

THE WELLBEING COLLABORATIVE

of Arizona Health Professionals

January 2024

Just like that, 2023 has passed and we have found ourselves at the beginning of a new year. Taking a moment to reflect back on 2023, a lot of impactful things took place including the inaugural wellbeing summit in September. In looking ahead to 2024, there are lots of opportunities and paths available for to consider based on what we have learned. To best prepare for an even more impactful and successful year, we are kicking off the new year with some strategic planning!

2024 Strategic Retreat

What is strategy but a set of curated and well thought-out decision that aligned with the mission, vision, values, and timeline of an organization!

On **January 25th, 2024**, The Wellbeing Collaborative's **Steering Council Members** and **Strategies Advisors** (under the leadership of Executive Director Flo Spyrow) will be coming together for an in-person day retreat in Phoenix to set the vision of the Collaborative, discuss opportunities for collaboration, and dive into the strategic initiatives to craft a roadmap for the next year.



Steering Council Members

- **Carisa Bamford**, *Clinician Experience & Development Sr. Dir.*, Banner Health
- **Charlon Wilson**, *Consultant, Transformational Fellow*, NARBHA Institute
- **Cynthia M. Stonnington**, *Associate Medical Director of the Office of Joy and Well-Being*, Mayo Clinic
- **Heather Rabin**, *Sr Advisor Wellbeing and Professional Development*, Dignity Health, CommonSpirit Health
- **Heidi Sanborn**, *President*, Arizona Nurses Association
- **Jasleen Chhatwal**, *Chief Medical Officer*, Sierra Tucson, University of Arizona
- **Jen Hartmark-Hill**, *Full-Time Professor*, University of Arizona/ArMA
- **Mary Jo Gregory**, *President & CEO*, NARBHA Institute
- **Michelle Villegas-Gold**, *Director of Health and Clinical Research*, Arizona State University
- **Rebecca Sunenshine**, *Medical Director*, Maricopa County Department of Public Health
- **Scott Sharples**, *Executive Director*, Care Management, Banner Health
- **Sheila Sjolander**, *Assistant Director*, Arizona Department of Health Services
- **Teresa Bertsch**, *CMO/CWO*, NARBHA Institute
- **Tiffany Pankow**, *Chief of Caregiver Wellness and Patient Experience*, Honor Health

Strategic Advisors

- **Alison Essary**, *Professor & Chair*, Dept of PA Studies, NAU-Phoenix
- **Beth Kohler**, *Owner*, Beth Kohler Consulting LLC
- **Holly Ward**, *Vice President of Communications*, Arizona Hospital and Healthcare Association (AzHHA)
- **Keith Frey**, *Principal Consultant and Coach*, Frey Healthcare Consulting
- **Mark Carroll**, *CMO*, Arizona Hospital and Healthcare Association (AzHHA)
- **Theresa Cullen**, *Department Director*, Pima County
- **Vince Berkley**, *Retired Assistant Surgeon General*, NARBAH Institute

Additional Experts

- **Stephen J. Swensen**, *Transformational Fellow* (NARBHA Institute), *Senior Fellow* (Institute for Healthcare Improvement)
- **Stuart Goodman**, *Principal* at Goodman-Schwartz Public Affairs
- **Kurt Mueller**, *Transformational Fellow* (NARBHA Institute), *Inaugural Lead* (North Country Psychiatric Residency Program)
- **Cindy Martin**, *Transformational Fellow* (NARBHA Institute)

We are so excited so share some of the outcomes of the strategic retreat in our February Newsletter!

A Leader's Story!

Continue to the next page to read the "why" story of the Collaborative's Executive Director: Flo Spyrow.



STORY HIGHLIGHT

FLO SPYROW'S STORY



Flo Spyrow is the former President & CEO at Northern Arizona Healthcare and is currently serving as the Executive Director of the Wellbeing Collaborative.

Compassion is the Greatest Gift

So there I was, a **nurse** with only **a few months of experience** in an overcrowded, understaffed Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) in Oregon. The NICU that I found myself in spanned several floors and many disconnected rooms overflowing with premature babies. Every night was **all hands-on deck**, emergencies arriving by helicopter, struggling premature babies, and not enough staff. **It was hectic and a lot, but I loved my job.**

However, I kept finding myself going home after long shifts **feeling guilty and frustrated** that I had **not spent enough time** with the anxious **families** of the babies still in critical condition. Despite all the life-saving care and miracles we were a part of, what kept sticking with me were the **faces of the parents** who looked at me hoping I could save their precious babies and not understanding all the technical information I was giving them. Time for me and our team to deliver a miracle always **left me feeling like I didn't have the time to do my job completely**; to care for their baby **AND** walk with them through the nightmare of a journey they were on. But that's just the way it was.

Thirty-five years later, after a long career as a nurse, attorney, and executive, I never expected to find myself on the other side of that experience. I found myself as a **mother standing at the bedside of my 34-year-old son, Andrew**, pleading with the physicians and nurses **to save my only child**. He was diagnosed with a rare, aggressive form of Glioblastoma. It was **unbelievable** that he could have such a devastating disease; **he was in the prime of his life.**

Although he was cared for in some of the most renowned health care systems in this country, it was during this 4-year journey that we experienced **some of the best and some of the worst of healthcare**. Some of the best care we received was from those who **truly cared and made a difference** in the quality and longevity of his life like the neuro-oncologist who fought tirelessly to gain access to a clinical trial for Andrew at Miami Cancer Center even though it was not her job. And those who simply showed us **kindness** along the journey in small and big ways.

On the other spectrum, **the worst care we received was from those who** reflected their work frustrations and hardship on us, like the radiation oncologist who told Andrew that he had 7 months to live, then went right on talking about the treatment fully **ignoring our uncontrollable sobbing**. Or the neuro resident who told me to **"shut up and stand in the corner"** when I was trying to communicate to him about Andrew's care.

These experiences are **WHY** I am now so committed to making a difference in the **systems and environments** in which healthcare workers practice. Because I have experienced how **environments** can have a significant impact on healthcare providers and thus on the patients looking to them for **help, support, and compassion**. That is **WHY** I have found myself as a part of the **Wellbeing Collaborative** and why I believe so strongly in *empowering leaders, professionals, and key stakeholders* to transform healthcare workplaces and systems. We **MUST** retain our health professionals and we **MUST** allow them the time and energy to give the gift of compassion to our patients and their families. In the end, that defines the quality of healthcare we deliver.