Becoming Great in Healthcare: Webinar Highlights

[PODCAST TRANSCRIPT – July 13, 2023]

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Lisa Bonsall: Hi, it's Lisa Bonsall, Senior Clinical Editor for Lippincott NursingCenter. For this episode of our podcast, I'm proud to bring you excerpts from the webinar, Becoming Great in Health Care, which we hosted in June of 2023. In the webinar, Anne Dabrow Woods, Nanne Finis, and Michael Bush had a one hour open and honest conversation addressing the challenges facing the health care industry, as well as the innovative work that is happening across the country in great health care organizations.

Listen in and see what you think. If you'd like to hear more, visit NursingCenter.com/wakeuphealthcare. Thank you.

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Lisa Bonsall: So our speakers today are Michael Bush, CEO of Great Place to Work. Nancy Finis, Chief Nurse Executive of UKG, and Anne Dabrow Woods, Chief Nurse of Wolters Kluwer, Health Learning, Research, and Practice. I'm going to turn things over now to Nanne Finis.

Nanne Finis: Thank you, Lisa, and welcome to my colleagues and to all of our audience today. I'm just so pleased to be with you here. Just a bit about myself. I'm, as you heard, the Chief Nurse Executive of UKG. I've been in the field for 43 years, but have worked in clinical and administrative nursing roles, in accreditation and then in technology for the last ten years.

I'm so excited to be here today. And Michael, I'm going to let you take the floor for a moment and tell our audience about yourself as well.

Michael Bush: Thank you very much, Nanne, and hello everyone, and thanks for joining us today. I run Great Place To Work. We work in over 140 countries. We do survey work with employees and over 14,000 companies every year. And about 750 of those are health care companies. So we know a lot about working people of all levels and all types in healthcare. I look forward to sharing some of what we are learning right now with all of you who join us today.

Anne Dabrow Woods: Hello, everybody. My name is Anne Dabrow Woods. I am the Chief Nurse of Wolters Kluwer, Health Learning, Research, and Practice, where I set the nursing strategy for our business. I've been a nurse for 39 years and a nurse practitioner for 25 years and I actually still practice. I work per diem for Penn Medicine, Chester County Hospital as a critical care nurse practitioner, and I also teach for both Newman University and Drexel University as adjunct faculty.

And, you know, being in the trenches through COVID the last few years, you know, I think the biggest issue here is that health care has come through such a challenging time, as has many of the other

disciplines that are out there. But the one thing that I really see is now when you look at staffing, when you look at the resiliency of people, it's actually worse than it ever has been before.

And I think a lot of that is due to the fact that we didn't get a break like some of the other disciplines have and the people who are left standing at the bedside, they're tired and the people with experience are much smaller group than the new numbers of nurses that are coming into our profession and working in our health care settings.

So we have a lot of challenges that we don't have enough competent, confident nurses at the bedside because they're all new. It takes some time to learn. And yet we have a smaller group of experienced nurses who are struggling. And right now health care is really at a precipice where we can make some great changes to improve not only how we're practicing health care, but also in regards to patient outcomes.

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Nanne Finis: So I'd like to just kind of kick off with a question to Michael, and part of Great Place To Work is really looking at and using a high trust culture or applying a high trust culture to organizations, and we see such business success as a result. How would you easily describe this, if you will, and perhaps some of the linkages that you've seen to business outcomes and business success.

Michael Bush: To create a high trust culture, there's really six things that are needed to be true and to be experienced by employees. Number one is that employees want to feel that the person that they work for respects them. And so respect is really determined by how people are talked to, whether or not people are listened to, whether or not people are involved in decisions that that affect their work.

And so for every people leader who's joined us today, you know, be mindful of that. Every interaction that you have or you don't have this kind of a meter where the people who work for you are calculating for themselves whether they feel like you respect them or not.

And then number two is whether or not people feel like the person that they work for, the people that they work with are transparently honest with them, that they're willing to share information with them based on a question that they might ask about how things are going in the organization.

What are we doing to create new talent and hire new talent in the organization? What are we doing to keep people employed by us that are at our hospital or institutions? So transparency is really important.

Number three is fairness and equity. People can, especially in health care, be so committed to their work and so committed to their colleagues.

Even if they work for a terrible people manager, they'll say it's a great place to work. That's the idea about health care. People are so committed to each other and to the patient care that having a wobbly people leader, they'll still say it's a great place to work. So respect, transparency and fairness and that people want to enjoy who they work with.

So sometimes, you know, you're working and somebody joins the team and you start to interact with them and you wonder, how did this person get hired? And what people leaders don't realize is people don't take that as an issue with the person who got hired. They want to know who hired the person that it's reflection and respect and a trust breaker with people, leaders who are hiring the wrong people.

It's really about skill sometimes it is. It's usually about values. You know, how we treat each other, how we treat the patient, how we communicate, whether we're attending work on time. It's really the values disconnection that if people are thinking, how did you know Cherie hire this person, you know that that's a trust issue and lowers respect and then people want to be a part of a team.

We call it camaraderie, which you find in health care. These fierce commitments of people knowing they can't really succeed alone. But they can only succeed their life's purpose based on working with others. And finally, what we call pride, which is feeling like you are cared for and the people you work with, you care for them as well.

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Anne Dabrow Woods: So you talk about the new business frontier, and as organizations are really being pushed to a higher levels of automation, greater agility and change, how does a great place to work really focus on humanizing businesses, especially health care? How do we bring the humanness back to health care?

Michael Bush: The humanization comes from a series of things. You know, people want to know that they're people leader cares for them as a person, not just an employee. That's number one. And so at a place that's the best workplace in health care, and we have them. Eight out of ten people say, My people leader cares for me as an employee.

They that means they care about their life outside of work. And this person I appreciate, employees really, really appreciate that and that that people feel like their people leader involves them in decisions that affect their work. They feel like their people leader does a good job of assigning and coordinating people and tasks around the work. They feel like their people leader is competent.

This is really, really important. It's hard to respect the people leader if you don't feel like they're competent in terms of the work. People like working for a leader who is approachable and easy to talk to. People like talking, working for a leader who doesn't micromanage them and tell them how to do something. But instead distills trust and that a people leader who when you hire a person, you trust them, right?

When you hire them, you don't trust them. Don't hire them. It's a mindset of this person is going to have to earn my trust or I'm going to extend trust, and maybe that can erode or not. And then people like working for a people leader that if they make a mistake, they don't feel like it's going to derail their career, that there's enough room to make an honest mistake, know no one likes mistakes, but they do happen occasionally in terms of judgment or something else, especially when somebody is learning and it's does the people leader take that as an opportunity to teach them how to how to get better?

So I just outlined six things that are the most important things when a person is deciding, Hey, I can exhale and this is a good environment for me, there may be a lot of things that aren't perfect. The commute is not perfect, the pace not perfect. I don't understand how to get promoted, but if I'm getting those six things, I have faith that some of those things will work out for me.

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Anne Dabrow Woods: You know, we just went through Nurses Month and a lot of health care systems provide the nurses with ice cream and pizza. It's not about the ice cream and pizza. It's about really

showing gratitude as a leader to the work force that is working for you and with you. And I think that's sometimes something that leaders forget. You don't have to buy your staff things.

It's about being seen on the floor, being approachable, being able to talk to the staff and having the staff talk to you. That's what really makes a difference. A simple act of gratitude. And I think so often we get caught up in all the tchotchkes years of giving these little gifts that really don't mean anything.

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Michael Bush: More doesn't mean more hours; more doesn't mean work harder, you know, more means prioritization. And starting with, number one, taking care of yourself, that's number one. Your well-being is the most important thing, because without that, you can't do any of what we're talking about, which is giving to others. So it definitely starts there. And so hopefully in the organization, there are things around wellbeing, around mental health, which is the key issue here around training opportunities, supporting people, getting to mental health assistance, whether it be through the apps that are available, through the meditation programs, through exercise programs and leaders who aren't doing those things. Good luck. You know, good good luck. Being a great leader now means you're doing those things and those things are going to be good for you at work and they're going to be good for you outside of work. You know, I just talked about trust means respect, credibility, and fairness. Trust means diversity, equity, people getting the same pay, doing the same work at the same level, proficiency equity.

In terms of representation, I should be able to see myself at all levels in the organization equity, meaning equitable opportunity for promotions that I should be able to see myself getting promoted in the organization. Equity in terms of well-being that everyone cares about, me and my family's physical health, mental health and financial health just like anybody else in the company.

Putting those things together is what's required to to be great.

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Nanne Finis: You often share, too, that health care is the only organization or the only industry that really has not recovered post COVID. It can you just give a little reflection around that and in this recovery to come, if you will? You know what can organizational leaders start to do to begin to change this culture?

Michael Bush:

There is no great future for health care in this country or any other. If we don't recognize what just happened and what people just did, there's no other demonstration of commitment. So people in an institution and what health care workers just did, you just cannot find it. And so way beyond those who found the vaccine, people who worked on the vaccine, we know them.

They were living pretty well. They were living pretty well. It wasn't the same. It wasn't the same. So this is you know, you can't you got to start with honesty and acknowledgment of what has actually happened. This is certainly the place to start. And I believe it's the hope for going forward.

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Anne Dabrow Woods: If you had a dream for all of health care, what would it be? What is your dream for this wonderful profession we work in that needs to change? What's your dream?

Michael Bush: Yeah, my dream is that we understand reality, which is how health care really gets done. And it's through the people. You know, we say that in many businesses, but a lot of leaders don't really believe it in health care. You know, it's completely clear. And that that we support leaders in their transformation. You know that the leader of the past - good manager, you know, manages to the budget gets things done on time.

All those things are important, holds people accountable, you know, follows/make sure people are following the rules and the requirements and so on. All those things are management. We've been talking about leadership in our time today and how you connect with people and feeling a need to connect with everyone that every once important there's not anyone on your team that's less that's more important than another, unless you've got somebody on your team who shouldn't be on your team because they don't live up to the values and the beliefs of the organization.

So my dream is that the leaders of health care raise the expectation of leaders and support them in their transformation in moving from a caterpillar to a butterfly. They support them in that and they realize it's going to take time. You know, this is a 3 to 4 year journey in making a commitment in terms of being a different kind of a leader.

You know, you actually we call them "for all" leaders. And so, you know, that's my dream. And that leaders who are currently, you know, the people who can make this transformation, who unfortunately, are these leaders who are working 60 to 70 hours weeks, That's what I'm talking about. Those leaders that we find a way through technology, through giving people flexibility, you know, in terms of when they need a break and when they can take a break and starting at ten because they want to drop off their kids a couple of days a week and just like everybody else does, you know, or attend to their pet or the elder parent. That we use technology which can handle this efficiently, enable that, and that's scheduling in that time so that people can take care of their lives through the same thing. You know that I'm in the UKG family, A Great Place To Work is, and this is what we're obsessed about. We waste so much time, you know, at work on doing things that are totally unnecessary, that are not adding value.

And we need to be putting our time into building people and taking care of people because then they're going to take care of patients, customers, each other. And that's the only way our organization is going to be able to fulfill its purpose.

Nanne Finis: And Michael, technology, just one little thought as you're talking is providing leaders and staff, the leaders insights into their people so that they're not going into 20 systems to see different aspects of what their people are managing or dealing with. But they can see a collection of, you know, data to act on.

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Michael Bush: This is something that I said, and it's easy to fly over if you're not taking care of your meditation gait, if you're not walking, riding, take care of your physical health. I don't know how you're going to make it through 2024, especially in the U.S., where there's going to be efforts to tear us apart rather than to pull us together.

And you got all that going on. And then you walk into that hospital or medical office building or that clinic or wherever it is, you can't do it because you're not a robot. So you're carrying all that stuff to you want to be in a place that knows that, that acknowledges that, that understands that. And that that we're carrying different things and reacting to things in a different way.

The only way you can be that person and be there to support other people is to be taking care of yourself. Yeah. So don't read the books on the one Minute manager and all of that stuff. Read the books on meditation, exercise 15 minutes, those behavioral changes that are needed to change you and support you as the perfect person and get your teams to do the same thing.

Your team's not going to walk if you're not walking, your team's not going to meditate if you're not meditating, your team's not going to, you know, eat differently if you're not eating differently. This is the call for leaders in this complex world. It's well-being number one.

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Lisa Bonsall: Thank you for listening. I hope you've enjoyed these highlights. If you'd like to hear more, visit NursingCenter.com/wakeuphealthcare. Thank you.

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