



Date: September 25, 2025

Time: 8:00 AM

Hilton Chicago/Oak Brook Hills Resort & Conference Center
3500 Midwest Road
Oak Brook, IL 60523
(630) 850-5555

Reservation link: 2025 Leadership Summit – [Click Here](#) To book or call (630) 850-5555

Registration is open only to IHA-member hospitals and health systems and 2025 IHA Corporate Sponsors.

	By Sept. 11, 2025	After Sept. 11, 2025
First staff member per organization	\$325	\$375
Each additional staff member*	\$275	\$325
Hospital/health system board member (available to those who are not employed by the hospital or health system)	\$225	\$275

*Additional registrant(s) must be employed at the same hospital or health system corporate office as the first registrant to qualify for this discount.

Summit Overview – "Unity Amid Uncertainty"

Hospital and health system leaders are no stranger to change and evolution across healthcare. Yet, the recent speed and scale of change, including major policy shifts in a matter of months, calls on the hospital community to remain united while moving forward. Unity is essential to advancing public policies and new innovations that allow hospitals and health systems to continue their important work to improve healthcare, ensure financial viability and deliver high quality healthcare for generations to come. With growing uncertainty comes unparalleled opportunity. Now is the time to embrace new ways of thinking, unleash the innovative potential of your organization and plot a powerful course forward.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2025

8:00 – 9:00 a.m.

REGISTRATION AND BREAKFAST

9:00 – 10:30 a.m.

OPENING GENERAL SESSION

9:00 – 9:10 a.m.

Welcome and Opening Remarks

Shawn P. Vincent, Chair, IHA Board of Trustees and President and CEO, Loyola Medicine, Maywood

9:10 – 10:10 a.m.

Rising Above the Uncertainties: New Thinking for Illinois Healthcare

Moderator: Shawn P Vincent, Chair, IHA Board of Trustees and President and CEO, Loyola Medicine, Maywood

Panelists: Michelle Conger, President, OSF Healthcare System, Peoria; Polly Davenport, DSc, MBA, RN, FACHE, Senior Vice President and Ministry Market Executive, Ascension Illinois, Chicago; Dia Nichols, FACHE, President, Advocate Health Care, Oak Brook; and Kim Uphoff, President and CEO, Sarah Bush Lincoln Health System, Mattoon

Rapid policy shifts, ongoing financial pressures and new technologies that could radically transform healthcare delivery (think AI) are forcing leaders to think and act differently. How can you remain confident, bold and optimistic when our field is being challenged, arguably like never before? The Summit's opening session will feature a no-holds-barred conversation about the future of Illinois healthcare with hospital and health system leaders from across the state. They'll discuss the strategies and mindset needed to remain united as a hospital community and rise above the uncertainties. You'll also hear about the ripple effects of extreme change on care delivery, workforce planning, patient outcomes, investments in communities, and long-term strategic decision-making. This session will set the stage for our focus on unity amid uncertainty and the motivation to keep moving forward.

10:10 – 10:30 a.m.

President's Address and Presentation of the Ruth Colby Leadership Award

A.J. Wilhelmi, IHA President and CEO

10:30 – 11:00 a.m.

NETWORKING BREAK

11:00 – 12:00 p.m.

THE HUMAN MARGIN: BUILDING FOUNDATIONS OF TRUST

Katherine Meese, PhD, Assistant Professor of Health Services Administration, University of Alabama at Birmingham

Discussions of clinician burnout have dominated healthcare in recent years. Yet, fostering a thriving hospital workforce remains one of the steepest mountains for leaders to climb. Truly understanding what's driving burnout and disengagement is key to building a healthy and engaged workforce—from clinicians to professional staff. This highly interactive session will break down decades of research into evidence-based strategies to sustain the healthcare workforce you rely on to deliver high-quality, patient-centered care. You'll learn about the real drivers of turnover and retention, the connection between trust and retention, new rules of transparency and communication, how to counter boredom and burnout, and why autonomy matters to both clinical effectiveness and organizational resilience.

12:00 – 1:15 p.m.

LUNCHEON

1:30 – 2:15 p.m.

MEMBER INNOVATION SHOWCASE

Hear about best practices and solutions to common management challenges, from IHA-member hospitals and health systems.

2:30 – 3:15 p.m.

CORPORATE SPONSOR BREAKOUT SESSIONS

AI Lessons from Across the Industry

John League, Managing Director, Digital and Ambulatory Strategy Research, Advisory Board; and Carol Chouinard, Vice President, Provider Technology Strategy Lead, Optum Advisory

Artificial intelligence (AI) has rapidly emerged as a critical tool for operational efficiency, cost containment and quality improvement. Health plans, providers, life sciences companies, and solutions providers are exploring and implementing AI in diverse ways, producing a wealth of innovative use cases. This session will discuss the transformative power of AI and how different healthcare organizations are leveraging AI to enhance operations and improve patient outcomes.

Workforce Wellness: Effective Approaches to Foster Well-Being and Retention in Healthcare

Patti Artley, Chief Nursing Officer and Chief Clinical Officer, Medical Solutions

As healthcare faces unprecedented challenges, workforce wellness has become more essential than ever. This session will explore innovative strategies to promote well-being and reduce burnout across healthcare teams and address how fostering a supportive work environment and utilizing staff to the top of their license can enhance retention and elevate job satisfaction. You'll learn about approaches that prioritize mental wellness and empower healthcare professionals to thrive, helping organizations build resilient teams and improve patient care.

Pivot, Partner, Perform: A Playbook for Hospital Leaders in Volatile Times

Patrick Burke, Principal; Teresa Garate, PhD, Managing Director; Rob Ross, Managing Director, Delivery Systems; and Jay Shannon, MD, Principal, Health Management Associates

Across Illinois, hospitals are navigating uncertain times while working to ensure they meet the needs of patients and communities. In this session, HMA experts will highlight how hospitals and health systems can move beyond traditional responses and rethink partnerships to support operations and community linkages. For health system leaders, this session offers fresh perspectives and insights locally and nationally on how to effectively navigate, pivot and thrive by implementing sound financing strategies and contingency planning, and by building strategic partnerships with community-based and behavioral health organizations.

3:15 – 3:45 pm

NETWORKING BREAK

3:45 – 5:00 p.m.

PRESENTATION OF IHA ADVOCACY AWARDS

WHERE TO TURN WHEN THE POLITICAL CLIMATE HEATS UP

Amy Walter, Publisher and Editor-in-Chief, Cook Political Report with Amy Walter and On-Air Political Analyst

America's political shifts are being felt around the world. Here at home, healthcare is often a hot topic—and an area experiencing sharp turns from previous presidential administrations. This session will bring an insider's perspective on the impact of political forces at play on your organization's financial viability and decision-making in the year ahead.

5:00 – 6:30 p.m.

CORPORATE SPONSOR RECEPTION

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2025

7:30 – 8:30 a.m.

CORPORATE SPONSOR BREAKFAST

8:30 – 9:30 a.m.

AI LEADERSHIP ROUNDTABLE: WHAT'S WORKING AND WHAT'S NOT WORKING (YET)

Moderator: Alexis Kayser, Healthcare Editor, Newsweek magazine

Panelists: Abel N. Kho, MD, MS, FACMI, Professor of Medicine and Preventive Medicine and Founding Director, Institute for AI

in Medicine (I.AIM), Feinberg School of Medicine, Northwestern University, Chicago; Jonathan Handler, MD, Senior Fellow for Innovation, OSF HealthCare, Peoria; and Sachin D. Shah, MD, FACP, FAAP, Chief Medical Information Officer and Associate Professor of Medicine and Pediatrics, UChicago Medicine and Biological Sciences, Chicago (additional panelists to be announced)

It's on the mind of every hospital CEO, CFO and COO: artificial intelligence (AI). This accelerating technology holds the promise of breaking down financial, operational and logistical barriers to quality care. What's more, it could be a driver of innovation and growth. This session's panel of AI leaders will examine the opportunities of AI while considering AI's current shortcomings around managing the complexities of data-driven care. Panelists will offer a realistic view on how to approach what could be a defining part of healthcare's future.

9:30 – 9:45 a.m.

NETWORKING BREAK

9:45 – 11:00 a.m.

THRIVING AMID UNCERTAINTY: STRATEGIC PATHWAYS FOR HEALTHCARE IN THE YEARS AHEAD

Craig Deao, Managing Director, Huron

Hospitals and health systems—whether large academic medical centers or small and rural hospitals—are navigating an era of extraordinary change. While many work to stabilize operations after years of financial strain, traditional cost and performance improvement efforts are proving insufficient amid today's uncertainty. This session will explore practical strategies for thriving, not just surviving, into the next decade. Real-world examples and peer insights will identify how to meet the demands of a rapidly shifting landscape. With new ideas for your strategic playbook, you'll walk away better equipped to align short-term realities with long-term aspirations—and to create opportunities to adapt and grow.

11:00 am – 12:00 p.m.

OVERCOME AND THRIVE: HOW TO OVERCOME OBSTACLES AND WIN THIS FIGHT CALLED LIFE

Justin Wren, Humanitarian, Author, MMA Fighter, Mental Health Advocate, Podcast Host

In the electrifying arena of life, we all step into the ring, donning the gloves of struggle, pain, and adversity. In the face of every challenge, we have a choice to make—a choice to rise, to fight and to overcome. As an MMA fighter, Wren has danced in the octagon, where every second counts and every blow matters. But his toughest fight, his most grueling bout, was not inside those steel cage walls. It was the battle within his own mind, the war against self-doubt, fear and the weight of past failures. In this inspirational closing session, Wren will guide you in fighting for your dreams, your purpose and the meaningful impact only you can create. You'll learn strategies to build resilience, improve emotional well-being, and maintain focus and purpose—essential skills to navigate stress, burnout and high-stakes environments. It's time to transform pain into fuel, setbacks into comebacks, and doubts into unwavering belief.

12:00 p.m.

CLOSING COMMENTS

At the conclusion of the 2025 IHA Leadership Summit, participants will be able to:

- Examine how policy shifts, financial pressures and emerging technologies are shaping healthcare delivery and organizational strategy.
- Identify leadership strategies to improve team performance, adaptability and outcomes across care settings.
- Apply evidence-based approaches to strengthen workforce engagement, trust and resilience.
- Evaluate opportunities to advance innovation, collaboration, and strategic decision-making in complex healthcare systems.

IHA Leadership Summit is the annual meeting place for hospital and health system leaders from across the state to connect and learn from industry leaders and from each other. By participating as a team, your organization can take advantage of our multiple attendee discount. The meeting will benefit:

- Chief executive officers
- Chief operating officers
- Chief financial officers
- Chief nursing officers
- Chief medical officers
- Chief human resources officers
- Chief quality officers
- Chief strategy officers
- Physician leaders
- Nursing leaders
- Legal counsel
- Government relations leaders
- Trustees and directors

Craig E. Deao, Managing Director, Huron

Deao has provided consulting services to healthcare organizations for two decades. He is a trusted advisor to boards and executive teams, with a focus on governance, strategic planning, growth, engagement and patient experience. His expertise extends to board education, governance restructuring, and the facilitation of strategic and leadership development initiatives.

Deao's work emphasizes the importance of creating high-performing governance structures and leadership teams that drive cultural and operational success. Over his career, he has guided healthcare boards through complex strategic challenges, helping them clarify vision, improve efficiency and strengthen accountability frameworks. He is highly sought after for his ability to facilitate effective strategic planning and governance processes, enabling senior leaders and boards to develop actionable, forward-thinking goals.

Deao has authored numerous publications, including the book *The E Factor: How Engaged Patients, Clinicians, Leaders, and Employees Will Transform Healthcare*, which has over 20,000 copies in circulation. His insights on governance and leadership have appeared in publications such as *Health Executive*, *Trustee Magazine*, and *Healthcare Philanthropy*.

Before joining Huron, Deao held leadership roles at VHA (now Vizient), where he led large-scale educational initiatives for healthcare executives, achieving significant improvements in organizational performance and satisfaction.

Alexis Kayser, Healthcare Editor, Newsweek Magazine

Based in Chicago, Kayser's reporting focuses on the operations and priorities of U.S. hospitals and health systems. She also curates the publication's weekly healthbiz newsletter, Access Health. Kayser has extensively covered value-based care models, artificial intelligence, clinician burnout and Americans' trust in the healthcare industry. Alexis joined Newsweek in 2024 from Becker's Hospital Review, where she worked on the CEO, workforce and finance desks.

Katherine Meese, PhD, Assistant Professor of Health Services Administration, University of Alabama at Birmingham

With 15 years of experience in healthcare management, leadership and research, Dr. Meese is an award-winning scholar and author in organizational behavior, well-being, and leadership. She is on a mission to use science to help healthcare leaders keep their people and keep them well. Dr. Meese has coauthored two textbooks on organizational behavior in healthcare that are used in over 160 schools nationwide and *The Human Margin: Building the Foundations of Trust* with Quint Studer. She also has deep experience in curriculum design and teaches and mentors graduate, doctoral, and executive students at the University of Alabama at Birmingham Department of Health Services Administration.

Amy Walter, Publisher and Editor-in-Chief, Cook Political Report with Amy Walter and On-Air Political Analyst

For more than 25 years, Walter has built a reputation as an accurate, objective and insightful political analyst with unparalleled access to campaign insiders and decision-makers. As Publisher and Editor-in-Chief of the Cook Political Report with Amy Walter, she provides analysis of the issues, trends and events that shape the political environment. In 2021 and 2023, Walter was named one of "Washington's Most Powerful Women" by Washingtonian Magazine.

A contributor to the PBS NewsHour, she provides weekly political analysis for the popular "Politics Monday" segment and is a featured contributor for their election and convention special coverage. She is also a regular Sunday panelist on NBC's Meet the Press and CNN's Inside Politics and appears frequently on Special Report with Bret Baier on Fox News Channel. From 2017 until early 2021, Walter was the host of the weekly nationally syndicated program Politics with Amy Walter on The Takeaway from WNYC and PRX. She's also the former political director at ABC News. Walter was an inaugural fellow at the Institute of Politics at the University of Chicago and currently sits on the Institute's Board of Advisors.

Justin Wren, Humanitarian, Author, MMA Fighter, Mental Health Advocate, Podcast Host

After battling depression, suicide and drug addiction, Wren experienced a life-changing journey living with the Mbuti Pygmy people of the Congo Basin rainforest. When he returned, he founded the nonprofit Fight for the Forgotten to knockout the world water crisis, which today has expanded its impact to serve the Batwa Pygmies of Uganda. Called "The Big Pygmy," Wren is a 10-time State Champion, five-time All-American, and two-time National Champion Wrestler. He is a veteran of the Ultimate Fighting Championship and has been inducted into the Black Belt Magazine Hall of Fame. Wren has inspired millions through his appearances on the Joe Rogan Experience, Mike Tyson's HotBoxin', the Ed Mylett Show, ESPN, NBC, CBS, ABC and FOX, as well as being featured in Sports Illustrated and TEDx Talks. He authored the bestselling book Fight for the Forgotten, is the host of his own inspirational podcast, Overcome with Justin Wren, and is a globally recognized keynote speaker. Wren has a deep-seated belief and ability to empower people to stoke the fire that is within us all.

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