

A Center of Excellence in Preventive Care

An Interview with Dr. David Levy, Chief Executive Officer, EHE Health

EDITORS' NOTE Dr. David Levy is an accomplished physician executive with a record of achievement in complex systems involving patients and a range of organizations. He is a renowned strategic thinker who has executed effective strategies for his own enterprises and a diverse set of public and private sector entities. At Franklin Health, he used his insights to create a scalable business that helped patients and families receive better, more satisfying care.



David Levy

As strategy leader at PwC, he led the effort to recommend public health and hospital reform for the Louisiana Recovery Authority after Hurricane Katrina. Dr. Levy then directed the team that helped California's Department of Public Health re-engineer the state's catastrophic surge response system. He earned an MD and an MS in epidemiology from McGill University.

COMPANY BRIEF EHE Health (*ebe.health*) was founded in 1913 as the first healthcare provider emphasizing the power of preventive care. It seeks to give people lifestyle skills geared towards optimal health, performance, productivity and longevity. U.S. President Woodrow Wilson endorsed the company's diet and tens of thousands of preventive exams were conducted as the company began its long history as a leader in the field. EHE Health has been at the forefront of progressive healthcare for more than 100 years and is committed to empowering people with the best tools for their health.

EHE Health is a purpose-driven organization with a long history of supporting its employees, patients and communities. How do you define EHE Health's mission and purpose?

I'll tell you what we all eventually realize, which is that life is a journey and our health – more than wealth, power, fame or just about anything else – determines how that journey is going to go and for how long. EHE Health's mission is to inspire and empower people to actively manage their personal and family health journey and help them navigate it, starting with preventive care. We do that by partnering with employers who have a vested interest in the health and well-being of their employees and on whom half the U.S. population relies for access to healthcare. Mental and physical health is not

only an essential part of personal and professional growth; it is also a cornerstone of thriving families, businesses, communities and the economy as a whole. While medical care in the U.S. is among the best in the world, it is also the most expensive. That is partly because we have a health system that is structurally focused on treating sickness and not enough on maintaining wellness.

At EHE Health, we emphasize evidence-based preventive health to help people stay healthy and productive for longer in life. From a health optimization and cost perspective, it's more effective and efficient to prevent or delay illness and injury before they occur than to treat them after the fact. We all know this like we know that it's better to put oil in the car rather than to replace an engine after it seizes, yet for a host of reasons – simple and complex – some people are more fully engaged than others in managing their health and healthcare. Disregarding those people who are not engaged and failing to understand their distinct social, psychological, economic and environmental circumstances for avoiding or delaying care can be costly and leads to disparities in health access and outcomes that are detrimental to society.

Companies want to partner with EHE Health because we take a behavioral-centric approach to engaging people wherever they are in their health journey. We augment workplace health programs with measurable, data-driven, technology-enabled health

improvement strategies that engage more people, produce better health outcomes and deliver a greater return on the value of investments in healthcare.

What have been the keys to EHE Health's success and consistent industry leadership?

EHE Health has been an innovation leader since it was founded in 1913. In fact, you might say the company was one of the original health industry disruptors of the 20th century by introducing a business model and science-driven approach to extending life and wellness that was fairly radical at the time and is still progressive to this day. True to its roots, EHE Health is a center of excellence in preventive care, now with a nationwide network of primary care physicians and clinics dedicated to delivering enhanced, patient-centered care. The company has made significant investments in technology and is the first and only health organization of its kind that is an omnichannel health engagement platform.

We use sophisticated behavioral analytics and customer segmentation strategies, many of which were pioneered by the retail and financial services industries, to understand and engage members. The functionality of our platform, which now includes mobile connectivity and APIs (application programming interface) in partnership with other leading health innovators, makes it easier for people to organize and manage all their health activities, access health information and connect directly with their doctor and other clinicians in a seamless, personalized user experience.

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The investments we’ve made in technology and innovative solutions have supported a strategic shift in our business in recent years. One of my first initiatives as CEO was to expand the reach and scope of the company from one that primarily catered to executives to one capable of delivering a highly personalized, patient-centered care experience, at scale, across large, diverse and geographically dispersed employee populations.

How did EHE Health adapt the way it works to address the challenges caused by the pandemic?

We responded quickly to minimize the risk of COVID-19 for our employees and patients, and anticipated our clients’ need for solutions to protect their employees and ongoing operations. By as early as April 2020, we had developed and operationalized a comprehensive Safe at Work™ Management System, giving companies capabilities and access to resources to conduct on-site and remote COVID-19 testing, contact tracing, rapid-response communication and real-time, enterprise-level monitoring of workforce health and protocol in compliance with individual state and federal guidelines. We later expanded the offering to facilitate vaccine rollout and help companies prepare for the return to a new normal of work, one that calls for ongoing vigilance and response to an ever-evolving health threat.

We also adapted our core business by modernizing the patient experience and innovating new ways to re-engage people in health services that sharply declined during the pandemic. While a comprehensive, in-person health assessment by a physician remains the

gold standard of care, we also now offer a virtual patient experience that goes beyond the limitations of telemedicine, as well as an all-digital experience that’s more of an entry point on the path to a more engaged health journey.

What important lessons can be learned from the pandemic and how are businesses responding to post-pandemic realities as life returns to some degree of normalcy?

COVID-19 altered the workplace, shifted business priorities, exposed gaps and weaknesses and forced us all to think differently. It’s unrealistic to expect a return to pre-pandemic business as usual. Painful as it’s been, the experience and lessons learned create opportunities to be better, stronger and more resilient in the future. The new reality is that even with vaccines, COVID-19 and its variants aren’t going away. We need to learn to live with the risks and respond swiftly and smartly to inevitable, isolated outbreaks.

One lesson learned from this is the importance of maintaining optimal health. COVID-19 was more dangerous and deadly for people with underlying health risks, and it compressed time by posing an immediate lethal threat to people for whom health and wellness was some future priority. This further underscores the importance of more widespread engagement in preventive care and in re-engaging those people who skipped or deferred care for nearly two years. The concern now for many businesses is the pandemic after the pandemic, with greater risk of more advanced, debilitating and costly chronic conditions and mental health issues.

COVID-19 also compressed time for the healthcare industry and accelerated the adoption of technologies that enable more consumer-centric access and interaction that other industries had been using for two decades.

We all also became much more aware of how connected we are as a society and the role that business leaders have to play in strengthening the health of communities. Offering employees access to quality healthcare is no longer regarded as a purely moral and ethical responsibility. Nor is the focus of population health management primarily about cost containment. Workforce health is now a strategic business priority with a clear, direct link to better business outcomes and long-term sustainability.

Companies that partner with EHE Health are setting themselves apart from competitors by looking at their health and wellness offering as an investment, not an unavoidable cost or line item to cut. Metrics around employee health that were rarely considered by the C-suite as an area for future investment are now recognized as material to financial performance. Moreover, many organizations now see workforce health as a core part of their mission and accountability to stakeholders. COVID-19 exposed health disparities among racial, ethnic and socioeconomic populations. This is an area where employers are in a position to address this by better engaging diverse groups in a culture of health and giving them a path and tools to navigate their health journey.

Will you discuss EHE Health’s focus on building a diverse and inclusive workforce in order to mirror the diversity of its patients and the communities it serves?

Racial disparities in health status are real and rooted in a long history of discriminatory practices and unconscious biases that affect the way people seek and experience care. As part of our core mission, EHE Health is committed to the elimination of racial disparities in access to high-quality care. Given our business model, we are in a position to advance this goal by setting an example for our employees and the companies with which we partner. We have worked hard to create a diverse and inclusive culture where everyone, across race, ethnicity, age, gender and sexual orientation, feels they are treated with dignity and respect, and our employees reflect the diverse population of members we serve. ●

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