



Sharon Hunt

Ph.D, FACHE, CHFP

Education

B.B.A Accounting

Texas Tech University

M.B.A.

Wayland Baptist University

Ph.D. in Family and Consumer Sciences

Education

Texas Tech University

Lagniappe:

A Little Something Extra

One should be a good leader who is able to foster teamwork, a shared vision, and a plan for the organization. Another key skill is communication among all stakeholders, including your employees and staff, patients, the community you serve, payers, and many others. Communication involves not just articulating a message, but also actively listening and working to foster a good relationship among all parties. It should always be a two-way street

Healthcare Administrator/CEO

Sharon Hunt, Ph.D., FACHE, CHFP is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Healthcare Management and Leadership at Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center. Prior to this role, she served as a rural hospital CEO and CFO. With over 30 years of experience in healthcare, she continues to provide financial consulting services to many rural hospitals in Texas.

Uniqueness of Career Journey

I began working in healthcare as an accountant at a community health center. I then transitioned to a CFO role at a rural hospital, where I eventually became the CEO. My accounting degree helped prepare me for the financial roles that I held, and my M.B.A. helped prepare me to serve as a CEO. I also became active in the American College of Healthcare Executives and earned my certification (FACHE) by being active, passing a rigorous exam, and maintaining required continuing education. Ongoing education and training through ACHE and other healthcare organizations has been essential throughout my career. My work as a healthcare administrator led me to my current position where I educate future healthcare leaders. This career change also led me to seek my Ph.D. in FCSE, which provided essential skills for teaching in higher education.

Inspiration for Career Choice

My initial motivation for my career was my love for business and accounting. My dad owned his own business and always loved math and the business side of things, which led me to pursue a business degree in accounting. I sought my first position in healthcare simply because it was an accounting position. I did not necessarily intend to work in healthcare, but, once I began working in the field, I loved it and wanted to continue to work in this area. When opportunities for advancement presented themselves, I jumped at the chance to lead others and feel like I was making a difference. I enjoy problem-solving and leading teams to create solutions. I also enjoy the organizational aspects of leadership,

Best Advice to Someone Considering This Career

There is not a one-size fits all approach to being a hospital CEO. Unlike many other healthcare professions, hospital CEOs are not required to have a certain educational background. Hence, people in this field come from a variety of professions. I came from a financial background. Some come from clinical areas, such as nursing, lab, pharmacy, etc. Many have worked their way up as I did, working as an accountant to a CFO, and then to the CEO position. Considering this, my advice for those interested in healthcare leadership is to find an area of healthcare in which you are passionate and interested. I had no desire to work in a clinical setting, rather, my enjoyment was working on the business side. Once you have an idea of what you enjoy doing, seek positions in that area. There are tremendous opportunities for advancement in healthcare, but, one must often start at an entry- or mid-level position and then work their way up. Be willing to start at a lower level, then work hard, volunteer to take on other roles as they become available, and show your willingness to learn, grow, and be a good team member.

Recommended Educational Preparation

Hospital CEOs have a variety of undergraduate degrees. Although there are some focused specifically on healthcare management, such as the BSHM degree we have offer in our department, many in this field sought degrees in other areas and then worked their way into the healthcare field. For one who knows they want to go into healthcare administration, a bachelor's degree in a business-related area or healthcare management is a good place to start. A graduate degree is often required for further advancement, especially in larger organizations. These degrees are normally a Master in Healthcare Administration (MHA), Master of Science in Healthcare Administration (MSHA) or a Master of Business Administration (MBA), some of which can include a concentration in healthcare administration. Along with these degrees, certifications, such as being a Certified Healthcare Manager (FACHE) through the American College of Healthcare Executives can be essential.