

SHAPING THE FUTURE HEALTHCARE WORKFORCE:

A Leadership Forum

JULY 2026

Essentia Health, 3000 32nd Avenue S,
Fargo, ND



A joint educational activity provided by NDHA,
Exigent Medical Education and Medical Solutions

MESSAGE FROM ASSOCIATION CEO

On behalf of the North Dakota Hospital Association, welcome to Shaping the Future Healthcare Workforce: A Leadership Forum. We are pleased to bring together healthcare leaders from across our state to focus on one of the most pressing issues facing our industry today: building a sustainable, resilient workforce.

The challenges we face—staffing shortages, burnout, financial pressures, and evolving care models—require more than short-term solutions. They call for intentional strategies, strong partnerships, and a shared commitment to innovation and collaboration.

Today's sessions are designed to provide practical insights and actionable strategies, from strengthening culture and trust to advancing long-term workforce models and addressing critical allied staffing needs. Just as important, this forum creates space to learn from one another and build connections that extend beyond today.

Tim Blasl

ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT/CEO

Overview

This leadership forum brings together healthcare executives, HR leaders, and clinical decision-makers to explore today's most pressing workforce challenges, including shortages, burnout, financial pressures, and shifting care delivery models.

Discussions will focus on:

- Moving beyond reactive staffing toward strategic, data-driven solutions
- Strengthening culture, trust, collaboration, and long-term workforce resilience
- Examining operational alignment, technology, governance, allied health shortages, state-specific insights, and peer-led strategies

Together, these discussions will help leaders improve recruitment, retention, patient flow, and sustainable organizational performance.

EVENT REGISTRATION DETAILS

Join healthcare leaders from across North Dakota or a focused discussion on workforce strategy.

Date: July 23, 2026

Time: 8:00am - 4:15pm

Location: Essentia Health
3000 32nd Avenue S
Fargo, ND

Registration Link: <https://ndha.org/events/leadership-roundtable/>



Agenda & Session Descriptions

8:00 AM – 9:00 AM
Registration and
Networking Breakfast

Begin the day by checking in and enjoying a light breakfast. Meet healthcare leaders from across North Dakota and connect with HR and clinical staff facing similar workforce challenges.

9:00 AM – 9:05 AM
Welcome Remarks

Representatives from the North Dakota Hospital Association and Medical Solutions will open the event with a welcome message and an overview of the day's goals: collaboration, innovation, and practical solutions for advancing the workforce.

9:05 AM – 10:30 AM
Keynote Session: Trust
is the Strategy: Building
Cohesion to Drive
Collective Performance

As hospitals across North Dakota confront workforce shortages, burnout, shrinking margins, and evolving care models, leaders face unprecedented pressure. This moment will not be solved by stronger individual performance, but by stronger collective performance. The question is not how hard one leader can push, but how to deliberately cultivate a cohesive culture built on trust, which is the foundation of every high-performing team.

This interactive session convenes C-suite executives, HR leaders, and clinical administrators to objectively re-examine workplace culture: the driver of behavior, performance, and retention. Leaders will identify actionable recruitment and retention strategies and gain practical troubleshooting tactics for human resources issues that they can implement immediately. Participants will leave with a clear understanding that the culture they create today will determine the workforce they have tomorrow.

Speaker: Kathleen Bartholomew

10:45 AM – 11:45 AM
Stabilizing the
Healthcare Workforce:
From Crisis Response to
Long-Term Strategy

Healthcare workforce challenges are no longer temporary disruptions; they represent a permanent shift in how labor must be structured, managed, and optimized. This session explores how healthcare organizations can move beyond reactive staffing decisions and toward a sustainable, system-based workforce strategy.

Attendees will examine the key drivers of workforce instability and learn how aligning workforce design, technology, data, governance, and operational execution can improve flexibility, financial performance, and long-term workforce resilience.

Speaker: Erin MacKenzie

Vice President, Solution Engineering, Medical Solutions

11:45 AM – 1:00 PM
Networking Lunch

Take advantage of your lunch break to build connections with peers and partners. Whether you're from administration, HR, or clinical leadership, this is a chance to strengthen collaboration across hospital functions.

1:00 PM – 2:00 PM
Beyond Nursing:
Why Allied Staffing is
Now an Operational
Imperative

Allied workforce shortages are no longer isolated staffing challenges. They are becoming major drivers of operational disruption across healthcare systems. From imaging and laboratory services to respiratory therapy and rehabilitation, allied professionals directly influence patient throughput, length of stay, care progression, and financial performance.

In this discussion, we'll uncover why allied staffing has become one of the most critical yet often overlooked constraints within healthcare operations and how organizations can build more effective workforce strategies to improve speed, flexibility, and operational stability.

Attendees will examine the structural realities shaping the Allied labor market, including growing demand, limited training pipelines, specialty-specific skill requirements, and increasing market fragmentation. The session will also highlight practical strategies healthcare organizations can use to reduce hiring friction, improve fill success, strengthen workforce partnerships, and better align operational decision-making with real market conditions.

Speaker: Matthew Neel

Vice President of Allied Health, Medical Solutions

2:00 PM – 2:15 PM | Afternoon Refreshment Break

2:15 PM – 3:15 PM
North Dakota-Specific
Discussion: Workforce
Strategies

Topics will include legislative advocacy, grant funding, staff wellness programs, and hospital association initiatives supporting recruitment and retention.

3:15 PM – 4:00 PM
Closing Roundtable
and Action Planning

All participants will regroup to reflect on the day, identify common themes, and outline action steps for applying what they've learned. The session will conclude with shared commitments and suggestions for continued peer collaboration.

4:00 PM
Closing Remarks and
Adjournment

Final comments from NDHA and Medical Solutions leadership to summarize key takeaways and encourage future partnerships in workforce development efforts.

Speaker Bios



KATHLEEN BARTHOLOMEW

Before turning to healthcare as a career in 1994, Kathleen Bartholomew RN, MN held positions in marketing, business, communications, and teaching. It was these experiences that allowed her to look at the culture of healthcare from a unique perspective and speak poignantly to the issues affecting providers and the challenges facing health care organizations today.

Bartholomew, has been a national speaker for the past 13 years. For her master's thesis, she authored "Speak Your Truth: Proven Strategies for Effective Nurse-Physician Communication". In 2010, she was nominated by Health Leaders Media as one of the top 20 people changing healthcare in America, specifically for calling attention to the impact of disruptive behavior on patient care, and the need for better physician-nurse communication.

In December of 2005, Bartholomew resigned her position as manager of a 57-bed orthopedic and spine unit in order to write "Ending Nurse to Nurse Hostility" (2006), which offered the first comprehensive and compassionate look at the etiology, impact, and solutions of horizontal violence on patients as well as the profession of Nursing.

Bartholomew's passion for creating healthy work environments is infectious. As a guest Op-Ed writer for The Seattle Times, she is an outspoken consumer advocate, and on NPR's "The People's Pharmacy," she calls for rapid improvement in hospital safety. As a health care culture expert, Bartholomew speaks internationally to hospital boards, the military, senior leadership, and staff about patient safety, communication, leadership, and power. With her husband, John J. Nance, she co-authored "Charting the Course: Launching Patient-Centric Healthcare" in 2012, the sequel to "Why Hospitals Should Fly" (2008). From the bedside to the boardroom, she applies research to practice with humor and an ethical call to excellence that ignites and inspires health caregivers and leaders to unprecedented levels of excellence.

Speaker Bios



ERIN MACKENZIE

Erin MacKenzie is Vice President of Solution Engineering at Medical Solutions, where she leads strategic workforce and technology initiatives focused on helping healthcare organizations build more adaptive, sustainable workforce models. With more than 20 years of experience across workforce solutions, staffing technology, operations, and client services, MacKenzie brings a unique blend of industry expertise and operational insight to healthcare workforce transformation efforts.

Prior to joining Medical Solutions, she held leadership roles with organizations including Bullhorn, erecruit, Newbury Partners, ADP, and Paychex, where she specialized in workforce optimization, staffing best practices, client strategy, and enterprise technology solutions. She is also the co-host of Highly Adaptive, a podcast focused on helping leaders and organizations respond to change with a more proactive and adaptive mindset. MacKenzie is recognized for her ability to connect workforce strategy, technology, and operational execution to drive meaningful business outcomes and long-term organizational resilience.

Speaker Bios



MATTHEW NEEL

Matthew Neel is Vice President of Allied Health at Medical Solutions, where he leads a team of more than 100 recruiters and operational leaders across multiple allied health divisions. With more than two decades of experience in healthcare workforce solutions, Neel specializes in allied workforce strategy, operational performance, recruiting optimization, and organizational scalability. He partners closely with executive leadership to align workforce strategy, operational execution, and market realities in an increasingly constrained talent environment.

Prior to his current position, Neel spent more than 17 years with Aureus Medical Group in progressive leadership roles overseeing allied sales, recruiting, and operations. Throughout his career, he has led initiatives focused on workforce specialization, placement efficiency, margin improvement, and operational consistency across allied healthcare staffing. Known for his practical operational insight and deep understanding of the Allied labor market, he brings a strategic perspective on how healthcare organizations can better navigate workforce shortages, improve throughput, and strengthen long-term staffing stability.

Learning Objectives

- Assess how culture, trust, collaboration, and leadership behaviors influence recruitment, retention, performance, and workforce resilience.
- Develop actionable strategies to strengthen workforce stability through targeted recruitment, retention, and HR troubleshooting practices.
- Identify the key shifts, risks, and market dynamics reshaping the healthcare workforce, including allied health shortages.
- Explore the core pillars of long-term workforce stability, including labor mix, technology, governance, analytics, and workforce maturity.
- Evaluate how fragmented strategies, operational friction, hiring processes, and restrictive requirements impact fill success, patient flow, and financial performance.
- Apply specialty-specific workforce strategies to improve speed-to-fill, workforce alignment, vendor effectiveness, and staffing outcomes.
- Identify practical next steps to strengthen alignment across HR, operations, and department leadership for more effective workforce decision-making.

Continuing Education Credits

To improve patient care, this activity has been planned and implemented by Exigent Medical Education and Medical Solutions. Exigent Medical Education is jointly accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME), the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE), and the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) to provide continuing education for the healthcare team.

Credit Designation for Nursing

Exigent Medical Education designates this continuing nursing education activity for 5.25 contact hours. Learners are advised that accredited status does not imply endorsement by the provider or ANCC of any commercial products displayed in conjunction with an activity.

Human Resources

This program has been submitted to the HR Certification Institute for review.

Exigent Contact Information

For information about the accreditation of this program, please contact Exigent at info@yourjointprovider.com.

Disclosure of Relevant Financial Relationships

Exigent Medical Education requires faculty, instructors, authors, planners, directors, managers, peer reviewers, relevant staff, and other individuals who are in a position to control the content of this activity to disclose all personal financial relationships they may have had in the past 24 months with ineligible companies. An ineligible entity is any organization whose primary business is producing, marketing, selling, re-selling, or distributing healthcare products used by or on patients. All relevant financial relationships are identified and mitigated prior to initiation of the planning phase for an activity.

Exigent has mitigated and disclosed to learners all relevant financial relationships disclosed by staff, planners, faculty/authors, peer reviewers, or others in control of content for this activity. Disclosure of a relationship is not intended to suggest or condone bias in any presentation but is made to provide participants with information that might be of potential importance to their evaluation of a presentation or activity. Disclosure information for faculty, authors, course directors, planners, peer reviewers, and/or relevant staff is provided with this activity.

The faculty reported the following relevant financial relationships or relationships they have with ineligible companies of any amount during the past 24 months:

Faculty	Relevant Financial Relationship
Kathleen Bartholomew, RN, MSN	Nothing to disclose
Erin MacKenzie	Nothing to disclose
Matthew Neel	Nothing to disclose

The directors, planners, managers, peer reviewers, and relevant staff reported the following financial relationships they have with any ineligible company of any amount during the past 24 months:

Directors, Planners, Managers, Peer Reviewers, and Relevant Staff	Relevant Financial Relationship
Jon Borton	Nothing to disclose
Kristin Dahl	Nothing to disclose
Lydia Schroeder	Nothing to disclose
Holly Hampe, DSC, FACHE, RN, MHA, MRM, CPHQ	Nothing to disclose
Dee Morgillo, MEd, MLS (ASCP), CHCP	Nothing to disclose

Disclaimer

Participants have an implied responsibility to use the newly acquired information to enhance patient outcomes and their own professional development. The information presented in this activity is not meant to serve as a guideline for patient management. Any procedures, medications, or other courses of diagnosis or treatment discussed in this activity should not be used by clinicians without evaluation of patient conditions and possible contraindications or dangers in use, review of any applicable manufacturer's product information, and comparison with recommendations of other authorities.

Disclosure of Unlabeled Use

This educational activity may contain discussion of published and/or investigational uses of agents that are not indicated by the FDA. The planners of this activity do not recommend the use of any agent outside of the labeled indications. The opinions expressed in the educational activity are those of the faculty and do not necessarily represent the views of the planners. Please refer to the official prescribing information for each product for discussion of approved indications, contraindications, and warnings.

Requirements for credit:

- Attend/participate in the educational activity and review all course materials.
- Complete the CE Declaration process online by 11:59 pm ET August 22, 2026.
- Instructions will be provided. If you do not enter the online portal by the above date, you will not be able to retrieve your statement of participation.
- Upon successful completion of the online form, your statement of completion will be presented to you to print.

