Wednesday, October 21, 2026

7:00 – 8:00 a.m. **Breakfast** (Pool Area Patio)

7:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m. **NDHA Registration Desk** – Check in. **Atrium**

8:00 – 10:15 a.m. **Concurrent Session**

- **Leading Without Authority: How HR Drives Manager Consistency to Reduce Turnover**
  Presented by Jen Bertsch, CEO, Leadwell Consulting
  Location: Director's Room

Content: HR leaders in small hospitals wear many hats, but their real leverage isn't authority, it's influence. This two-part interactive session explores how HR can drive manager consistency in three critical areas: clear expectations, quality feedback, and building accountability. We'll tackle the real barriers HR faces when coaching managers are without formal power and leave with concrete tools you can implement Monday morning. Yes, hiring matters, but one of the fastest ways to reduce hiring pressure is to keep more of the people you already have. **Recommended Audience: Human Resource Employees**

- 8:00 – 9:00 a.m. Part 1 (60 min): The Foundation
- 9:00 – 9:15 a.m. 15-min break
- 9:15 – 10:15 a.m. Part 2 (60 min): Building Your Playbook

Note: Both parts are connected but designed so attendees can get value from Part 2 even if they miss Part 1.

8:00 – 9:00 a.m. **Concurrent Sessions**

- **Medicaid Policy Changes – HR 1** **Sponsored by: ND HFMA**
  Presented by Jodi Hulm, Care Management Program Director, ND Dept. of Health & Human Services
  Location: Executive Room

Content: This session provides an essential overview of the major changes affecting Medicaid and Medicaid Expansion that came out of Working Families Tax Cut Act also known as HR 1 signed into law on July 4th, 2025. Attendees will explore the core sections of the bill that affect Medicaid and Medicaid Expansion populations. **Recommended Audience: HFMA members, and others interested.**

- **Medical Gaslighting** **Sponsored by: ND SHRM**
  Presented by Dr. Susan Sgambati, Sr. Physician Risk Manager, COPIC
  Location: Conference Room

Content: "Medical gaslighting" is recognized as a serious patient safety concern. The term describes situations in which a patient's symptoms, concerns, or lived experience are minimized, dismissed, or misattributed by a clinician—often unintentionally. While the intent is rarely harmful, the impact can be significant: delays in diagnosis, erosion of trust, and preventable adverse outcomes. This discussion will explore how cognitive biases, communication breakdowns, and system pressures contribute to these experiences, and more importantly, how we can recognize and mitigate them. **Recommended Audience: Risk Managers, others interested.**

- **ED Cardiovascular Mortality in North Dakota (Medicare Beneficiaries) 2024-2025**
  Presented by Dr. Angeline Brunetto, Medical Director, Appeals, CMS BFCC Quality 13th SOW
  Location: Board

Content: A focused review of 2024, and confirmed by 2025 data, identified North Dakota as having statistically higher emergency department cardiovascular mortality among Medicare beneficiaries relative to 28 other states served by the QIO. Contributing factors cited in the analysis include prehospital care processes, the timing of electrocardiogram (ECG) acquisition, provider type, and hospital classification. **Recommended Audience: All interested.**

9:00 – 9:15 a.m. Break **Sponsored by: DTB Systems**

9:15 – 10:15 a.m. **Concurrent Sessions**

- **Medicare Cost Report Worksheet S-12 and Other Hot Topics** **Sponsored by: ND HFMA**
  Presented by Scott Braun and Bev Fiferlick, Eide Bailly Advisory LLC
  Location: Executive Room

Content: This session will provide an overview of the new Medicare cost report Worksheet S-12, including its purpose, how it works, and the information hospitals will need to complete it accurately. Presenters will discuss key reporting requirements, practical considerations, and potential issues hospitals should be aware of as they prepare for implementation. The session will also address other current Medicare cost report developments and hot topics affecting hospitals. **Recommended Audience: HFMA members, and others interested.**

- **Risk Manager Legal Roundtable** **Sponsored by: ND SHRM**
  Presented by Melissa Hauer, VP/General Counsel, NDHA
  Location: Conference Room

Content: This session will review recent court decisions that impact healthcare risk management, discuss the development of effective risk management strategies, and look at how recent legislation and regulations may impact healthcare risk management. **Recommended Audience: Risk Managers.**

- **Beyond C. diff: When Clostridia Disrupts Brain Function, Behavior, and Recovery**
  Presented by: Dr. Shylah Schauer **Sponsored by: NDONL**
  Location: Board Room

Content: Hospitals have become highly effective at detecting and managing C. difficile infection, yet many patients continue to experience cognitive, behavioral, and recovery challenges that are not explained by traditional models of infection. Emerging evidence demonstrates that Clostridia species beyond C. diff, when expanded in the gut after antibiotics or other disruptions, can produce neuroactive and inflammatory metabolites that influence systemic inflammation and brain function. This session provides a biologically grounded, clinically relevant framework for understanding how gut microbial disruption, particularly involving clostridia family organisms, affects mental status, behavior, and functional recovery in hospitalized patients. **Recommended Audience: CNOs, nurse managers, others interested.**

- ***The Future of AI in Healthcare** - *Tentative*
  Presented by: American Hospital Association? TBA
  Location: Embassy Rooms

Content: This session will explore AI in healthcare – from practical uses for leadership to governing clinical and administrative integration.

10:15 – 10:30 a.m. Break **Sponsored by: DTB Systems**

10:30 – 11:30 a.m. **Concurrent General Sessions**

- **Preparing for 2027: A Healthcare Legislative Outlook**
  Moderated by Tim Blasl, President, and Melissa Hauer, VP/General Counsel, NDHA
  Panel: Representative Jon Nelson, Senator Judy Lee, Senator Tim Mathern (add'l TBA)
  Location: Executive Room

Content: Join a panel of state legislators for a timely discussion on the issues, priorities, and policy proposals expected to shape the 2027 legislative session. Hear directly from policymakers about their perspectives on healthcare policy, the state's healthcare landscape, and the legislative issues most likely to impact providers, payers, patients, and the broader healthcare industry. **Recommended Audience: CEOs, CFOs, COOs, Government Relations.**

- **Nurses/Clinical** – **Mitigating Nursing Liability: Key Risks and Strategic Safeguards**
  Presented by: Cyndi Siders, Executive Consultant **Sponsored by: NDONL**
  Location: Board Room

Content: Clear, concise, accurate, and clinically pertinent communication and documentation form the foundation for safe, coordinated, patient-centered care. Lack of clinically detailed communication is often noted as a contributing factor for serious safety events and nursing liability. This presentation will illustrate through case example, frequent allegations for nursing malpractice including nurse leader liability related to scope of practice, failure to provide appropriate assessment, performance

of treatment/technique, failure to monitor, and failure to follow facility policies and provide a safe environment. **Recommended Audience: CNOs, Nurse Managers, others interested.**

11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. **NDONL Meeting/Lunch**
Location: Board Room

11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. **LUNCH** (Pool Area Patio) **Sponsored by: MMA**

12:45 – 1:45 p.m. **Opening Keynote Session** – sponsored by Sanford Health

Culture By Design: Transforming Workplaces One Brain Pattern Interrupt at a Time

Presented by: Paul Long **Sponsored by: Sanford Health**
Location: Royale Room

Content: No wonder our minds habitually focus on what's wrong and why we're frustrated instead of where we could be and what it would take to get there. This is where Fundamism™ changes everything. Workplace culture expert Paul J. Long has discovered a powerful truth: Culture isn't something you fix - it's something you create through moment-by-moment choices. Through his principles of deliberate connection, he teaches leaders and teams how to implement "brain pattern interrupts" that shift attention from problems to possibilities. The insight is simple but profound: You can't be deliberate and overwhelmed at the same time. When you become intentional about how you show up, how you connect, and where you focus, you transform your experience—and your organization's culture. **Recommended Audience: All disciplines.**

1:45 – 2:00 p.m. Break **Sponsored by: DTB Systems**

2:00 – 3:00 p.m. **Concurrent General Sessions**

- **Behavioral Emergency Response Team (BERT) Sponsored by: Sanford Health**
  Presented by Jennifer Harrington, MSN, BSN, RN, Sanford Health
  Location: Executive Room

Content: Behavioral health crises can occur anywhere in the hospital setting, creating challenges for patients, families and healthcare staff. A Behavioral Emergency Response Team (BERT) provides a proactive, multidisciplinary approach to identifying, de-escalating and managing behavioral emergencies while promoting safety and preserving dignity for everyone involved. This presentation will explore the development, implementation and impact of a BERT program within healthcare organizations. Attendees will learn how a response team can reduce workplace violence, improve patient and staff experiences and support a culture of safety. Real-world lessons learned, operational considerations and best practices for training, team composition and response protocols will be shared. **Recommended Audience: All disciplines.**

- **Financial Stewardship: The Reverse Engineered Strategic Plan**
  Presented by: Tim Kittila & Scott Davidson, Kraus-Anderson
  Location: Embassy Room A/B

Content: The traditional masterplan process for healthcare campuses involves dreaming big to achieve patient experience goals, creating a plan to match that dream, and culminating with an evaluation of cost to construct the plan. Have you been through this process and ended up with a plan you could not afford? Ultimately having to revise, or compromise, on the dream plan and disappointing your entire team. Costing you and your team time and money! What if you could start with cost on day one? In this session, you will learn about the reverse engineered masterplan that is gaining adoption within the healthcare C-Suite. Through the lens of a Case Study on a recent Critical Access Facility industry experts, we share the tools and processes you can bring to your next masterplan that will set you up for cost, schedule, and scope certainty AND achieving your realistic vision for the future. **Recommended Audience: All disciplines.**

3:00 – 3:15 p.m. Break **Sponsored by: DTB Systems**

3:15 – 4:45 p.m. **Concurrent Sessions (90 minutes)**

- **NDHA Membership and Business Meeting**
  Location: Royale Room
  - NDHA member CEO or CEO Designee only
  - Orders of business, approval of minutes, budget review, and reports from board chair and president, the North Dakota Hospital Foundation, and HSIsolutions.

- **Perspectives in Zero Suicide Implementation**
  ***Panel**: Sarah Kemp Tabbut, LCSW, Program Manager for ND Hopes and ND Thrives; Kora Dockter, BSN, retired RN and mother of Steve, who died by suicide; Melissa Lennon, PT, DPT, Altru Inpatient Behavioral Health, Grand Forks; and Jeremy Brown, Director of Operations, FirstLink, Fargo.*
  Location: Director's Room

Content: The foundational belief of Zero Suicide is that suicide deaths for individuals under the care of health and behavioral health systems are preventable. For systems dedicated to improving patient safety, Zero Suicide presents an aspirational challenge and practical framework for system-wide transformation toward safer suicide care. Zero Suicide principals can assist hospitals, clinics, and other organizations screen for those at risk and provide or refer to appropriate care in the moment. In this session, the panel presentation will begin with a brief description of Zero Suicide and its seven elements. Then, a mother who lost her son to suicide will share how Zero Suicide principals may have made a difference for her son. Two North Dakota healthcare organizations who have begun their Zero Suicide journey will share their successes and lessons learned and a representative FirstLink will discuss how their Care and Support Program can be leveraged for follow-up. Wrapping up the presentation portion of the session will be information about special considerations for at-risk Veterans seeking care. The panelists will then take questions from the moderator and the audience. **Recommended Audience: All disciplines.**

5:00 – 9:00 p.m. **Evening Event:**

5:00 p.m. Food & Beverages available.

6:00 p.m. Join us for an evening of trivia!

Thursday, October 22, 2026

7:00 – 8:00 a.m. **Breakfast** (Pool Area Patio)

7:00 – 10:15 a.m. **Vendors set up for Trade Show**
Location: Grand Ballroom

7:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. **NDHA Registration Desk** – Check in.
Location: Atrium

8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. **Revenue Cycle Workshop**
Presented by Kathy Reep & Bob Paskowski, PYA, P.C.
Location: Conference & Director's Rooms

Content: Intended to expand the knowledge base of revenue cycle professionals, this program explores the major workflows and best practices within the hospital revenue cycle. The program is intended as a resource to help the revenue cycle team become stronger by developing a deep understanding of the entire revenue cycle, from pre-admission through billing, collections, and claims reconciliation. The session will also address the development of key performance indicators to help in tracking improvement success and recent regulations/legislation necessitating process changes. **Recommended Audience: All involved in the Revenue Cycle process.**

8:00 – 9:00 a.m. **Concurrent Sessions**

- **The Invisible Shield: Safety & High Reliability. Simplified.**
  Presented by: Missy Wetsch and Nicolette Johnson, CHI St. Alexius Health
  Location: Board Room

Content: This session introduces the foundational concepts of a High Reliability Organization (HRO) and examines how HROs differ from traditional approaches to safety and risk management. Participants will explore the core principles that drive high reliability, including preoccupation with failure, reluctance to simplify, sensitivity to operations, commitment to resilience, and deference to expertise, and how these behaviors contribute to building and sustaining a strong Safety-First culture. Through practical discussion and real-world examples, learners will gain insight into how organizations successfully apply HRO principles to improve safety, operational excellence, and team performance. The session is designed to inspire participants to identify

opportunities for implementing and sustaining High Reliability practices within their own teams and organizations. **Recommended Audience: All disciplines.**

- **Overview of Take Care of America's Veterans Act, including Critical Access for Veterans Care Act — S. 1868**
  Presented by Marcus Lewis, CEO, First Care Health Center, Park River, US Navy Veteran, and Co-Chair, Veterans Special Interest Group, NRHA
  Location: Embassy B Room

Content: The TCAVA includes many bills that will affect Veterans' healthcare, benefits, and ability to receive care in the community. This omnibus bill includes S.1868; veterans in many rural communities can face long drives to reach VA facilities even when a local critical access hospital is available. Senator Cramer has taken the issue from a rural-health concern to federal legislation, while North Dakota hospital CEOs and rural health organizations have supplied the real-world evidence and grassroots support needed to advance it. Join Marcus to find out more about what has been done and where the legislation sits now. **Recommended Audience: All disciplines.**

9:00 – 9:15 a.m. Break **Sponsored by: DTB Systems**

9:15 – 10:15 a.m. **Reimagining North Dakota's State Hospital: Transforming Behavioral Health with Trauma Informed Care**
Presented by Todd R. Medd, JLG Architects
Location: Board Room

Content: The North Dakota State Hospital in Jamestown, ND, is a vital component of the state's behavioral healthcare system, and its replacement represents a transformative investment in patient-centered, trauma-informed care. This presentation provides a project update from the design team and the client, highlighting progress to date and the shared vision guiding the development of this much-needed facility. As a key update to the North Dakota Department of Health and Human Services' care model, the design team will demonstrate how the project responds to evolving clinical, operational, and safety needs while supporting long-term system resiliency. The team will also share insights into major program areas and the design parti informing campus planning, building organization, and the patient and staff experience. Emphasis will be placed on the integration of Trauma-Informed Design principles and how they support patient healing, dignity, and overall well-being. The team will further outline strategies used to balance safety and security with a therapeutic environment, ensuring protection for both patients and caregivers. Attendees will gain an understanding of how this project builds opportunity and strengthens the behavioral healthcare ecosystem across North Dakota. **Recommended Audience: All disciplines.**

10:15 a.m. – 1:15 p.m. **TRADE SHOW & LUNCH**
Location: Grand Ballroom

Lunch Sponsored by: MMA

Plan to attend the trade show – a high-energy hub of innovation, networking, and cutting-edge advancements in medical technology! Join industry leaders, healthcare professionals, and tech innovators to explore the latest in patient care, medical devices, and digital health solutions. Representatives from top-tier healthcare companies engage in dynamic discussions, sharing insights on how their products can revolutionize treatment, enhance efficiency, and improve patient outcomes. **Recommended Audience: All disciplines.**

1:30 – 2:30 p.m. **Concurrent Sessions**

- **Improving Sepsis Care through Standardization and Program Development**
  Presented by Dr. Christopher Anderson, Associate Chief Medical Officer, and Dr. Joshua Honeyman, Section Chair, Board Health
  Location: Board Room

Content: This presentation will focus on the utilization of protocols, tools, and messaging to Clinicians and staff that drive improved patient outcomes for facilities of all sizes. **Recommended Audience: All disciplines.**

- **Hospital Emergency Preparedness**
  Presented by Derek Hanson, CEO, Heartland Consulting Group LLC
  Location: Executive Room

Content: A variety of topics will be discussed including Environment of Care issues, Disaster Medicine, and Patient Decontamination. The presentation is intended for entry-level hospital emergency preparedness staff and safety committee members. The topics will focus mainly on the rural hospital setting. **Recommended Audience: Those who oversee hospital Emergency Preparedness programs.**

2:30 – 2:45 p.m. Break **Sponsored by: DTB Systems**

2:45 – 3:45 p.m. **Concurrent Sessions**

- **AI is Already Here: How Leading Revenue Cycle Organizations are Using AI Right Now**
  Presented by: Blake Hartgraves, VP, Strategic Business Partnerships, PMMC
  Location: Board Room

Content: Tired of hearing what AI might do someday? This session focuses on what's working right now. Through industry research, real-world examples, and practical guidance, you'll learn where AI is delivering value across the revenue cycle today—from recovery prioritization and coding review to payer intelligence, and advanced analytics. We'll also discuss how to balance technology with human expertise, measure ROI, maintain security, and deliver meaningful results for your organization. **Recommended Audience: All disciplines.**

- **Life Safety Code**
  Presented by Kevin Drader, Kevin Himmelspach, and Karla Aldinger, Life Safety and Construction, ND Health & Human Services
  Location: Executive Room

Content: This presentation will provide an overview of the LSC Maintenance Manual. The manual covers 30 key life safety topics related to facility maintenance and compliance and the most frequently cited topics will be focused on, highlighting common deficiencies, maintenance expectations, and practical considerations for maintaining safe conditions. The goal is to provide maintenance staff with a clear understanding of the areas most commonly identified during surveys and inspections, while offering practical guidance to help prevent deficiencies and promote ongoing life safety compliance. **Recommended Audience: Those involved with life safety code compliance.**

3:45 – 4:00 p.m. Break

4:00 – 5:00 p.m. **Pharmacogenomics in Clinical Care: Improving Safety, Efficacy, and Outcomes**
Presented by Tamara Ruggles
Location: Executive Room

Content: Pharmacogenomics is transforming how clinicians approach medication therapy by using genetic information to guide prescribing decisions. This presentation will provide an overview of pharmacogenomics and its role in improving medication safety, efficacy, and patient outcomes. Attendees will learn how genetic variation can influence drug response, review common medications impacted by pharmacogenomic factors, and explore practical strategies for incorporating pharmacogenomics into clinical care. **Recommended Audience: All disciplines.**

5:00 – 9:00 p.m. **Evening Event: ND Healthcare Executives Forum (NDHEF) Social Hour**
Location: Grand Ball Room

Friday, October 23, 2026

7:00 – 8:30 a.m. Breakfast (TBA)

7:00 a.m. – Noon **NDHA Registration Desk**
Location: Atrium

8:30 – 9:30 a.m. **Concurrent Sessions**

- **CEO Legal Roundtable**
  Presented by Melissa Hauer, VP/General Counsel, NDHA
  Location: Conference Room

Content: Join Melissa Hauer and your colleagues in an open discussion to identify challenges particular to the hospital industry, including emerging risk, leadership difficulties, and recent legal decisions, regulations, and public policy affecting the healthcare profession in North Dakota. You're encouraged to share best management practices and solutions that have been used successfully. **NDHA Member CEOs only.**

- **What is the OGC?**
  Presented by Rachel Sinness and Tracy Laaveg, OGC
  Location: Board & Executive Rooms

Content: Rachel Sinness and Tracy Laaveg of the OGC will provide an overview of the state's newest agency focused on guardianship and conservatorship services. This presentation will cover the agency's role, available programs and resources, guardianship funding, training requirements, and how the office interacts with courts, attorneys, families, and community providers. **Recommended Audience: All disciplines.**

9:30 – 9:45 a.m. Break **Sponsored by: DTB Systems**

9:45 – 10:45 a.m. **Rural Health Transformation Program Update**
Presented by ND HHS
Location: Board & Executive Rooms

An overview of North Dakota's Rural Health Transformation Funds Program. More details to come.

10:45 – 11:00 a.m. Break **Sponsored by: DTB Systems**

11:00 a.m. – Noon **Closing Keynote Session**

Becoming Awesome: Building a Champion Mindset **Sponsored by: HSI**
Presented by Cam Awesome, US Boxing Champion
Location: Conference & Directors Rooms

Content: US boxing champion Cam Awesome shares his hard-won secrets to achieving unbeatable success in business and life. Through vivid stories from his journey from bullied kid to world-class athlete, Cam reveals a revolutionary approach to conquering any challenge: embracing failure as rocket-fuel for inevitable success. With humor and passion, Cam walks audiences through his early days getting pummeled in the ring and his 6-mile daily walks to the gym. He shows how anyone can develop true grit by reframing setbacks as feedback and focusing relentlessly on continuous improvement. As Cam puts it, "The best things that have ever happened to me came after my toughest failures and losses." But Cam's message isn't just about perseverance - it's about pursuing audacious, game-changing goals. He breaks down how organizations can apply his championship training techniques, setting moonshot targets and reverse-engineering them into day-by-day discipline. And he demonstrates how a culture of psychological safety, where people feel safe to take risks, fail, and innovate, drives exceptional performance. **Recommended Audience: All disciplines.**