



The Monthly Newsletter of
BCBSM Leadership Development Association

FROM THE DESK OF OUR PRESIDENT



DeAndre K. Elliott
BCBSM LDA President, 2022-2023

Greetings BCBSM LDA members:

It's with great excitement and humility that I serve as the 2022-2023 President for Chapter 141 of the BCBSM Leadership Development Association. This year, I'm dedicated to expanding the flow of communication and awareness of volunteer opportunities. As the Blue Cross organization prepares to open its doors completely, we will implement a hybrid model that will increase engagement and build camaraderie.

This year's theme is "Grow to Enjoy."

Every day we should strive to grow as individuals, and our chapter is no different. I'm encouraging everyone to be deliberate in your growth. Take inventory and identify the areas you need to grow in. Understand why growth is necessary; and most importantly, enjoy the journey. For our chapter to grow, we must do three important things:

- **Plant** the seed of leadership and what you would like to achieve
- **Nurture** the seed of leadership in our membership and future leaders
- **Celebrate** the achievements of our membership and leaders as they enjoy the fruit of their labor



Each month, I'll expand on one of these areas to inspire you to take the steps needed for your personal and professional growth.

I'm grateful for the team of leaders that support me in executing this plan, including the executive advisors, the board of directors and the vice presidents and their teams. I would like to introduce the 2022-2023 BCBSM LDA Vice Presidents:



Carla Harris
Awards & Recognition



Veronica Beasley-
Robinson
Professional Development



Lydia Officer
Program Administration



Angela Haygood
Finance



Tiffany Darby
Public Relations

In closing, I encourage you to take advantage of all that BCBSM LDA has to offer as well as support one another in your growth goals. I look forward to working with you and celebrating a successful year.

Yours Truly,

DeAndre K. Elliott

WHAT'S IN THIS ISSUE

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HEIGHTEN YOUR LEADERSHIP SKILLS AND JOIN A GREAT TEAM!

BCBSM LDA is looking for motivated members to apply for the following positions:

- ✓ **Public Relations: Blues MixerSM (1 Co-Chair)**
Plan monthly mixers that include the selection and booking of venues, obtaining a host and selecting a menu and any other activities that will be included in the event.
- ✓ **Public Relations: blueprint Newsletter (1 Support staff member)**
Organize, develop, create and obtain content and articles to be included in the monthly newsletter. Ensure a team is in place that includes but not limited to writers, photographers and editorial. Attend monthly editorial meetings to review newsletter prior to its publication.
- ✓ **Public Relations: Member Recruitment and Retention (1 Chair / 1 Co-Chair)**
Attend bi-weekly new hire orientations. Deliver email blast to new hire's that details benefits of BCBSM LDA and NMA and current events happening. Develop and create ways to retain and increase membership. Identify opportunities for growth and communicate through the appropriate channels.
- ✓ **Public Relations: Community Involvement (Support Staff Members)**
Identify and plan monthly events that allow the members of BCBSM LDA to volunteer and give back to the community.
- ✓ **Program Administration: Leadership Speech Contest (1 Chair / Support Staff Members)**
Chair: Overall leadership for planning and delivery of the event. With the support of a committee, works in partnership with Toastmasters and other groups to recruit contestants, provide coaching opportunities for contestants, and logistics planning for the event.
Committee members: Assist with planning, contestant selection, coaching for contestants, and other logistics leading up to and during the event.
- ✓ **Program Administration: Meeting Planning (1 Chair / Possible Openings for Support Staff Members)**
Identify and research potential venues for member meetings, works with VP of Program Administration to finalize contracts and logistics for booked events, ensure logistics are set for virtual meetings and help identify ways to increase participation during meetings.
- ✓ **Program Administration: Meeting Support (1 Chair / Support Staff Members)**
Chair: Coordinates communications for all chapter events, including monthly meetings. Delegates are responsible to the committee to create email flyer graphics and Eventbrite links for events.
Committee members: Create email flyer graphics as assigned.
- ✓ **Program Administration: Program Development (1 Chair / Possible Openings for Support Staff Members)**
Creates surveys for monthly meetings. Engages with new members that attend monthly meetings either in person or following an event, which includes providing a new member packet with additional chapter information and resources.



NMA Chatper141@bcbsm.com

Subject: Public Relations or Program Administration

Include the role you're interested in as part of the email

JOIN US!

blueprint is **HIRING.**

APPLY NOW

Share your creativity and volunteer for an award winning newsletter!

- Graphic Designers
- Writers
- Photographers

For more information email:

blueprint Chair Barbara.Krajenke@advantasure.com
or *blueprint* Co-Chair MBanaszak@bcbsm.com

NEW MEMBER CORNER



Member Benefits

- Networking through monthly meeting 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!

Kelly Brittian
Griffin Cobean
Stephanie Davis
Nicole Ezell
Christina Hix
Alan Huddy
Chelsea Marr

As a member of BCBSM LDA you are now a part of a great group of leaders, striving to live out our theme, "Grow to Enjoy."

We encourage you to connect with our members and learn something new about the organization.

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

Welcome OUR NEW TEAM MEMBERS

NEW MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

by Michelle Banaszak, Communication Specialist

Our new member, Sue Kuypers, is the Vice President of Technology Business Management at Advantasure. While she's new to BCBSM LDA, she's actually been with the Blues for 22 years. She started as an analyst in finance, then advanced to multiple managerial roles. These roles taught her more about the finances of a non-for-profit and Medicare Advantage.

She has had many roles at BCBSM in finance, Operations, IT, and landed in Medicare Advantasure in Risk Adjustment and was part of the creation of Tessellate. She ran product management for Tessellate and was able to use her experience in risk adjustment and finance to design new solutions.



Sue Kuypers, Vice President of Technology Business Management at Advantasure

Sue said, "One great thing about Blue Cross is you can leverage what you've learned from one area and move to other areas."

Sue has been in her current role for a year and a half, and has learned a lot about the technology development for analytic and core administration product suites. Sue's team has helped set up many processes from intake and estimation through billing the client. She says a collaborative environment where product management, the architects, the product development team, testers, account management, etc. are all aligned and working together is key.

By working for Blue Cross and Advantasure, Sue has grown from an Individual Contributor into leading a team. She's helped build the team environment and has to strategically think about where the department is going next. "You have to think about how to build excitement, motivate your team and learn how to prioritize. Each management level changes your focus; from tactical to more strategic."

As a leader, she's inspired by other leaders who are visionaries. "I think it's important to create a vision and strategic direction for your teams and where you're going in order to create that purpose for them. That way you all have the same focus and goals....it's a struggle if they don't know what's going on and where you are going as a team and organization."

Sue has wanted to join BCBSM LDA for years, but it was just something she didn't get around to. When a recent email came to her inbox, she thought, this organization has a lot of value. She had gone to a few meetings in the past with other team members and really enjoyed what she heard. So far, her favorite part of being a member has been Management Week because the sessions were insightful and thought provoking.



Fishing in Puerto Vallarta

Let's get to know Sue:

- Her favorite restaurant is Juan Miguel's in Clinton Township.
- Outside of work, she enjoys boating, golfing and her latest hobby – pickleball. Some of her friends were playing so she gave it a try and loves it!
- She loves to travel. She's going to Iceland in October, where she plans to climb a glacier, boat through a fiord, visit an active volcano and travel Ring Road around the island.



Golfing in Arizona

JUNE MONTHLY MEMBER MEETING

by Jennifer Pakkala, Health Care Analyst

Our June Monthly Member Meeting featured the annual address by Daniel J. Loepp, President and CEO of Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan. He said this year's chapter theme, Step up: Restore Reboot, Recreate, is timely for many reasons.

"During the pandemic those we serve were really relying on us more than ever and our industries were filled with new challenges and new opportunities," he said. "When the world changed, our stakeholders were faced with incredible uncertainty, and I'm very proud to say Blue Cross stepped up and we were there for them just like we've been for 83 years."



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

In addition to the pandemic accelerating the evolution of the workplace through remote and hybrid working, Loepp said the pandemic clearly intensely affected our company's focus on mental health and it's raised awareness about the needs for accessible behavioral health services.

Additionally, the pandemic exposed health care disparities more broadly to the nation, which Loepp said increased our company's urgency to eliminate other health care disparities. Last year, our company began working with the Association to reduce racial disparities in maternal health by 50% in five years. Loepp reviewed recent milestones, including [historically high Medicare Star ratings](#) and [recognition by J.D. Power](#) as having the highest member satisfaction ranking in 2022.

He rounded out his address by looking forward, saying how the company is embarking on a major shift as it advances care by driving innovations and transformations. "When you look forward, the future success of our company also relies on having talented leaders in right positions to execute this vision," Loepp said. "We'll continue to invest in our people and career development through organizations like the Leadership Development Association. Supporting your growth and empowering leaders will ensure we can succeed and maintain our culture of high performance."

After the 2022 BCBSM LDA awards, lifetime NMA National Director Nancy Bennett installed the incoming officers, board members and the 2022-2023 BCBSM LDA President DeAndre Elliott.

2022 Hall of Fame – Mike Duggan, City of Detroit Mayor

2022 Executive of the Year – Jeniene Edwards

2022 Art Seidler Leader of the Year – Tambra Hinton

2022 Member of the Year – Lydia Officer

Silver Knight Award – Sharon Gipson

MEET THE NEWLY ELECTED BCBSM LDA BOARD MEMBERS

By Jennifer Pakkala, Health Care Analyst



Congratulations to the newly elected BCBSM LDA board members! We wanted to ask them what they're looking forward to during their board term and about their goals for the chapter. And since it's National Ice Cream Month, we asked for their favorite ice cream shop order.



Kaitlyn Sibai: I'm excited for gaining a new perspective on the innerworkings of BCBSM LDA, learning from other board members, expanding my network and seeing what the incoming leadership team has in store for us.

My goal is to help our chapter grow. I'd really like to see more people in the company talking

about our organization. I think getting back in-person events will help ignite the spark in people to connect with colleagues and nurture their leadership skills. I'd like to use this spark to create contagious positive energy to empower everyone to take charge of their leadership development journey!

May I take your order?

I love all things chocolate and dough-y, so chocolate ice cream with chocolate chunks, cookie/brownie/cake dough pieces, fudge (inside the ice cream AND hot fudge drizzled on top) and caramel. Also, add M&Ms to the top!



Sharese Hogan: I'm looking forward to new ideas and creative meeting planning that will accommodate our NEW "new normal." I would like the work that the BCBSM LDA leaders do to be recognized in a BIG way, by leaders around our organizations. We handle budgets, manage teams and lead important strategies – it is time for the enterprise to know.

May I take your order?

Two kid's scoops, one butter pecan and the other cookies and cream. I love a fresh waffle cone and bananas.



Samah Hamam: I'm looking forward to a return to the office to reunite with my peers and to in-person meetings where we'll have an opportunity to network and build new connections. I'm hopeful that opportunities for professional development will increase and create more influence across the BCBSM LDA chapter.

I'll take the initiative to communicate better and find solutions to challenges. I hope to be vulnerable and encourage those around me to step up and make a difference with me. I want to focus on our membership and create a more extraordinary engagement atmosphere.

May I take your order?

I would love a waffle cone with French vanilla ice cream with chewy brownie pieces and light peanuts for the extra crunch!



Vaneitta Goines: I'm excited to be able to see new ideas come to fruition. We've got some great new leaders and I'm looking forward to how our partnerships can open doors for our members. My goals are to build value for our members – helping people learn tools and approaches to strengthen their careers and increasing access to professional

development opportunities. A key interest is building even more effective divisional and diversity partnerships, including more employees.

May I take your order?

Waffle cone, of course! One with lime ice to beat the summer heat and sprinkles are a must! Either that or a thick chocolate shake with whipped cream and cherries!



Jinjing Pursell: I'm looking forward to learning from my fellow board members and serving the BCBSM LDA members. My goal is to be the listening ear for members and voice their concerns and suggestions.

May I take your order?

Chocolate pudding ice cream with strawberry jam.



BLUES MIXERSM RECAP

By Barbara Krajenke, Communications Specialist

In case you missed it, we have recaps of the April and May Blues Mixers present by Michelle Fullerton and Terrance Puryear. Both mixers delved into the topic of *resilience*.



Michelle Fullerton

The **April Mixer**, presented by Michelle Fullerton, Senior Director of Group Customer Advocate, Consulting Reporting & Group Operational Readiness talked about coping with COVID-19 stress and re-entry anxiety.

Michelle mentioned how mental health was the common issue that affected all employees and leaders in all industries across the state.

Michelle shared that a [survey by Ginger found that more than 70% of American workers reported that the COVID-19 pandemic has been the most stressful time in their career](#).

What can we as leaders and future leaders do about it?

- Become **aware**
- **Remove** the **stigma**
- Focus on **whole-person health**
- **Talk** about it
- Build **resilience**

One thing to remember is that we're all in this together. As a leader it's important to be aware of your employees and coworkers wellbeing and to come from a place of concern. Be alert to your employees and coworkers behavior, moods and conversations such as physical complaints or suicidal thoughts.

Michelle gave us a few things to remember:

- You're not alone
- There's no comparative - don't compare yourself
- Encourage self care
- It takes a village

To what extent have you felt the following?

■ Agree ■ Disagree

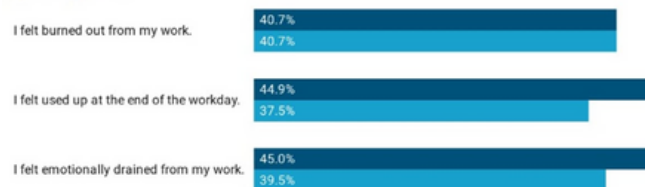


Chart: Employee Well-Being Study, Society for Human Resource Management © 2020

The topic of the **May Mixer** presented by Terrance Puryear, Team Leader II, was readiness and resilience - NOW is the new "normal."

"With resilience must also come RECOVERY. Resilience without recovery leads to rigidity (the inability to adapt or be changed)," said Terrance. He went on to explain how we all exercise resilience, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, because we had to. We had to be flexible and adapt without breaking. But now is the time to recover.



Terrance Puryear

"Catch your breath. Celebrate victories. Acknowledge and talk through anxieties. Invest in time and wellness and preventive care options."



Terrance explained that in order to be resilient we must take a moment for recovery which means we have a posture of readiness. He said the way to practice readiness is to ask yourself these questions:

- What am I excited about?
- What am I ready to give?
- Who am I ready to help?
- What am I passionate about?
- How am I being active in the things for which I have passion?

Terrance described "normal" as a canvas we paint on,... "a work of art that's always in progress."

He also talked about change and grieving over what was lost, no matter what the capacity. Allowing yourself to acknowledge and grieve this loss will allow you to better engage with what's emerging.

Terrance also encouraged us to have the courage to be challenged. The challenge he gave us was to leverage community and connect. We don't live life alone. Look for good connections and build community because it takes a community to build a leader.

HAPPY FOURTH OF JULY!

by Ju Fonda Overton, Project Consultant



IT'S TIME FOR THE 4TH OF JULY!

It's the [United States of America's day to celebrate our independence and freedom](#) from 1776 to the present, free from the British Empire, into our own nation.

Now in 2022, we have more reasons to celebrate and be grateful for the 4th of July. We're learning from one another to be better. We have the opportunity to pass our history down; to teach others how to survive during a pandemic, teaching them to be triumphant and persevere during challenges. So, let's be kind to each other, and celebrate the 4th of July.

From the *blueprint* staff we wish you all a Happy Independence Day!

PD EXCHANGE - CLOSING THE DEAL SERIES, PART 3 - EXECUTIVE PANEL DISCUSSION

by Veronica Beasley-Robinson, Executive Assistant



On June 17, YPN and BCBSM LDA partnered to bring our members career insights from some of Blue Cross' executives during the last installment of the Closing the Deal Series (Part 3). The executive panelists were Laura Byars, Vice President – Talent & Human Performance; Tiffany Albert, Senior Vice President – Health Plan Business; Steve Anderson, Vice President – Hospital Contracting & Network Administration; Bridget Hurd, Vice President – Inclusion & Diversity and Cindy Dion, Vice President – Business Efficiency & Continuous Improvement.

The event was facilitated by YPN Co-Chairs – Ann Mansour and Madyson Davis and moderated by BCBSM LDA Professional Development Chair Veronica Beasley-Robinson.

There were many take-aways, but what was most apparent was that these executives were extremely transparent. From talking about work life balance, to taking risks to level up in their careers, to sharing book recommendations, quotes and just best practices, there was something for everyone.

Here's a summary of the conversation:



Tiffany: How have you been able to build and maintain your network in a virtual environment?

I think it's been more about maintaining my network. Prior to the pandemic, I was thoughtful and deliberate about connecting with people across the enterprise, whether it was Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan and Blue Care Network, Life Secure, etc. So, when the pandemic started, I kept that connection.

It's all about being intentional, continuing to have some sort of routine, because I think for me, throughout the pandemic, it was most important to remain connected and not lose the opportunity to partner and collaborate and learn from people in the organization.

Cindy: How do you determine if or when you need to change course to get to the next level?

It's pretty natural to expect that our interests and our goals are going to change over time, right? But how do you know if it's time to really think about perhaps a job change? I can only reflect on my own experience and for me, there are usually a couple indicators that sort of nudged me in that direction. I think sometimes in the role that you're in, it just might not be substantial enough for you anymore. Ask yourself: Are you waking up excited about what you might be facing in the days ahead? I ask myself this question and had those kinds of thoughts and observations that I may be ready for something new. Those were clues for me to consider changing my course.

PD EXCHANGE CONTINUED

Bridget: What behaviors do employees need to see from leadership to believe that an inclusive culture is high priority?

You know, it's what we do! And I've been in this role for six and a half years. And when I reflect on where we were six and a half years ago and where we are now, it's just amazing. It's amazing to see the growth in our leaders and it's also amazing to see the growth and development of our employees in so many different ways. And I truly believe, heart to heart, that in this absolute cause, we totally are committed to a culture of inclusion. And in doing so, empathy and compassion show up in the workplace environment every day. You know, when we think about it, we reflect on the last two and a half years, but even the past few weeks, there's been so many traumatic events in our environment. So, when we take the opportunity to include from that perspective to understand that different people experience different things in different ways; that's one way that leadership can demonstrate inclusivity and inclusiveness in the workplace.

Laura: What kind of mistakes should someone avoid when attempting to advance within the company?

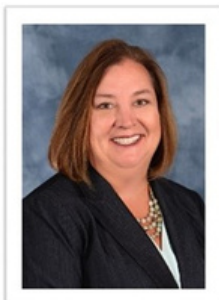
Please be thoughtful about the fact that up is not the only way to advance your career. There is so much to be gained from moving laterally, sometimes, it is even taking a step back. And while it might seem frustrating to you, I guarantee it's going to be easier to build those skills and broaden your skill set and be a more valuable colleague to our organization or wherever you go. But, if you get some of those foundational experiences in a variety of opportunities and build those skills and consider what your options are, you will be better for it.

Steve: How do you keep your team motivated despite conflicts and obstacles?

I think a lot of us get stuck in our own ways and are a little reluctant to shake up the apple tree; and we've had some people shake up the apple tree a little too much and then you know that didn't work out, but there was at least an effort. If you're rowing a boat in a storm and you're trying to get to the shore, you can't worry about the waves and what's floating alongside you. You need to focus on getting your job done, which is getting to the shore. And, so, for me, obstacles come in many shapes and sizes. We should treat them all the same. Keep our eye on that horizon and try to get there.



Steve Anderson
Vice President
Hospital Contracting &
Network Administration



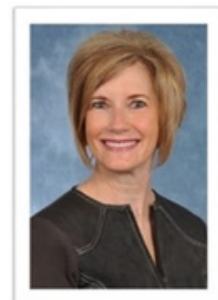
Laura Byars
Vice President
Talent & Human
Performance



Bridget Hurd
Vice President
Inclusion & Diversity



Tiffany Albert
Senior Vice President
Health Plan Business



Cindy Dion
Vice President
Business Efficiency &
Continuous Improvement

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

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Co-Chair Michelle Banaszak

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President: DeAndre Elliott

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Dana Bell

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Christina Frison

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Samah Hamam

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Jason Loepp

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Heidi Saucier

Kaitlyn Sibai

Board Secretary

Christina Frison

Chapter Representatives

National Director: Nancy Bennett

Lifetime National Director: Nancy Bennett

Lifetime National Director: Cathy Longo

Executive Advisors

Cassandra Alston-Childs

Jac Amerell

BCBSM LDA Officers

VP of Public Relations: Tiffany Darby

VP of Finance: Angela Haygood

VP of Awards and Recognition: Carla Harris

VP of Program Administration: Lydia Officer

VP of Professional Development: Veronica Beasley-Robinson

NMA National Mission Statement

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