



October 2021



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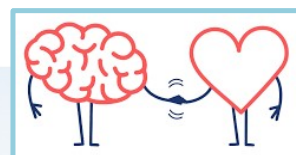
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## From the Desk of Our President



**Sharese Hogan**

*BCBSM LDA President, 2021-2022*

Greetings BCBSM LDA members.

Have you turned your heat on? That's the question asked throughout social media when the outside temperature dropped drastically in the last couple of weeks. I would like to ask the same question about career and professional development, have you turned on the heat?



As we transition from summer to fall, it's time to take an assessment of the things that you have a passion to learn about and will take you to the next level in your career.

We know that 2020 and 2021 caused many people to take a pause in many different aspects in life. I've talked to members who are hesitant to network, who have had to deter from their visions for career growth or who have had put their education on the back burner. BCBSM LDA has programs and events that will help our members step up and get back on track. Starting this month, we'll offer Professional Development webinars and continue the book club discussion on the Jane A. G. Kise book "Intentional Leadership"; we will facilitate our first Monthly Member Meeting with Michele Busuito (Office of the General Counsel); and Jason Thomas (Corporate Audit and Advisory Services) will be our first mixer host of the year. Please watch your email for registration links.

In addition to growing and creating the change you want to see in your professional career, I hope you take time to safely enjoy the beauty and fun of the fall. Personally, it's my favorite season, with an exception of the increase in my energy bill after I finally turn my heat on.

I look forward to seeing you in future meetings!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sharese Hogan".

Sharese Hogan, 2021-2022 President ▪  
BCBSM Leadership Development  
Association ▪ Chapter #141





## 2021 NMA Annual Conference

*By Jennifer Pakkala, health care analyst*



Chapter President, Sharese Hogan, speaking at the 2021 National Conference

A small contingent of BCBSM LDA leaders attended the 2021 NMA Annual Conference in Greenville, South Carolina from September 8-11.

Highlights of the event included honoring the newest member of the NMA Hall of Fame, Thomas Simmer, M.D., retired Blue Cross Senior Vice President and Chief Medical Officer. During his acceptance speech, Dr. Simmer encouraged attendees to “get started and course correct” on their ideas and goals, be adaptable instead of wasting too much time by planning and forcing changes to fit the original plan.

BCBSM LDA was also well represented at the Member of the Year luncheon, as BCBSM LDA members Charles Schultz received his 2021 Member of the Year award and Jennifer Pakkala was recognized for receiving the 2020 honor.

Attendees heard Lt. Colonel Patricia Murray, a former Miss California, and retired FBI special agent, Bob Hamer. Lt. Colonel Murray explained the discipline it takes to “run your own race” by staying focused on your goals and moving forward. She also facilitated a hands-on personality assessment session which demonstrated how well various personalities work together—or don’t work together. Special agent Hamer talked about his leadership experiences related to his undercover experiences stopping international smuggling rings.



BCBSM LDA members at the Member of the Year luncheon: Nancy Bennett, Matt Zelman, Carla Harris, Charlie Schultz, Jennifer Pakkala, Sharese Hogan and Kaitlyn Bradley



2021 NMA Member of the Year Charlie Schultz, BCBSM LDA President Sharese Hogan and 2020 NMA Member of the Year Jennifer Pakkala



BCBSM LDA goes back-to-back in the Member of the Year Award with Charles Schultz (2021) and Jennifer Pakkala (2020)

## 2021 NMA Annual Conference *(continued)*

BCBSM LDA President Sharese Hogan hosted the Chapter Leading Training for presidents and vice presidents. When approached for the opportunity, the BCBSM LDA president was excited to share her experiences in both roles. She delivered a message that included the roadmap for a successful term (see below), the character of a leader, the importance of planning and how working as an innovative team will improve their chapter's member experience.

### Road Map:

- Personal Evaluation
- Plan
- Organize
- Motivate
- Financial Integrity
- Prepare for challenges

Sharese believes that leadership is learned through experience and knowledge. She encouraged the attendees to get more involved in their local chapters and would like to carry out the same message to you, the membership of BCBSM LDA.

At the awards luncheon, BCBSM LDA received its Outstanding Chapter award, First Place Publications, Community Services Award and Chapter Programs award.

In the Leadership Speech Contest, BCBSM LDA-sponsored Jayanti Gupta, a senior at International Academy East in Troy, Michigan, placed third in an impressive field of young orators.



BCBSM LDA member Matt Zelman is being sworn in as 2021-2022 NMA Chairman of the Board by current chair Scott Chestnut of the Collins Leadership Association.



BCBSM LDA members congratulate chapter sponsored speech contest third place winner Jayanti Gupta on her excellent performance.



Sandra Zakrzewski (Charlie's Mom), Charlie Schultz, Kayla Pirie, Sharese Hogan, Nancy Bennett, Carla Harris, Rosi Simmer, Dr. Thomas Simmer, Kaitlyn Bradley, Cathy Longo, Matt Zelman, Jennifer Pakkala, Paul Pakkala celebrate Dr. Simmer's induction into the NMA Hall of Fame.



## New Member Corner



*Invite your friend or favorite co-worker to join BCBSM LDA! Send them the link to [Join Now](#).*

*As a member of BCBSM LDA you are now a part of a great group of leaders, striving to live out our theme, "Step up." 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, health care communications analyst

Don't be surprised if you find new BCBSM LDA member Michael Sappington sitting at an intersection.

## Michael Sappington



"I like to sit at the intersection of business, technology and innovation and look for opportunities where we can take an industry to a new place—disrupt it with innovative services and solutions that solve difficult problems," he said.

Michael joined Blue Cross on August 9 as a Vice President of Care Delivery Services while maintaining his role as CEO of the company's newest subsidiary, a management services organization. This new partnership is his latest intersection and fits the criteria of Michael wanting to align himself with "good-good-good."

"Good for the consumer, good for the company and good for the communities we serve—ultimately all three have to be there," he said. "I'm excited about what we're doing here, and it absolutely fits that criteria."

Michael said he joined BCBSM LDA because he's always very interested in learning and improving his management and leadership capabilities. "I am a lifelong learner and it's important to me to avail myself to all the tools in order to do that."

A self-described "put yourself in the path of progress" entrepreneur, Michael has been leader or founder in all the companies he has worked at. Prior to his 15 years with his management services organization, Michael was part of an information security integrator and prior software development services firm for the global oil and gas industry.

Michael said he has learned over the years of leadership that a company must have a meaningful purpose that people can rally around.

"When people can identify with 'the why' and the purpose, the effort and expected outcomes become clear," he said. "I also like to envision the future and then put a stake down and go for it. My leadership style is to hire great people and align everyone with the company's beliefs and purpose. Once you have purpose and alignment, then you've got something really compelling and inspirational."

## A little more about Michael

- He lives in Birmingham, Michigan, with his wife, Tina, and has three children: Owen (24), Quinton (22) and Olivia (18).
- They're an active family that loves to golf, ski, bike, hike, walk and travel to see and experience new places and things. "We're up for going anywhere."
- His bucket-list includes traveling to Antarctica; he has been to all the other continents.
- His guilty pleasure is milk chocolate, especially in the form of a chocolate chip cookie.



# CALENDAR of EVENTS

October  
12

## BCBSM LDA Book Club Meeting

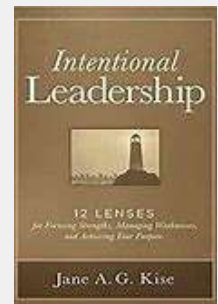
12:00 – 1:00 p.m.

We'll be starting our discussion of Chapters 3 and 4.

### Facilitator:

**Kaitlyn Bradley**, BCBSM LDA VP of Professional Development

[Link to register](#)



October  
26

## Professional Development: Discover your DiSC Personality Style to Enhance Leadership Skills

12:00 – 1:00 p.m.

### Speaker:

**Shunda Jones**, Administrative Manager – BCN Corporate Performance

Join us for an engaging discussion about personality types as defined by the DiSC assessment.

[Link to register](#)





# Leadership – The most important skill – empathy

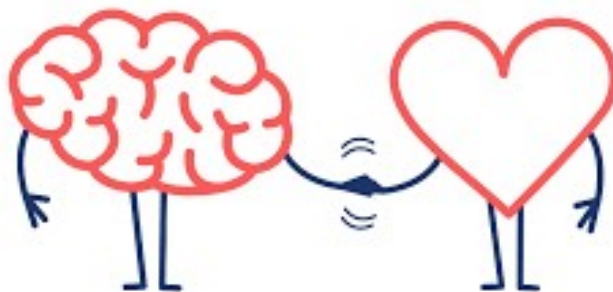
By Barbara Krajenke, communications specialist



An article in Forbes published September 19, 2021, [Empathy is the Most Important Leadership Skill According to Research](#) by Tracy Bower, discusses how empathy is an imperative skill for leaders and has even been proven to drive significant business results.

Exercising empathy fosters not only a positive work environment, but also a productive one. The research found that due to the stresses employees may be facing because of the pandemic, empathy is more important than ever. Empathy is a remedy to relieving some of this stress related to the work environment and driving results.

Link to full article: [Empathy is the Most Important Leadership Skill According to Research](#)



A second article in Forbes published October 9, 2020, [4 Ways to Practice Empathy at Work – And Why it's Crucial to Your Career](#) by William Arruda mentions how empathy is a critical skill in career growth. Empathy is required for relationship building and finding a connection with others. Empathy is a skill without boundaries and can carry over from the in-person to the remote workplace. The article gives a definition of what empathy in the workplace means and how to practice it. Empathy is about understanding yourself and relating to others. It's a quality that fosters relationships and is needed for career growth.

Link to full article: [4 Ways to Practice Empathy at Work – And Why it's Crucial to Your Career](#)



# Breast Cancer Awareness

By Michelle Banaszak, communication specialist

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month. According to the World Health Organization, breast cancer is the most common cancer among women worldwide, claiming the lives of hundreds of thousands of women each year and affecting countries at all levels of modernization. 1 in 8 women in the United States will be diagnosed with breast cancer in her lifetime, and although rare, men can get breast cancer, too.

National Breast Cancer Foundation, in recent years, has found a gradual reduction in female breast cancer incidence rates among women 50 and older. Death rates from breast cancer have also been declining, in part due to better screening, early detection, increased awareness and continually improving treatment options.

*There are currently over 3.8 million breast cancer survivors in the United States.*

Early detection is the best way to avoid breast cancer-related death. This includes doing monthly self-breast exams and scheduling regular clinical breast exams and mammograms.

Healthy habits that can help reduce the risk of breast cancer include:



- Maintaining a healthy weight
- Staying physically active
- Eating fruits and vegetables
- Not smoking
- Limiting alcohol consumption

Visit [nationalbreastcancer.org](https://nationalbreastcancer.org) to learn more about the causes, types, treatments and statistics about breast cancer.

## BOO!

Happy Halloween from BCBSM LDA!



Whether you're taking the kids trick-or-treating, going to an event, staying in to watch scary movies, or simply indulging your sweet tooth, may it be Spooktacular!

### 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, Erica Addison, 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: Heidi Saucier  
 President: Sharese Hogan  
 President-Elect: DeAndre Elliott

### Board Members

Erica Addison  
 Leonard Alford III  
 Dana Bartell  
 Dana Bell  
 DeAndre Elliott  
 Christina Frison  
 Vaneitta Goines  
 Samah Hamam  
 Sharese Hogan  
 Jason Loepp  
 Heidi Saucier

### Board Secretary

Christina Frison

### Chapter Representatives

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

### Executive Advisors

Sharon Gipson  
 Darrell E. Middleton

### BCBSM LDA Officers

VP of Public Relations: Terrance Puryear  
 VP of Finance: Ta-Tanisha Baldwin  
 VP of Awards and Recognition: Carla Harris  
 VP of Program Administration: Sarah Cheaito  
 VP of Professional Development: Kaitlyn Bradley

## NMA National Mission Statement

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