

A Candid Conversation with Mayo Clinic

[PODCAST TRANSCRIPT – September 22, 2023]

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Lisa Bonsall: Hi, this is Lisa Bonsall, senior clinical editor for Lippincott NursingCenter. Today's episode includes highlights from the webinar *Wake Up Health Care Pursuing Greatness, A Candid Conversation with Mayo Clinic*. Listen in as JoEllen Frain, human resources chair at Mayo Clinic talks about the challenges that many health care organizations are facing today and how they must simultaneously elevate culture and innovative workforce solutions to make their organizations a great place to work.

To view the whole webinar, please visit nursingcenter.com/wakeuphealthcare. Thank you.

JoEllen Frain: What I hope to guide and talk with all of you about today are some things that we've tried, some things that we've learned from, some things that may be helpful to you as an organization because I want us to all understand that we can all lift each other up during this time. And I hope that that's what we accomplish at the end of today's session.

So thank you.

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JoEllen Frain: Where we are today is we're an organization of about 76,000 employees. We serve over 1.3 million patients from over 130 countries. You know, our logo really is important to us because it represents who we are, and that's our clinical practice as one shield in our logo, we have three shields kind of interlocked, but one shield is our clinical practice, but equally of significance within that logo, are our educational and our research shield, because those are the two kind of workhorses around our practice that really elevate Mayo Clinic.

Our education is not only for our students and learners and providers of the future, but also support of our current work workforce as things change and transition and we continue to hone our practice. Our internal education shield is really driving that on behalf of the organization. The second aspect is our research shield, and that really is where we take discovery and bring it to delivery.

And it's been so fascinating to watch how that's accelerated over the last couple of years and how we're pushing ourselves to say, how do we get quicker from discovery to translation for our patients and having our research R&D such a part of our clinical practice as well as with our education?

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JoEllen Frain: And I don't want to gloss over the real and significant pressures that we face day to day. And Mayo Clinic is not immune to them. We are not immune to recruitment challenges. We are not immune to some of the kind of peaks and valleys with compensation and other challenges. But I think what I would describe as unique to Mayo is that our why is really sound and it has remained unchanged and we revisit that why routinely and for the right and important reasons.

And I think so often when people talk about their why, they're like, Oh no, no, we have that printed on our pamphlet and we have it etched in our wall. And so of course everybody knows our why. But I think it really becomes a differentiated why when they can see our leaders living in that why and acting that out.

And I think as I experience Mayo Clinic, we use that why to help formulate our decisions and that why is the patient and we revisit that routinely and regularly. But it is coupled with that patient centric focus that this relentless pursuit of innovation is coupled with it. And so it's not being happy within the routine and being able to just pay, you know, care for our patients today.

But it's insuring that we're looking around the corner, that we're asking ourselves the tough questions that we challenging ourselves to say "Could this be done differently and better on behalf of our patients in the constant balance that we work within?"

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JoEllen Frain: Listening has to be with purpose and plans. And so we routinely, like many other organizations, do listening strategies, and we do staff surveys to kind of measure our progress or gaps.

So one real example that came out of our listening from last year's survey was just really the different generations that we have in the workforce and the meaning behind our benefits. What some individuals highly, highly value other individuals don't see value in at all. And so how is it that we have so many different generations with so many different kind of needs?

How are we responding to them as an employer? So we formed a task force to modernize our benefit offerings. One trend that's coming out loud and clear across many different kind of avenues is really around flexibility. You know, I think sometimes when we mention flexibility to leaders, they equate that with chaos. And I really think that flexibility is different than that.

Flexibility is one in terms of choices. Flexibility is oftentimes a currency for some that says, I'm willing to work nontraditional hours in order to have the payoff of being home between these hours and these hours. Too often our schedules were forcing people into eight hour or 12 hour blocks. So we start to kind of crack those open and we're leveraging our new technologies to help us with that, in terms of staff scheduling, to provide that flexibility, bring some more transparency and tools to our staff that will afford them that.

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JoEllen Frain: The other part that we've started to understand and explore more is more around the well-being of our staff post-COVID, and understanding what that looks like. And we've provided venues and opportunities for staff to share their journey through that because everybody's journey is a little bit different.

There were staff that were working when most of their colleagues were sent home, and they have a different lived experience than we have with those that were sent to be remote and have not yet returned to campus. And so, you know, it's not a one size fits all, but it's really grounding ourselves in terms of this is an intentional path forward of things that we are going to do to ensure, one, that we don't lose that connectivity because that is the secret sauce of our organization and quite honestly, I would argue in health care. And health care is, you know, centered around the patients. And we have

our direct patient care providers. But in many organizations now, we have their support systems that are removed from the office and are working remote. And I think we have a little bit of a tension between those that are able to work from home in their yoga pants and etc., and those that are on the front lines.

And I think it's important that we find intentional ways that we continue to bring those groups back together so they know that there is a visible and tangible support. And we've intentionally done that with many of our teams, is saying you have a very hands on practice component with the groups that you serve. So from an HR, Finance, I.T. perspective, you're not only getting it from your lens, but you're there in order to kind of share that with the practice and the practice sees that visible support. They see that we're still connected as an organization.

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JoEllen Frain: We've been intentional in being able to return staff towards professional development, not certainly to the full extent that we were prior to COVID for lots of different challenges, but just that investment in staff and that opportunity for them to understand that we're invested and want them to feel the passion about their profession and continue to build their skill and support them in building those skills. And so we've been intentional about that with our staff as well, to say we want to make sure that you're getting that opportunity to kind of refresh and kind of refill your bucket too, as we're facing these challenges.

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JoEllen Frain: Most health care organizations, if you ask your staff, is their ability to go the extra mile for their patients. And I think in a high trust culture, that's one of those elements where we work together to bring those answers, to bring hope, to bring answers, to bring kind of pathways for them, you know, from a clinical setting.

But on a personal setting, we share articles with our staff every week about staff who have gone above and beyond to create a wedding ceremony for an individual where their parent may not be leaving the hospital, where we had an individual after one and a half years in the hospital believing she was six years old, we had staff that were able to get a Cinderella horse and carriage to take her away from the hospital in a Cinderella gown. We had staff administrators dressed up as, you know, Disney characters as they went through it. And so I think it's that opportunity to go that extra mile because not only is that important for the patient, it is important for the individual staff's purpose and understanding their connection of changing lives. And I think our teams come in to health care with that intent.

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JoEllen Frain: It's the confidence in the senior leaders in the direction of the organization. And you can't say enough how we need to inspire our staff in where we're headed, because some of the things that we're asking our staff to contemplate and think about, things like A.I., automation, you know, I think we're coming at a point where they've seen automation through the medical record that was supposed to bring them better tools, and it has in some regards, but it also has brought other burdens, so rightfully so. I think there's a lot of speculation, some of these new terms and these technologies that are kind of coming to the forefront. It's really important for our leaders to help ground those kind of those innovations and why, and that staff believe and trust and follow in that direction. And I think you

have to spend a lot of time and diligence in closing those because in order to go further, faster, you need to do the hard work upfront to ensure that your staff and your army are behind you.

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JoEllen Frain: When you look at gender, racial, generational, etc., kind of gaps, what you're really looking at is things that become challenging to belonging. And if you don't have strong belonging, the ability to do the other things that we we want to do as an organization become much more challenging. And so I think as many organizations have over the last couple of years, come to understand some of those challenges, we've made differentiated investments.

And so, for example, Mayo Clinic has made \$100 million investment in eliminating racism within our organization. And how that plays out is through one, ensuring that our leadership is involved, that they are articulating the and driving the results that we're looking for with that, but also creating an environment where we recognize we don't have the answers and understand that bringing more people into the solutioning is critical.

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JoEllen Frain: In health care, we're all facing health equity issues, but I think that allows us to really reflect upon some of the barriers that become apparent as you start to address health equity. Oftentimes it's that my health care provider doesn't look like the community that I live in. And so that has helped us to really understand and be purposeful about, we need to drive diversity within our workforce, which will at its end help us reduce health inequities and understand that we become the place that we aspire to be, which is hope and healing for all of mankind.

And if we don't have a workforce that reflects that, we won't be able to achieve that outcome.

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JoEllen Frain: What I hope for health care is that all of us dig down into our why. And again, it may seem Pollyanna, but we all can remember the reasons why we came to a health care organization. We can understand why we went into the health care profession. Some being direct patient caregiver, some others being support. And if we can't look ourselves in the face and say, I get the why, I get why it's important, how are we going to pass that on to the next generation of which all of us are going to rely on for care? So that would be one thing that I would love to change about health care is just that inspiration of the next generation of what a meaningful, fulfilling and enriching career health care can be.

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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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