



June 2021



From the desk of our president 2
Reflecting on a year of success

Juneteenth 3
Why we should celebrate it

New member corner 4
Information on member benefits and how to get involved

New member spotlight 5
Meet one of our new members, Angie Fisher

Celebrating Asian American and Pacific Islander heritage 6
Extending the AAPI May celebration

Calendar of events 7
Upcoming BCBSM LDA events

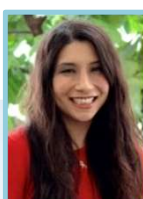
Member monthly meeting 8
Diversity and leadership

HBCU mixer experience 9
Learning more about HBCUs

Fatherhood and Speech Contest 10
Fatherhood and career and trophy pics

Celebrating Pride Month 11
Learn more about our LGBTQ+/ally ERNs

PD exchange 12
Certified manager or supervisor course





From the Desk of Our President



Sharese Hogan

BCBSM LDA President, 2020-2022

Greetings BCBSM LDA Members:

What a year for our BCBSM LDA Membership – a year like none other.

- We successfully executed a full virtual chapter year with amazing programming and events.
- We navigated our first year as a One Blue LDA Chapter, after our merger with the BCBSM NMA Chapter 145.
- We collaborated with the Employee Resource Networks for numerous events. *Thank you to BlueActs, YPN, Multi-Cultural Network and POWER.*
- We held our first virtual Management Week with over 450 attendees participating.

There have been so many successes, that I cannot list them all; but I can say that they were not possible without a few amazing people. To the current VP Team, this year of virtual learning could not have been accomplished without you. *Thank you to Erica Addison, Ann Charlick, Joslynn Collins, Dana Johnson, Heidi Saucier and Charlie Schultz!* You all have done a remarkable job during the 2020-2021 team year, truly embodying our theme by

leading outside the box. I'm excited to see what's next for you on your Blue Cross organization and BCBSM LDA journey. Congrats again to Heidi and Erica as they transition to the BCBSM LDA Board of Directors.

To the incoming VPs, I'm excited to serve my second term as BCBSM LDA President with you. Let's make the 2021-2022 program year fun, insightful, educational and new. Please help me welcome Ta-Tanisha Baldwin (VP of Finance), Kaitlyn Bradley (VP of Professional Development), Sarah Cheaito (VP of Program Administration), Carla Harris (VP of Awards and Recognition), and Terrance Puryear (VP of Public Relations).

To the BCBSM LDA Board of Directors, many of you are serving your final term, I thank you for your support and wish we wish you all the best.

To our members, thanks for being a part of this year. Your level of engagement is unmatched; except how much you will be involved this coming program year. 😊

Please remember to register for our final meeting and hear from one the biggest BCBSM LDA supporters, Daniel J. Loepp. He will address the membership during our Annual Meeting on June 21.

Again, what a year with more great things to come!

In Service,

Sharese Hogan, 2020-2022 President ▪
BCBSM Leadership Development Association ▪
Chapter #141

Things are
about to
get really
good.

Juneteenth and why we should celebrate it

by David Shelby Jr., team coordinator



Freedom Day, Jubilee Day, Liberation Day and Emancipation Day. All these titles make up a common shared holiday and historical moment. They represent Juneteenth. Juneteenth is a celebration of the enslaved who were freed in the United States. Over the past few years, the holiday has garnered more and more attention. There is a desire within segments of the Black American community to make Juneteenth, or June 19, a national holiday. After all, the name of the holiday means freedom and what better place to celebrate freedom than in the land of the free and the home of the brave.

What happened to the early celebratory nature of Freedom Day and cause for the holiday to not be celebrated within the Black Community? One of the primary factors that caused the day to lose its community involvement was segregation. There were many black families who wanted to assimilate into mainstream culture and were ashamed of their slave past. Those families also found it difficult to not only find work, let alone find the ability to take the day off to celebrate it. More recently the holiday has gained national attention outside of the Black community. It became a recognized United States holiday by the company Apple Inc. in 2018. Twitter, Nike, and the National Football League added the day to be a recognized holiday that was a paid off day. Google Calendar added Juneteenth to its list of US Holidays.

As a Black American, I recognize the importance and the need for the holiday. Often in this country Black Americans are never fully recognized for their contributions to it. Juneteenth is an exclusive holiday that openly says that at one point that black people in the country were made to suffer the unspeakable horror that is slavery. All the damages that have been done to their lives were made to end. That is certainly worth celebrating and highlighting, especially since there is a need to correct the past injustices that many Black Americans can still feel the sting from and look forward to the future. A national holiday to recognize our freedom stands as a reminder that we have the rights and privileges of this country just like everyone else. A day to remind to the country that we are all truly equal.

New Member Corner

OUR NEW TEAM MEMBERS

Welcome



*Cassandra Alston-Childs
Timika Ambrose
Veronica Beasley-Robinson
Elizabeth Bowman
Kara Coughlin
Peter Hatz
Kendra Hobbs
Christine Horne
Maya Jetter
Jessica Kauffmann
Christopher Kelley
Josefina Kristic
Lakeshia Knox
Austin McGuire
Joe Mims
Rita Olejniczak
Floretta Watson*

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 Michelle Banaszak, communication specialist

As someone who works on the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan newsletter, *Blues News Direct*, it was a little strange for our new member, Angie Fisher, to be the interviewee and not the interviewer. Angie is the manager of Corporate Affairs at Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan.

Before coming to work for Blue Cross in 2013, Angie used her journalism degree from Central Michigan University to work for a variety of newspapers and magazines. Unfortunately, the world of journalism is ever-changing with cutbacks and layoffs, and Angie was hoping to find something more permanent. That's when a friend told her about an opening at Blue Cross, and Angie accepted the position of a writer for *Blues News Direct*.

Eight years later, Angie has worked her way up from writer to manager. She helps manage communications for the workforce, special projects and employee campaigns, director-level conferences and more. "Since I started with the company, I've learned a lot. Helen [Stojic] has been a great mentor, and I have a great team that's helped me out along the way. I was just a reporter with writing experience, and now I'm a manager. I've grown in decision-making abilities and this leadership role has made me more confident."

When discussing leadership characteristics, Angie mentioned the importance of good communication, especially when it comes to decision making. "If a leader is open about challenges and decisions, that's important and helps build trust." As a manager, she feels like a bigger contributor in the company than when she was a writer. But she now knows that her role is to do what's best for the company, which doesn't always benefit one individual. That's why communication is key.

Angie Fisher



Angie and her family at Smale Riverfront Park in Cincinnati

Angie's favorite part about working for Blue Cross is that every day is different. She's never stayed at a company this long and says eight years has flown by. "The complexity of our business keeps things interesting. We have different challenges every day, opportunities to learn new things, and that expands my skills and keeps me on my toes."

In addition to joining BCBSM LDA, Angie is also a member of Active Blue and Young Professional Network. She gets the chance to attend a lot of events to cover them for *Blues News Direct*, and she always leaves feeling inspired and energized. She even recently ran the virtual Active Blue 5k, which had over 800 participants! Speaking of running, Angie's favorite thing to do outside of work is exercise.

A little more about Angie

- She enjoys spending time with her husband, Dave, and two children, Gwen and James
- Because her husband is an excellent cook, her favorite place to eat is at home
- She'd love to travel anywhere in Europe, but especially Paris
- Her favorite show is *Gilmore Girls* – she likes to go back and re-watch it
- Her mom also used to work for Blue Cross



Celebrating

ASIAN AMERICAN & PACIFIC ISLANDER HERITAGE MONTH

by Barbara Krajenke, communications specialist

In May we celebrated Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month. We interviewed two panelists, from the ERN event held in April, the *Xenophobia in the Asian American and Pacific Islander Community*. Kaylan Matsumoto, Senior Project Manager Consultant at Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan and Alice Pau, Business Consultant at CompWest Insurance share their thoughts.



Kaylan Matsumoto



Alice Pau

What Asian American or Pacific Islander figure inspires you the most?

Kaylan: Growing up, I always admired [Kristi Yamaguchi](#). There wasn't many Japanese-American public figures that were popular when I was younger, so it was inspiring to see her become an Olympic figure skater – it gave me something to relate to, especially since she was Japanese and "looked like me."

Alice: All the people who have come before us and paved the way for us to have a better life. Especially my parents who came to America with out much money or knowledge of the language. They worked tirelessly to achieve a better life for our family.

What is a fact about Asian American and Pacific Islander history that may not be known to our readers?

Kaylan: My Great Uncle George was a member of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, during World War II, an Army unit comprised of American born sons of Japanese immigrants and Nisei or second-generation Japanese Americans. "[Go For Broke](#)" was their motto as they needed to put everything on the line to "win big." They were fighting two wars: the war against the Germans in Europe and the war against racial prejudice in America. The Combat Team was the [most decorated unit for its size and length of service](#), in the entire history of the US Military, including seven Presidential Unit Citations.

Alice: There are likely many facts about Asian American and Pacific Islander history that our readers may not be aware of. It's an important part of our history and we need to educate our youth of this heritage and history.



What does Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month mean to you?

Kaylan: I hold a lot of respect for my elders, especially considering what Japanese Americans endured during WWII. Being a yon-sei (fourth generation) Japanese American woman, keeping the Japanese traditions and cultures is extremely important for me. My family, both the Matsumoto and Nakamura sides, have interesting histories tracing back to Japan, so knowing those stories and traditions to continue for future generations from what I've learned from my grandma, aunts, and uncles is important to me.

Alice: A time to celebrate, educate and honor Asian American and Pacific Islander cultures. One way we can all celebrate is to read a book to educate ourselves about the history of another this culture or watch a documentary. Support AAPI owned businesses and learn about ways you can fight violence and racism against the AAPI community.

Alice shares some Asian American and Pacific Islander history:



➤ 1763 – [First recorded settlement of Filipinos in America](#). To escape imprisonment aboard Spanish galleons they jump ship in New Orleans and flee into the bayous of Louisiana.

➤ 1790 – [First recorded arrival of South Asians in the United States](#).



➤ 1847 - Three Chinese students arrive in New York City for schooling. One of them, [Yung Wing](#), graduates from Yale in 1854 and becomes the first Chinese graduate from a US college.

➤ 1896 - [Bubonic plague scare in Honolulu](#) - Chinatown burned.

➤ 1964 - [Patsy Takemoto Mink](#) becomes first Asian American woman to serve in Congress as the representative from Hawaii.



CALENDAR of EVENTS

June
21

June Monthly Member Meeting
12:00 p.m.

Keynote Speaker: Daniel J. Loepp, President and CEO
of Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan

[Link to register](#)



June
26

Earthworks Urban Farm Program
9:00 – 11:00 a.m.

Earthworks is a community-based farm, seeking to build a more sustainable fresh food system and maintain a connection to the environment. Volunteers are needed help with various tasks such as weeding, harvesting, garden bed prepping, planting, and general garden maintenance.

Registration: Link will be provided to the first six people to submit interest to jherrington@bcbsm.com.



Monthly Member Meeting – Diversity and Leadership

By Ju Fonda Overton, analyst



Vincent Kirkwood

Vincent Kirkwood, Senior Director of Diversity & Inclusion at MRA Experimental Marketing, was our presenter for the May Monthly Member Meeting. He started off by giving up some true nuggets on how to lead by looking outward.

Vincent teaches teams how to deal with diversity in the workplace and amongst others. He stated that first and foremost is the understanding that everyone is different. He said that we must view the current situation and try to see where we can go. We must be the leader that we want. We must be trustworthy and honest. That will help our team to trust us.

A good leader develops their employees. This could start with making sure that the work environment is inclusive, a safe place where everyone's voice matters and practices fairness.

Diversity means that we're all different, but we all deserve to receive respect. When we respect each other and understand that we're all different, that's when we learn to be inclusive.

Leaders must put themselves in the shoes of their employees to understand what they're trying to tell them. It's impossible to have empathy for anyone if you can't place yourself in their position.

Everyone has opportunity to show inclusivity within the workplace. For example, understanding that people may have different religious beliefs than you do. However, we should respect their beliefs. Another way to show inclusiveness is empowering employees to speak their mind and that what they say matters by asking for their input on a particular situation. When employees feel that they matter they tend to be more accountable at work.

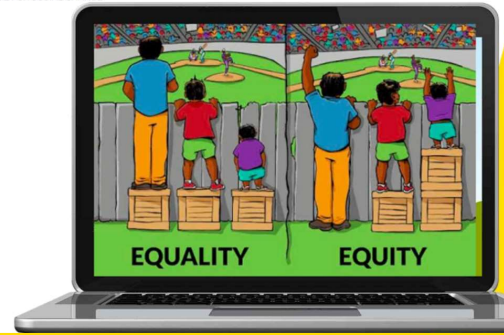
Four Characteristics of Inclusivity:

- All employees feel respected
- All employees experience a sense of belonging
- All employees are empowered to contribute to the process
- All employees have a fair chance of progressing their careers

Click this [link](#) to view the meeting.

Equity vs. Equality | Fairness

Source: ANGUS MAGUIRE // INTERACTION INSTITUTE FOR SOCIAL CHANGE



Inclusivity: Am I Welcome Here?



Not just creating ways to allow all a chance, but giving them what's needed to thrive

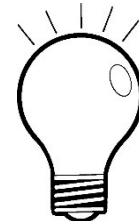


Inclusion: Bringing in traditionally excluded individuals/groups in a way that shares power.



Our goal as leaders is to provide an experience that frees people from making unnecessary efforts to belong and prove the workplace is a safe base for being heard and appreciated.

"Being different is my superpower"



BCBSM LDA 2021 Virtual Mixer: HBCU experience

by David Shelby Jr., team coordinator



Qunita Wilson

You may be wondering what is an HBCU. The term HBCU is an acronym short for Historically Black College and University. You may think why was there a need for a separate school for Black American students? Black American students were not afforded the same opportunities as their white counterparts. There were schools and universities that did not accept black students simply because of their race, if they wanted to further their education, they had to attend an HBCU.



The mixer represented several HBCUs, including:

[Bennett College](#)

[Howard University](#)

[Central State University](#)

[Jackson State University](#)

[Florida A&M](#)

[Wilberforce University](#)

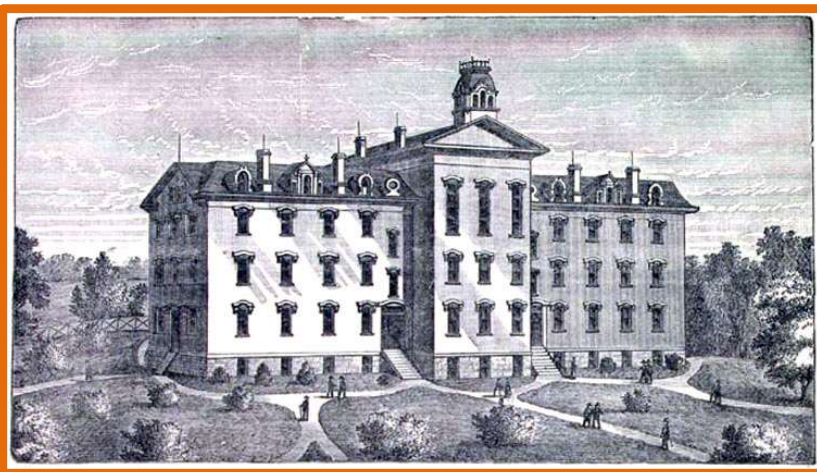
[Hampton University](#)

The speaker, Qunita Wilson, Director of State Accounts at Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, spoke of her remarkable experience at Jackson State. The amazing people that HBCU's produce often become leaders in corporations, schools, and government, like our own Madame Vice President Kamala Harris of Howard University. It's worth mentioning that a quarter of the students that attend HBCUs are not black students. Many of these schools are extremely diverse and have many cultures represented.

The mixer also included a fun game where we split up into teams and played a questionnaire about how much we knew about a particular HBCU.

The mixer provided those of us who did not attend an HBCU to learn a portion of their history and experience the tremendous pride and community of those who attended developed over the years.

Click on this [link](#) to view the mixer.



**The First Black Owned and Operated HBCU
Wilberforce University circa 1885.**

Photo credit: African American Odyssey, Daniel A.P. Murray Pamphlet Collection. Founded in 1856, Wilberforce University was established near Xenia, Ohio as a joint venture between the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME) and the Methodist Episcopal Church.
<https://hbculifestyle.com/first-black-owned-hbcu/>

BCBSM LDA panel discussion – balancing fatherhood and career

By Barbara Krajenke, communications specialist

Since on June 20 we'll be celebrating Father's Day, this is a great issue to put a recap of the panel discussion, *Balancing Fatherhood and Career*. Fathers are a pillar of love and strength when it comes to raising and supporting a family. They help us feel secure and teach us how to navigate the world. We wanted to find out how some of you balance your job and being a dad. The panel discussion hosted by Sarah Cheaito and Candice Brock, delved into this topic with four panelists: Jason Thomas, Dr. Faris K. Ahamad, Antwon Griffith and Devin Scott. The panelists gave insight into their experiences about balancing being a father and their career. They all had a common thread, that their career choices revolved around being a dad. They chose career paths that would allow them a life and work balance to be a dad and provide their kids with a good life and opportunities.



2021 BCBSM LDA Youth Leadership Speech Contest

In March we held our BCBSM LDA Chapter 141 Annual Speech Contest via Zoom.

The placing contestants received their trophies and sent us their pics with them to celebrate their hard work. We'd like to again extend congratulations to the winners and all the talented contestants.



1st Place: Jayanti Gupta



2nd Place: Saket Kulkarni



3rd Place: Shivangi Bhatt

Celebrating Pride Month



by Michelle Banaszak, communication specialist

In honor of Pride Month, we spoke with the co-chairs from EMPOWR, Jeff Lynch and Alexis Clark. EMPOWR is an ERN through Emerging Markets (Equally Blue is the similar ERN through Blue Cross) and a safe space for allies and those who identify as LGBTQ+ to discuss issues relevant to the LGBTQ+ cause. These networks aim to create a culture of inclusion, promote the professional development and support the existing and future diverse workforce.

What is your favorite thing about Pride Month?

Jeff: Chicago's Pride Parade. It's a spectacular event in June which attracts several hundreds of thousands of people every year. I generally prefer to march in the parade with the Chicago Gay Men's Chorus.

Alexis: That it symbolizes being your true authentic self. I love the support that Pride Month receives, not only from the LGBTQ+ community, but also from its allies. I think that bringing awareness to the struggles within this community is important, but so is celebrating all the accomplishments and positive things happening around the world.

Are there any events this month you'd like to suggest to our readers?

Jeff: My hometown of Evanston, Illinois is holding their first Pride event ever this year in June. Many suburbs around the country are having "drive by" Pride events, where neighbors decorate their cars or yards and wave their Pride flags. Keep an eye out in your state for local celebrations.

Alexis: June Trivia with the EMPOWR network will be a lot of information about the Trans community, and our upcoming membership meeting on June 28. I would also suggest looking within your community for upcoming Pride events or ways to become a better ally in helping the LGBTQ+ community.

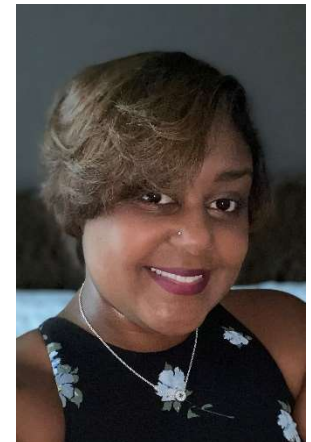
Do you have a favorite event you've attended in the past to celebrate Pride?

Jeff: Atlanta Pride, which is in November, remains my favorite Pride event. My husband is from Georgia and we still have friends there we like to meet up with to go to the parade and post-parade festival.

Alexis: Last year, we held an event called Safe Space for Curious Questions. This event embodied the entire meaning of what EMPOWR stands for. We want to be a place where people can feel safe and be curious while maintaining respectful conversations within the workplace.



Jeff Lynch



Alexis Clark



To get more information or to join EMPOWR, you can visit The Source on the Emerging Markets homepage, under Human Resources, then click on [Diversity & Inclusion](#) to see the list of ERNs.

To get more information or to join Equally Blue, visit BluesLink and click on [Inclusion & Diversity](#), then click on Connect. Engage. Impact. to see the list of ERNs.

PD Exchange

Advance your career through the Certified Manager or Certified Supervisor Certification Program

By Kaitlyn Bradley, Management Week chairperson



Are you looking to take the next step towards leadership and strengthen your managerial skills? If so, you might be interested in the Certified Manager or Certified Supervisor development programs from [The Institute of Certified Professional Managers](#).

The National Management Association has been collaborating with The International Management Council since 1974 to provide learning opportunities that explore key attributes of a professional manager and promote the recognition of management as a profession.

The [Certified Manager](#) certification program is designed for mid-level managers to validate competency through 90 hours of learning, covering topics such as management essentials, planning and organizing, and leading and controlling. The cost is \$850 for the full bundle, which includes the application, certification, learning materials and exams.

The [Certified Supervisor](#) certification program is designed for entry-level managers to help them succeed in their first management role. It includes 40 hours of learning, covering topics such as motivating, organizing, problem solving, managing diversity, communication, and much more! The cost is \$375 for the full bundle, which includes the application, certification, learning materials, and exam.

If this sounds like something you might be interested in, we have good news BCBSM Leadership Development Association will award two members with 50% reimbursement for the successful completion of the CM or CS certifications. All active BCBSM LDA chapter members are eligible for cost reimbursement. Eligible candidates must meet ICPM certification requirements and deadlines. The BCBSM LDA board will review and select individuals from the list of interested candidates.

If you're interested, send an email to NMAChapter141@bcbsm.com with your contact information and a brief paragraph about why you are interested. You can learn more about the programs by visiting <https://www.icpm.biz/> or watching the recording of the [CM & CS Program Information Session](#) held on May 11.

WHAT BENEFITS DOES THE CM CERTIFICATION PROVIDE?



Use of the CM® Credential

As a Certified Manager, you earn the right to use the CM® professional credential after your name. This credential denotes a level of managerial competency that is recognized worldwide and sets you apart from other managers.



In Demand Management Skills

ICPM's certification course materials comprise a comprehensive learning system that develops managerial knowledge, skills, and abilities that are in demand in today's workplace. The application-based materials contain tools and practices that can be put to use right away!



Opens Doors to New Opportunities

The CM® credential opens doors for managers and leaders seeking employment or desiring to advance their careers. Certified Managers work in **Fortune 500 companies, government agencies, non-profit organizations, universities, the military, and more.** They span all industries without exclusion.



Global Recognition and Portability

The Certified Manager certification is a globally recognized brand with Certified Managers living and working globally. The CM® credential is portable, enabling recognition for hiring and advancement in all parts of the world, including the United States, Asia, Europe, Africa, and the Middle East.



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: Michelle Banaszak, Ju Fonda Overton

Dustin Freeze, Internet public domain

Website: <https://nma1.org/141/>

BCBSM LDA Board Officers

Board Chair: Jennifer Pakkala

President: Sharese Hogan

President-Elect: Sharese Hogan

Board Members

Leonard Alford III

Dana Bartell

Corrie Beaverson

Dana Bell

Karema Bobbitt

Christina Frison

Nichole Gilbertson

Vaneitta Goines

Angela Hollis

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.