

Positioning Nurses to Drive Change: An Interview with Dale Beatty

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Lisa Bonsall: Hello, this is Lisa Bonsall, senior clinical editor for Lippincott NursingCenter. I'm pleased to be speaking with Dr. Dale Beatty, Chief Nurse Executive and Vice President of Patient Care Services at Stanford Healthcare and President of the Association of California Nurse Leaders. Thank you for joining me today.

Dale Beatty: It's a pleasure, Lisa. Thank you.

Lisa Bonsall: Can you talk a little bit about your career journey in nursing please? Did you always see yourself going into executive leadership?

Dale Beatty: No, I did not always see myself going into executive leadership. When I started my career in the 80s, you know, I didn't know exactly what I wanted to do career wise and I just started working in a nursing home and really enjoyed the relationships and the connections with family, patients, other care providers as well. And my mother happens to be a nurse, and she suggested that I go into nursing, which wasn't even in my paradigm. And so off to nursing school I went and I actually was the only male in my program, which was an interesting experience and in many ways created great awareness and in terms of who I am but also helped me define where I wanted to go as well. And so I started my career in nursing, finished nursing school and actually came to Chicago because I had a scholarship through the Veterans Administration to Northwestern in the City of Chicago and launched my career there. And yeah, I really liked working clinically. I loved working clinically. I worked at the open heart ICU, the burn unit, transplant unit, but then I also went into emergency trauma services and surgical services and I was really just exploring areas of clinical interest.

But then I found myself getting into — to answer your question — more formal leadership roles, a manage role, director role, vice president roles, and my career advanced from there, and have been a Chief Nurse now for 22 years.

Lisa Bonsall: Well, that's quite a background you have. At the recent AONL conference you presented the keynote "DEI in nursing leadership: Moving from conversation to action." Can you talk about the success in diversifying the nursing workforce at Stanford?

Dale Beatty: Sure, this is a very... area of strategic interest and growth at Stanford. We've actually changed some of our structures and our systems to be much more inclusive, recognizing that to eliminate health disparities, you have to have a diverse workforce and you have to have a workforce that mirrors the community in which you serve.

So we have stood up, you know, ERGs, employee resource groups, to really focus on areas and create community.

And we've also done things intentionally like we collaborated with the National Black Nurses Association to create our Stanford Medicine Black Nurses chapter, nursing chapter, and have great membership and we participate nationally and presenting there as well. And we've done the same with Latinx. I'm actually the Co-chair for the executive sponsor and Co-chair for our Latinx ERG here at Stanford, and I also Co-chair with our Chief Medical Officer, our Health Equity forums as well.

Lisa Bonsall: And how did you first become involved with board membership? What was your first position?

Dale Beatty: That's a really good question. I'm going to have to think back on that. Well, I've been involved in a lot of boards, probably my first one was I got formally involved in the Illinois Organization of Nurse Leaders on a nursing board, and ultimately became the President of the Illinois Organization of Nurse Leaders. So that was my first big professional nursing board that I was on and had the opportunity to lead as the President. And it was really eye opening and growth enhancing to be on the other side because I've been on the service side on the operational leadership/executive leadership, but to be on the governance side was an eye opener.

Lisa Bonsall: Fantastic. And how did you become involved with the Nurses on Boards Coalition? Why is their work so important?

Dale Beatty: The I think one of the things that we know is that the nurse leaders and executives have to be at the table where strategy, vision and governance is taking place. And so, you know, I'm a big believer in that, that nurses have to participate in governance to use their voice collectively to change social policy, to take position and to lead in the organization.

Lisa Bonsall: And what advice do you have for nurses who are interested in leadership and board service?

Dale Beatty: I would say one of the things I think is important...find yourself a mentor. Someone that's done some board and governance work and help tease out what your interest is. I also think it's important to do something that you're passionate about. I have a particular passion, for instance, on hospice and palliative care. So I sat on a board and one of the largest hospice and palliative care organizations in the country, and that was very satisfying and rewarding. And I still had expertise and have expertise where I felt like I contribute. So I think it's important to give back to your community and to provide support and to use your voice.

Lisa Bonsall: Wonderful. Thank you so much. Those are all great answers. Is there anything else you would like to say about board membership?

Dale Beatty: I would just echo that you know, I think board leadership is critically important and I really applaud NOBC for taking a position of getting nurses involved in boards and recognizing as the largest healthcare professional that we certainly are making sure that we have representation at the table and that nurses are in a unique position to drive policy changes in the healthcare organization, in our country, in the world.

And I do think it's in a very important to leverage your professional knowledge, skills and abilities as well. I happen to be a member of the American Academy of Nursing, which heavily focuses on policy to make sure that we have experts that are at the table, along other experts that of multidisciplinary nature, to drive the changes that are necessary in this country and also the world.

Lisa Bonsall: Wonderful. Stanford is certainly lucky to have you at the helm there, thank you so much.

Dale Beatty: It's really a pleasure and it's a pleasure to be a nurse, and it's a pleasure to be involved with NOBC.

Lisa Bonsall: Dr. Beatty, thank you so much.

Dale Beatty: Thank you so much for your time. Appreciate it.

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