, the calendar brings the opportunity to reflect on the past 12 months and the chance to plan for the upcoming year. The new year provides us with the opportunity to start off with a clean slate full of optimism and hope. BCBSM LDA Leadership President Sharese Hogan and members of the Vice President Team share their thoughts and discuss their respective 2021 resolutions!

## BCBSM LDA President Sharese Hogan

Welcome to a NEW YEAR and I am hopeful it will be positive and productive!

I have some amazing goals for 2021, mostly focused on Personal Wellness.

I would love to get back to me. For me, this means that I will work to be the best *me* mentally, emotionally and physically. 2020 drained me, partially because of the many grieving moments in the society around us and partially because I spent a lot of time giving energy to the people around me. So, getting back to me will allow me to LOVE ON ME a little more and that self-love will spill over to the many different areas of my life.

I wish you all a great 2021!



## Vice President of Public Relations-Erica Addison



The drama and trauma of 2020 has reinforced my desire and need to become more intentional with

appreciating my life and others in 2021. My resolution in 2021 is to consistently journal and write down something that I am thankful for daily. This will enhance my appreciation of the many blessings in my life. Everyone let's challenge ourselves to shift our thought patterns and assess resolution as a chance to add something positive versus the need to refrain from doing something bad.

## Vice President of Awards and Recognition-Joslynn Collins

This year I didn't make any New Year resolutions or create any vision boards, this year is all about action and execution. If I want to shed a few pounds or decide to take a trip, I will prepare and act. If 2021 has already taught anything, it's that it's, much like 2020, a real force. Planning is always great but a lot of beautiful things happen in the spur of a moment. My action for 2021 is to simply get it done. Procrastination is the laziest action word of all.





# 2021 New Year Resolutions from the BCBSM LDA Leadership Team *(continued)*

## Vice President of Professional Development-Charles Schultz

Normally I don't do New Year's resolutions, but since 2020 has been a year like no other, I decided I would make one for 2021. My resolution is to continue to push myself to grow. This is a very broad resolution, but there are many ways that I can grow both personally and professionally. As a professional I will continue to focus getting comfortable being uncomfortable. By putting yourself out there, you open new opportunities. In the new normal, it is important to adapt, reach out, and not become complacent.



## Vice President of Program Administration-Heidi Saucier



For the past few years, I have chosen a word to focus on for the year. This year, my word is realignment. As I've navigated through the adventures of 2020, I realize that there are areas where I need to get back on track or need to take off pause. Some are related to realigning my healthy

habits, others are related to revisiting some professional development opportunities that I had to put off due to COVID-19. I'm excited that I will be able to keep moving forward and head in the right direction!

## Vice President of Finance-Ann Charlick



With the new year comes new year resolutions. Personally, I resolve to practice a consistent exercise program and keep it a top priority. Professionally, I resolve to continue to learn and develop the skills I use in the various tasks I perform, both as a volunteer and as an employee. I wish all of you a prosperous and edifying 2021.



# CALENDAR of EVENTS

February  
10

## Morning Coffee Break with BCBSM LDA

8:00 – 9:00 a.m.

This will be our second morning coffee session, hosted by the BCBSM LDA Professional Development Committee. We will be featuring breakout rooms to facilitate dialogue over a morning cup of coffee.



[Link to register](#)

February  
16

## February Monthly Member Virtual Meeting

12:00 – 1:00 p.m.

### Speaker:

Kathryn Levine, President and CEO, Blue Care Network and Vice President, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan.

Join us 15 minutes before the meeting for a time of virtual networking! Watch your email for more details!



[Link to register](#)

February  
24

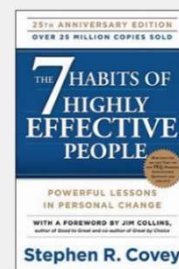
## BCBSM LDA Book Club Meeting

12:00 – 1:00 p.m.

We'll be starting our discussion of Habit 5: Seek first to understand, and then to be understood.

### Facilitator:

Charles Schultz, BCBSM LDA VP of Professional Development



[Link to register](#)

## Coming in March: Save the date!

### March 31: BCBSM LDA Annual Speech Contest

4:30 p.m.

Watch your email for registration details.

## 2020 Monthly Member Meeting Overview

By Michelle Banaszak, communication specialist

Even though we couldn't meet in person in 2020, we still had the opportunity to hear from several great leaders through our virtual Monthly Member Meetings. These leaders truly know what it means to lead outside the box.

~~Think~~ Outside  
Lead



In September, we welcomed Tony Michaels, President and CEO of The Parade Company. He attributes a lot of his success to his team. "A career doesn't happen without a team. It happens when the team thinks freely and isn't afraid to bring their ideas, it's thinking out of the box." Tony's advice for thinking outside the box is to not be afraid. He said, "Leaders want to know what you have to say, they want you to contribute and be a part of the team."

In October, our guest speaker was Olga Stella, Executive Director of Design Core Detroit. She spoke about the challenges of dealing with really hard work. She suggested using several strategies to take on these challenges: A little planning can go a long way, find balance by defining the problem you're trying to solve and focus on building relationships. Keep it simple. Plans that are too complicated typically don't get done. Lastly, tell your story and make it resonate.

In November, Darcy Kerr, Senior Vice President of Emergent Holdings talked about leading during a crisis. Especially through the pandemic, we've all had to work outside our comfort zones. She said, "Leadership is best defined by not only your ability to lead others, but your ability to adapt the ways in which you lead." Everything that is planned can change, so we must remain flexible.

We closed 2020 with our December guest speaker, Reverend Faith Fowler, Executive Director of Cass Community Social Services, Pastor of Cass Community United Methodist Church in Detroit. Rev. Fowler shared stories of how she's thought outside the box throughout her career, including fundraising for Cass Community, creating jobs for the homeless in Detroit, helping clean up the environment and starting the "Tiny Homes" program.

We're so thankful we were able to hear from these fantastic leaders and look forward to advice from new speakers at future Monthly Member Meetings in 2021. Remember to check your email and keep an eye on our Upcoming Events page in coming issues of *blueprint* for specific dates, times, speakers and topics.





# PD Exchange

## The informal leader

*By Kaitlyn Bradley, Management Week Chairperson & PD Exchange Author*

Most of us have a “go-to” coworker; that person who always seems to have the answer you’re looking for. Even when they don’t know the answer, they know exactly where to look or who to ask. Many times, this person is not your direct leader. Perhaps they are the administrative assistant, or an analyst. Maybe you are this person.

Have you ever wondered how that person became your “go-to”? If they don’t hold a position of power, how do they have all the information and seem to have influence on those around them?

An informal leader is a person who has established great rapport with their coworkers, often seen as credible, trustworthy, knowledgeable, and influential. An informal leader doesn’t hold a position of power but is skilled in leading up and leading across.

Being an informal leader can help you develop your skills before you hold a management position. Informal leadership presents an excellent opportunity to showcase your abilities to influence those around you, especially amongst the complex structure of corporate hierarchies.



Here are some tips for improving your informal leadership skills:



**Foster relationships, old and new** – Maintaining strong relationships with colleagues across the organization can be extremely helpful when trying to quickly gather information. But remember that maintaining relationships requires frequent contact and two-way trust building.



**Be an early adopter** – Learn about new technologies and processes. Embrace the new and bring your knowledge and excitement back to your team. Never stop learning.



**Be part of the solution, not the problem** – Instead of complaining about something to your coworkers, use your energy to problem solve. Present your ideas to your leader and your team to demonstrate initiative and creative thinking.



**Stay humble** – You’re never going to know everything. Admit when you don’t know the answer, or when you’re wrong. Be willing to learn new things.



**Communicate clearly** – You can demonstrate skills such as critical thinking and attention to detail by writing emails that are clear and concise, based on facts, and error-free. Improve your credibility by removing emotions and opinions from communications.

Being an informal leader can have a significant impact on your career development, especially if you aspire to be a formal leader. However, these skills won’t come easy. You must put in the work to reap the rewards. Spend a little bit of time each week thinking about how you can be an effective informal leader. Apply the tips presented in this article, and you will be an informal leader in no time!

## BCBSM LDA Code of Ethics

- I will recognize that all individuals inherently desire to practice their occupations to the best of their ability.
- I will assume that all individuals want to do their best.
- I will maintain a broad and balanced outlook and will recognize value in the ideas and opinions of others.
- I will be guided in all my activities by truth, accuracy, fair dealing and good taste.
- I will keep informed on the latest developments in techniques, equipment, and process. I will recommend or initiate methods to increase productivity and efficiency.
- I will support efforts to strengthen the management profession through training and education.
- I will help my associates reach personal and professional fulfillment.
- I will earn and carefully guard my reputation for good moral character and good citizenship.
- I will promote the principles of our American Enterprise System to others, by highlighting its accomplishments and displaying confidence in its future.
- I will recognize that leadership is a call to service.

## Statement of Principles

BCBSM LDA is dedicated to managerial excellence, personal and professional growth, and leadership development. The following principles identify BCBSM LDA's core beliefs and provide the basis for the Association's Mission Statement.

- We believe in the highest standards of personal and organizational integrity and respect for the individual.
- We believe in lifelong learning, continuous improvement, and the development of a workforce capable of sustaining a competitive posture in the global economy.
- We believe management is a creative, dynamic, and essential process enabling people to achieve personal and organizational objectives.
- We believe that managerial responsibility is shared among all individuals at all levels of the organization and that leadership is critical to management success.
- We believe that individuals and organizations have a community and civic responsibility.

## blueprint team

Writers: Barbara Krajenke, Michelle Banaszak, Ju Fonda Overton, Jennifer Pakkala, David Shelby Jr.  
 Designer: Carena Freeman  
 Photographers: Christina Frison, Michelle Banaszak, Ju Fonda Overton  
 Dustin Freeze, Internet public domain  
 Website: <https://nma1.org/141/>

## BCBSM LDA Board Officers

Board Chair: TBD  
 President: Sharese Hogan  
 President-Elect: Ronnie Adams

## Board Members

Leonard Alford III  
 Dana Bartell  
 Corrie Beaverson  
 Dana Bell  
 Karema Bobbitt  
 Christina Frison  
 Vaneitta Goines  
 Jennifer Pakkala  
 Mitchell Pike  
 Angela Tanner

## Board Secretary

Christina Frison

## Chapter Representatives

National Director: Matthew Zelman  
 Lifetime National Director: Nancy Bennett  
 Lifetime National Director: Cathy Longo

## Executive Advisors

Sharon Gipson  
 Jim Kallas  
 Darrell E. Middleton

## BCBSM LDA Officers

VP of Public Relations: Erica Addison  
 VP of Finance: Ann Charlick  
 VP of Awards and Recognition: Joslynn Collins  
 Regional Director: Dana Johnson  
 VP of Program Administration: Heidi Saucier  
 VP of Professional Development: Charles Schultz

## NMA National Mission Statement

NMA offers leadership development products and opportunities that maximize the potential of our members, sponsoring organizations and communities.