

# The Human Aspect

**An Interview with Maxine Carrington, Senior Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer, Northwell Health**

**EDITORS' NOTE** *Since joining Northwell in 2008, Maxine Carrington has served in progressively responsible leadership roles and has successfully driven team member engagement and development at every layer of the health system. Most recently, she served as deputy chief human resources officer where she was responsible for the design and implementation of strategic initiatives related to the team member experience, career and performance development, change management, workforce diversity, equity and inclusion, corporate social responsibility and compensation. She previously held several regional and site HR roles. Prior to joining Northwell, Carrington was a manager and attorney with the New York City Mayor's Office of Labor Relations. In addition to mentoring within and outside of the organization, she is an instructor with the Center for Learning & Innovation, Northwell's corporate university, and serves as a co-sponsor of the organization's business employee resource groups. She is also a trustee of the 1199 Pension Fund serving employees for the New York Region and serves on the board of The INN (Interfaith Nutrition Network), a not-for-profit organization that provides essential services to assist those challenged by hunger, homelessness, and poverty. Carrington holds a bachelor's degree in political science and Africana studies and a master's degree in educational administration and policy studies from the University at Albany in New York. She obtained her Juris Doctorate degree from New York Law School.*



Maxine Carrington

Northwell's focus on caring for our people has been at the forefront this past year in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. We increased our efforts to support the well-being of our 76,000 team members and we have seen the impact of those efforts in our increased employment engagement numbers and recent elevation from #93 to #19 on the Fortune 100 Best Companies to Work For® list. We are now working to make sure we sustain this momentum in caring for the well-being of our people.

**You mentioned culture. How are you able to maintain culture with the size and scale of Northwell Health?**

The first priority is to define the culture and we do this by starting with our mission, behavioral commitments, and values. We refer to our values as the "trulys" – to be truly compassionate and truly innovative, for example – and this bonds the organization across our 76,000 team members. We have many locations and each has a local culture, but they are all connected by our Northwell mission and values. We work to ensure sustainment of our culture through our hiring, selection, recognition and compensation practices.

**How critical is it for Northwell Health's workforce to mirror the diversity of its patients and the communities it serves?**

Our President and CEO, Michael Dowling, makes it very clear that this is of great importance and has his commitment. He recently discussed with me the need to more effectively surface diverse talent in the organization. We created a team within Northwell about a year and a half ago called Fair Employment Practices and in addition to a focus on immigration, they lead our workforce diversity, equity, and inclusion strategy. Many other teams also play a role – it is a comprehensive and integrated strategy. Key objectives include preventing bias in the hiring process, driving organizational commitment, and increasing the representation of underrepresented groups in leadership.

Parallel to that focus is a major commitment to inclusion. While we can increase representation, if people don't feel that they have a voice and that they belong, we will not be able to retain that talent. We have invested heavily in

education with an inclusive leadership course, unconscious bias training and cultural competency education. We will be expanding our impact by providing equity, diversity and inclusion education for family members of our team members.

We are also driving these efforts at our medical school and experiencing positive outcomes. There is a strong voice and commitment from our dean in partnership with faculty, students and a dedicated physician leader to attract and support our diverse student population.

**You devote your time as an instructor at the Center for Learning and Innovation, Northwell's corporate university. Will you discuss the mission and impact of the Center?**

It was Michael Dowling's vision many years ago to have our own university. The university is comprised of our Center for Learning and Innovation (CLI) and the Patient Safety Institute (PSI). PSI is about ensuring quality patient care and safety outcomes. CLI houses enrichment learning, leader preparation, development programs and more. Its offerings include emotional intelligence, coaching and conflict management. The Center provides an opportunity for our team members from all over the organization to connect, learn and grow together. We continue to evolve the work of the Center to ensure that its programs and offerings are relevant and supporting the organization's needs.

**Northwell Health was on the front lines of the pandemic and treated more COVID patients than any other health system. How proud are you to see the strength and resilience of your team members during this challenging and uncertain time?**

Proud is an understatement. I would not work anywhere else. We have a saying at Northwell – "I am made for this." We also have a new branding campaign called "Raise Health." The work that we have done for years, especially around culture development and emergency management, enabled our people to be made for this and they demonstrated their character, selflessness, courage and resilience during this unprecedented time. It is a privilege and honor to raise the standard of health alongside them. ●