

Speaker Biographies

Creating a Culture of Wellness in Healthcare Settings



Joseph Acierno, MD, JD, was recently appointed Chief Medical Officer and Director for the Division of Public Health for the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services. Dr. Acierno previously served as Deputy Chief Medical Officer and oversaw the regulatory portion of the division, specifically the Licensure, Investigations and Environmental Health Units. Dr. Acierno is a graduate of Creighton University with the following degrees: Bachelor of Science, Doctor of Medicine and Juris Doctor.



Daniel R. Anderson, M.D., Ph.D. is an Associate Professor of Medicine at the University of Nebraska Medical Center where he specializes in Cardiac Electrophysiology: the science of the mechanisms, functions, and performance of the electrical activities of specific regions of the heart. Dr. Anderson's specific clinical interests include understanding the aspects and contributing factors involved in atrial and ventricular arrhythmias, as well as in atherosclerosis and ischemic cardiomyopathy.



James T. Canedy, MD, FACHE, is President and Founder of SimplyWell, an established leader in the personal wellness and health management arena. Dr. Canedy is a practicing, board-certified orthopedic surgeon, a fellow of the American Academy of Orthopedic surgeons and a fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives. He is also Adjunct Associate Professor at the University of Nebraska Medical Center, President/Executive Director of Private Practice Associates, LLC, Clinical Service Chief, and Orthopedics at The Nebraska Medical Center. Dr. Canedy is a graduate of the University of Nebraska Medical Center and University of Tennessee Campbell Clinic Orthopedic Surgery Residency Program.



Matt Davison is color analyst for the Husker Sports Network, and former award-winning receiver for the Nebraska Cornhusker football team. His achievements include: First Team Academic All Big XII, member of the Brook Berringer Citizenship team and 2nd on the all-time receiving charts. But, Matt counts his academic dedication, commitment to youth and community outreach his greatest accomplishments. In 2008, Matt started the Creating Captains foundation which teaches young people to be leaders and agents of change in their schools and communities. In his professional life as a sportscaster, Matt has continued his community stewardship. He's used speaking engagements as a forum to spread his uplifting and positive message and continue his philanthropic efforts in Nebraska communities.



Rebecca Vinton Dorn, M.A., is Executive Director of Wellness Council of the Midlands (WELCOM). Becky works with approximately 250 companies of all sizes across the state of Nebraska in developing a business plan that focuses on the creation of a healthy culture through supportive corporate policies and strategic health interventions. Becky serves on various nonprofit boards such as Ted E. Bear Hollow and Live Well Omaha and participates in several community task forces dedicated to worksite wellness. She was awarded the Hollie Bethel Distinguished Alumni Award from the University of Nebraska at Omaha College of Education in 2011. Becky has a Bachelor of Arts degree in English from the University of South Dakota and Master of Arts in Health Education from the University of Nebraska at Omaha.



James Early, M.D. is a Clinical Associate Professor in the Department of Preventive Medicine and Public Health at the University of Kansas School of Medicine-Wichita. In 1993, Dr. Early founded Via Christi Weight Management which is one of the country's premier adult weight management clinics. The clinic specializes in the medical and surgical treatment of obesity and institutional and corporate wellness programming. His major areas of interest include the behavioral management of lifestyle related chronic illnesses; obesity; health promotion and disease prevention; lipid disorders; cardiovascular disease risk factors; and systems research related to ambulatory medical practice. Dr. Early received his Doctor of Medicine from the Indiana University School of Medicine and is board certified in family and internal medicine.



David Filipi, MD, is Medical Director for Quality Advancement for Blue Cross Blue Shield of Nebraska. A board certified family physician, he was previously vice president of Medical Affairs and Chief Medical Officer for Methodist Physicians Clinic in Omaha. He currently chairs the Douglas County Board of Health. Dr. Filipi graduated from the University of Nebraska College of Medicine. He was elected President of the Nebraska Academy of Family Physicians in 1989, the Metro Omaha Medical Association in 2005 and then President of the Nebraska Medical Association in 2009. In 1996 he earned an MBA from the University of Nebraska-Omaha. Dr. Filipi served nationally on both the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) Commissions on Socio-Economics and Quality. He was also the AAFP liaison to NCQA, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the American College of Pathology Laboratory Reference Committee.



Angie Frederick, MS, ACSM-HFS & EIM has over 15 years of experience in the fitness and wellness field. She has a master's degree in sports administration from the University of Southern Mississippi, a bachelor's degree in Exercise Science from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and several health & wellness certifications. She is currently the Director of Medically Based Wellness for the YMCA of Greater Omaha where she manages chronic disease programming as well as standards for health and wellness across the association.

Cindy M. Kugler, MS, CES, CSPS, CSCS has held a variety of positions in the area of lifestyle modification for chronic disease since she began her professional career with Bryan Health in 1985, including: Exercise Specialist for cardiac and pulmonary rehabilitation, Manager in Health Enhancement Services, and is currently the Bryan LifePointe Clinical Liaison. Kugler received a Master's of Science degree in Exercise Physiology from the University of Nebraska-Omaha, and is a Certified Exercise Specialist (CES) by the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) and a Certified Strength and Conditioning Coach (CSCS) and Certified Special Populations Specialist (CSPS) by the National Strength and Conditioning Association (NSCA). Kugler is currently the acting Chair of the CSPS certification committee for the NSCA.



Jeremy A. Lazarus, MD, is a psychiatrist in private practice in Denver, and the 167th president of the American Medical Association. Dr. Lazarus is also a clinical professor of psychiatry at the University of Colorado Denver School of Medicine, and teaches at the University of Miami Leonard M. Miller School of Medicine. Dr. Lazarus is widely published on issues of ethics, economics and managed care, his most recent book is *Entering Private Practice: A Handbook for Psychiatrists*. He graduated from Northwestern University and received his medical degree from the University of Illinois College of Medicine. He is only the third psychiatrist in AMA history to be elected its president, and the first since 1939.



Diana Lecher, RN, is the Wellness Coordinator at Chadron Community Hospital and former Director of Home Health/Hospice/Cardiopulmonary Rehabilitation at the Hospital. Ms. Lecher facilitated a multi-level, evidence-based intervention at the Hospital and community at large. Her efforts led to the formulation of an active Wellness Committee, and to a Governor's Award for achieving 60% employee participation, 9% reduced nicotine use, and policy enrichment to encourage positive change. Diana is a charter member of the Panhandle Worksite Wellness Advisory Council.



Thomas L. Lenz, Pharm.D. is a tenured Associate Professor of Pharmacy Practice, and the Clinical Director for the Cardiovascular and Diabetes Risk Reduction Programs at Creighton University in Omaha, Nebraska. Dr. Lenz is also a Fellow in the American College of Lifestyle Medicine, and certified as a Physical Activity in Public Health Specialist. Dr. Lenz has published over 75 articles and 4 books on the topics of lifestyle medicine, cardiology, pharmacy education, and disease prevention. Dr. Lenz has a Master's Degree in Exercise Science, a Doctor of Pharmacy degree, and a Fellowship in Cardiovascular Research.



Julie Luzarraga, LICSW, DCSW is the founder of The Center for Counseling & Psychotherapy, and founder and Executive Director of Omaha Integrative Care. She specializes in infertility, mind body medicine, depression, anxiety, trauma, mood disorders, loss and relationship issues. Luzarraga received her Masters in Clinical Social Work from Boston College and her Diplomate in Clinical Social Work, which is the highest distinction bestowed on clinical social workers. She is a member of the American Society for Reproductive Medicine and holds a Certificate in Integrative Mental Health. She trained and worked at Child Guidance Centers in Boston, Massachusetts, and Connecticut, as well as trained in the Yale Child Study Center's Child Development

Community Policing Program.



Alan Nissen, MD is the Nebraska DHHS Medicaid Medical Director, and is Board Certified in Otolaryngology and Head and Neck Surgery. Dr. Nissen is a member of the American Neurotology Society, and a fellow of the American College of Surgeons. A South Dakota native, Dr. Nissen played basketball for the University of Nebraska-Lincoln before earning his medical degree from the UNMC where he also completed his residency. Before moving to Lincoln, Dr. Nissen practiced at the California Ear Institute at Stanford for 13 years and at the University of Louisville for seven years, where he was the medical director of otology and neurotology.

His peer-reviewed research articles are published in a variety of scholarly and medical journals, including the American Journal of Otology; Ear Nose and Throat Journal; Laryngoscope; and Annals of Otology, Rhinology and Laryngology.



Dan Noble, MD, specializes in spinal surgery and is president of the Nebraska Medical Association (NMA). Dr. Noble received his undergraduate degree from the University of California at Berkeley and his medical degree from Baylor College of Medicine at the Texas Medical Center in Houston, Texas where he also completed his residency in Orthopaedic Surgery, and fellowship in spinal surgery. He practiced in rural West Virginia for two years before completing a fellowship in spinal surgery at the University of British Columbia Hospitals in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. In 1991, he became a staff spine surgeon at Kaiser Permanente's Northern California Regional Spinal Center in Oakland, California. Dr. Noble moved to Lincoln, Nebraska in 1996, and has served as President of the Lancaster County Medical Society (2000), Secretary-Treasurer for the NMA (2004-2011), and Deputy Chief Medical Officer of Nebraska Health and Human Services (2006-2007). Dr. Noble is also a Lt. Colonel in the Nebraska Air National Guard, where he currently serves as Chief of Aerospace Medicine for the 155th Air Refueling Wing.



Edward M. Phillips, MD, is Assistant Professor of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at Harvard Medical School and Director of Outpatient Medical Services of the Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital Network in Boston, Massachusetts. Phillips founded and directs The Institute of Lifestyle Medicine (ILM) in the Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at Harvard Medical School, www.instituteoflifestylemedicine.org. Dr. Phillips is a Fellow of American College of Sports Medicine (FACSM) and serves on the Executive Council that developed and leads the Exercise is Medicine™ global initiative. He is co-author of ACSM's Exercise is Medicine™, The Clinician's Guide to the Exercise Prescription (Lippincott, 2009) and is chair of the Exercise is Medicine Education Committee. The President's Council on Fitness, Sports and Nutrition has recognized both Dr. Phillips and the ILM with its Community Leadership Award. He appears on national media including Good Morning America, ESPN radio, and in Time Magazine.



Joann Schaefer, MD, joined Blue Cross Blue Shield as Vice President of Medical Care and Medical Management in May 2013. She previously served as both Chief Medical Officer, and Director of the Division of Public Health for the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services from 2005 to 2013. Prior to that, she was a tenured Associate Professor in the Department of Family Medicine at Creighton University Medical School and practiced family medicine in Omaha. Dr. Schaefer is committed to creating a culture of wellness and helping Nebraskans lead healthier lives. She leads by example showing people they can overcome health challenges by sharing her own journey as a liver transplant patient, and how a healthy lifestyle along with a positive attitude can make a difference in life and longevity. She graduated from Creighton University Medical School and is board-certified in family medicine. She has been recognized by both Creighton University Medical School and California State University-Fullerton, where she received her undergraduate degree, for her service and as a distinguished alumna.



Alan Thorson, MD, is Clinical Professor of Surgery at the University of Nebraska Medical Center, and Creighton University, where he is a member of the Creighton Cancer Center and faculty member of the Center for Practice Improvement and Outcomes Research. Dr. Thorson is President of the American Society of Colon and Rectal Surgeons and former President of the American Cancer Society. Dr. Thorson also served as President of the Association of Program Directors in Colon and Rectal Surgery, Chair of the Residency Review Committee in Colon and Rectal Surgery, and President of the American Board of Colon and Rectal Surgery. He completed his undergraduate and medical education as well as his surgical training at the University of Nebraska, with his Fellowship in Colon and Rectal Surgery at the University of Minnesota.



Marcia Wallen, MS, RD, LMNT, is the Williamsburg Hy-Vee registered dietitian. Marcia is a Lincoln native and a graduate of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and Iowa State University. She has experience in a variety of health care settings including work as a hospital clinical dietitian and department head, consultant to nursing homes and as a nutritionist and program coordinator for the WIC Program. Her special interests are children and families, weight loss and diabetes management. Marcia looks forward to helping you lead an easier, healthier and happier life.



Katie Walz, MS, RD, LMNT earned a bachelor's degree in nutrition and dietetics from the University of Nebraska and her master's degree in nutritional science from Northern Illinois University. Ms. Walz consults with patients on a wide variety of nutrition issues such as gastrointestinal diseases, weight management, food allergies and cardiovascular disease, and provides wellness presentations and cooking classes for local businesses. Walz is a registered dietitian with Bryan LifePointe and Vision Specialists of Council Bluffs.



Nicole White, PharmD is an assistant professor of pharmacy practice at Creighton University. In addition to teaching pharmacy students, White practices in The Creighton Cardiovascular and Diabetes Risk Reduction Program: a worksite chronic disease management program specializing in hypertension, dyslipidemia and diabetes. The program focuses on reducing chronic disease risk through lifestyle modifications and medication therapy management.



Ryan Whitney, MD, is the Chief Medical Officer for Bryan Heart and the Executive Medical Director of Bryan LifePointe. A native of Omaha, Nebraska, Dr. Whitney attended the University of Nebraska-Lincoln for his undergraduate studies and went on to the University of Nebraska College of Medicine in Omaha where he received his medical degree. He completed his residency in internal medicine at the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics in Iowa City. He returned to Omaha to serve his fellowships in cardiology and interventional cardiology at the University of Nebraska Medical Center. Dr. Whitney is certified by the American Board of Internal Medicine Subspecialty Boards of Cardiovascular Diseases and Interventional Cardiology.



Michael Zaruba, MD, is in family practice at the Auburn Family Health Center, PC in Auburn, Nebraska, and is a member of the Nebraska Medical Association. He is a board-certified physician with the American Board of Family Medicine and a certified member of the American Association of Medical Review Officers. He is also a Licensed Operator Coordinator at the Cooper Nuclear Station in Brownville, Nebraska. He attended the University of Nebraska-Kearney, and the University of Nebraska Medical School.