

## 2022 Excellence in Leadership Award Nominee



***Robert Ritz, CEO***

*MercyOne, Clive*

- Years at the hospital/organization = 9
- Years in health care = 35

### **Nomination**

*Heather Campbell, President and Chief Legal Officer*

*MercyOne, Clive*

Bob Ritz joined MercyOne in July 2013 as President of Mercy Des Moines Medical Center, an 802-bed acute care, not-for-profit Catholic hospital on two campuses in Des Moines and West Des Moines and with subsidiary hospitals in Centerville and Newton, and 47 outpatient and ambulatory sites of service. On his arrival, Bob completed a comprehensive study of Mercy's 50+ sites of service. This study resulted in significant changes to repurpose multiple locations, including consolidation of services to achieve maximum performance and efficiency. He also completed a comprehensive strategic plan to guide Mercy's future direction and allocation of resources while preparing for the rapid changes in the delivery and financing of health care services in Iowa. Included in the strategic plan was a vision to provide a "Remarkable Mercy Experience" for everyone the organization is privileged to serve. This initiative involved the formation of the Department of the Mercy Experience, a comprehensive partnership with The

Ritz Carlton Leadership Center and training for more than 7,000 Mercy colleagues and physicians in just two months. This work led to Bob's participation on an advisory board for the formation of a new institute at Cornell University to integrate hospitality and health care in a new model of design, development and operation. The institute is a combined effort by Cornell University's Sloan Program in Health Services Administration and the Hotel School of Management at Cornell University.

Additional strategic initiatives led by Bob included partnering with Kindred Health to open a 50-bed MercyOne Inpatient Rehabilitation Hospital in Clive to address the need for additional inpatient rehabilitation facilities in central Iowa and to support growth in the neurosciences and orthopedics service lines, and a partnership with Universal Health Services to open a 100-bed Behavioral Health Hospital in Clive to meet the growing and unmet need for behavioral health services in central Iowa. The strategic plan resulted in growth in all major service categories including inpatient, outpatient, emergency service and surgical services. MercyOne Des Moines Medical Center also enjoyed multiple consecutive years of improved financial performance under Bob's leadership.

Bob held the position of President of Mercy Des Moines Medical Center from 2012-2017, at which time he was named President and CEO of Mercy Health Network, a network of more than 40 affiliate hospitals, 230 clinics and 20,000 colleagues with primary markets in Iowa and limited market presence in South Dakota and Nebraska, and an aligned medical group of more than 1,000 providers. Under Bob's leadership, a new operating model was developed and implemented to support MercyOne's integration plan to function as a regional health ministry.

Bob also developed a strategic plan focused on providing a convenient and efficient system of health services. Initiatives included:

- A centralized transfer system to ensure access to the appropriate level of services for all patients.
- A comprehensive virtual care delivery system to support nurses and providers stressed with staffing shortages and capacity constraints.

- A new membership model designed to transform the communities MercyOne serves by maximizing each person's state of well-being by providing a pathway for consumers to manage their health and well-being.
- A new urgent care system to meet consumer demand for convenient services.
- A unified medical group to create substantial efficiencies, control costs, improve the quality of services, and improve and maintain access to care for patients across a wide continuum of care.

In February 2019, Bob led the launch of the new MercyOne brand across all Mercy Health Network ministries in Iowa to face the market as one system of health services. He also developed a plan for addressing issues of diversity, inclusion and health inequities in MercyOne and the communities it serves. The Colleague Care Program emphasizing the importance of resiliency and the organization's role in supporting the mental health of all colleagues also was implemented.

Additional initiatives across MercyOne included:

- Achieving continuous growth of MercyOne's affiliate hospital network to ensure access to care in both urban and rural communities across Iowa.
- Opening a new cancer care center at MercyOne Dubuque Medical Center and the new Richard Deming Cancer Center in Des Moines.
- Partnering with a community group in Albert Lea, Minnesota, to open a family practice clinic to bring health care services back to the community.

Bob exhibited exemplary leadership in successfully managing the organization's response to the COVID-19 pandemic using a three-phase crisis management system including business disruption, business continuity and business recovery.

Bob's leadership extends nationally through his service on the Catholic Health Association Advocacy and Public Policy Committee. He also has served on numerous CEO panels and written several articles about various health care-related topics. He facilitates communication with our state and federal officials, advocating for the health care industry in Iowa.

Bob is very active in the Des Moines community. He is a member of the board of directors and executive committee of the Greater Des Moines Partnership. He is a member of the Iowa Business Council and is chair of the Iowa Business Council Career Ready Workforce Committee. He also is on the Des Moines Performing Arts Board of Directors as a chair of the finance committee. He is a member of the Greater Des Moines Committee. Bob's previous board service included membership on the Iowa Hospital Association Board of Officers and Trustees and several IHA committees, the United Way of Central Iowa board of directors and Des Moines University's board of directors.

Above is just a summary of Bob's many accomplishments as a health care executive during his time in Iowa. This does not account for his numerous accomplishments during his career before his arrival in Iowa in 2013.

I am pleased to submit this nomination for Bob Ritz as a candidate for the IHA Excellence in Leadership Award and strongly recommend your consideration of this nomination based on Bob's accomplishments as outlined above.

### **Summary**

Robert Ritz is CEO of MercyOne, an integrated system of over 40 hospitals and 420 health care facilities delivering health care services throughout Iowa and surrounding areas. MercyOne includes more than 3,200 licensed hospital beds, more than 20,000 colleagues and a Mercy accountable care organization recognized as the 10th largest ACO in the U.S.

Before serving as CEO of MercyOne, Bob was president of MercyOne Des Moines Medical Center, an 802-bed acute care, not-for-profit Catholic on three campuses in the Des Moines metro area.

Bob and his wife, Mary, reside in Urbandale. They have three sons and two grandchildren. Besides spending time with his family, Bob's interests include running, golfing and community activities.



## **Letter of Support No. 1**

*Brenda Cushing, Trustee*

*MercyOne*

I am writing to offer my strongest recommendation that Bob Ritz be awarded the IHA Excellence in Leadership Award for 2022. I have known Bob for more than nine years and firmly believe he is highly deserving of this recognition due to his successful career in health care leadership, his lasting impact on his community, his involvement in civic and nonprofit organizations and being a role model through achievements and high ethical standards.

Bob has experienced tremendous success in his chosen field of health care leadership and management. Specifically, Bob has served in various leadership roles with successful health systems, not only in our community, but in Illinois, Connecticut and West Virginia for the past 38 years. Bob is a highly competent executive and stands out from his peers. His progressive career path reflects his intelligence, diligence and strong work ethic. Bob is firmly committed to the mission at MercyOne. Bob is highly regarded and respected by all his health system's stakeholders, including physicians, nurses, employees, patients, and the board of directors.

Although Bob has experienced a great deal of success in his career, he also has offered his talent, skills, and experience to help others in our community. Bob speaks at industry, civic and nonprofit events. He offers his expertise as a member of nonprofit board of directors and has led fundraising campaigns in our community for charitable organizations. He also gives of his time to mentor others.

Bob has clearly distinguished himself as a health system leader by his enthusiastic drive to provide compassionate, high quality, personalized health care to his community.

It has been a real privilege for me to know Bob and serve on his board of directors. He has made a lasting impact on me as an outstanding role model in our community and knowledgeable and caring health system leader. Bob warrants the IHA Excellence in Leadership Award. He is a tremendous executive, an even better person and is committed to making a positive difference in Iowa health care.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can provide any additional information to support his nomination.

## **Letter of Support No. 2**

*Kevin Kincaid, CEO*

*Knoxville Hospital and Clinics*

I write to support the nomination of Bob Ritz for the IHA Excellence in Leadership Award. It is both an honor and privilege to write this letter of support for Mr. Ritz. I have had a front row seat to his leadership for several years now. Not only has Mr. Ritz forever changed the landscape of health care delivery in Iowa, but he has also been a constant inspiration under the most difficult of times. Under his leadership he has transformed the relationship of how a system of care relates to those we serve. Although many of the accomplishments are not widely known yet, they will become ever more apparent as the delivery system evolves at a rapid place.

Mr. Ritz recognized early on that a two-parent system serving a high percentage of Iowans that was geographically split, would not meet the needs of the future. He led the MercyOne system into the reality that a single parent organization was the only way to provide the focus and flexibility that the care of Iowans requires. This lift was incredibly heavy, not to mention it took shape as we fought off a worldwide pandemic. This effort could have been easily shelved for the next generation to solve but Mr. Ritz had the resolve to see it through. His leadership has positively affected the care for all Iowans.

Physicians, nurses, technologists and support staff are all facing unprecedented challenges. Mr. Ritz constantly has them front and center of his vision for the future. I cannot think of a leader that embodies the spirit of this award more than Robert P. Ritz. I highly encourage you to give Mr. Ritz your utmost consideration for this honor.



### **Letter of Support No. 3**

*Suku Radia, CEO (retired)*

*Bankers Trust*

It is my honor and privilege to send this letter to endorse the nomination of Bob Ritz for the Iowa Hospital Association's Excellence in Leadership Award.

I was the Board Chair of Mercy Medical Center and headed the search committee which culminated its work by offering Bob the position of CEO of MercyOne Medical Center-Des Moines. The health care industry has undergone massive change both at the Federal and State levels during Bob's tenure as CEO of MercyOne Medical Center and following that, as CEO of the MercyOne Health Network System which encompasses all of Common Spirit and the Trinity hospitals statewide.

Bob is very much on the forefront of developments that affect how health care is delivered and with all the reimbursement issues that have complicated the industry. Very few people fully grasp how challenging the industry has become. Bob has emerged as a real leader in this industry and his opinion is very much respected on legislative developments.

I admire Bob's tenacity and that is why he is one of the most effective leaders in the health care industry in Iowa. He enjoys a national reputation. The system he heads up has over 20,000 colleagues.

Bob has served both on the Board and the Executive Committee of the Iowa Hospital Association for a number of years. Many groups involved with complex health care issues in Washington D.C. have sought Bob's advice and I witnessed how well versed he is when I became involved with a "think tank" that needed someone to explain certain aspects of the Affordable health care Act's exchange programs. Bob was masterful and I received many compliments for getting someone of his caliber so engaged with assisting the advocacy efforts of this think tank.

My wife and I have become friends with Bob and Mary Ritz. They have been a great addition to our community. Bob chaired the Greater Des Moines Committee in 2015. He did a superb job of leading that organization composed mostly of CEOs. He also serves on the Iowa Business Council which represents the 20 largest employers in Iowa.

Bob's leadership style is very much of fostering teamwork and providing servant leadership. He is a very humble professional who has always embraced DEI well before its principles were formally advanced.

I recommend Bob unequivocally for the IHA's Excellence in Leadership Award. He has more than earned this honor and as you can tell, I am very much a supporter of Bob.

## **Letter of Support No. 4**

*David Vellinga*

*Retired CEO of Mercy Health Network and retired CEO of several other Iowa hospitals*

It is my privilege and great pleasure to write this letter to support the nomination of Robert P. Ritz for the IHA Excellence in Leadership Award. I have known Bob since he was hired as the Mercy Des Moines CEO in 2013. He provided tremendous leadership to Mercy until his promotion to the MercyOne CEO position in 2017. During this time, I developed enormous respect for his dedication to Mercy's Mission, his leadership skills and his devotion to leadership excellence through his relentless commitment to responding to all our customers' needs.

Below are the reasons for and examples of why Bob is worthy of this important IHA recognition:

- ***Bold yet common sense growth plans and detailed organizational effectiveness plans*** – Bob has shown the ability to quickly discern MercyOne's needs and has moved effectively to provide creative recommendations and innovative work tools for organizational success. All these initiatives have included well defined goals with efficient execution plans. Specific examples of these initiatives and efforts are:
  - Development and implementation of a 100-bed behavioral health hospital in Clive.
  - Development and implementation of a 50-bed inpatient rehabilitation hospital in Clive.
  - Development and implementation of a centralized transfer center.
  - Development and implementation of a family medicine clinic in Albert Lea, Minnesota. This brought access to health care back to a community that had none.
  - Development and implementation of a new cancer center in Dubuque.
  - Development and implementation of a new master campus plan for MercyOne Des Moines Medical Center.
  - Development and implementation of a new MercyOne strategic plan resulting in growth in all major service categories.
  - Development and implementation of a new operational model.
  - Development and implementation of a unified MercyOne brand identity.

- Development and implementation of digital and virtual services (virtual nursing, Care Anywhere, Phreesia online scheduling and payment system, to name a few).
  - Development and implementation of MercyOne's organizationwide response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
  - Integration of Wheaton Franciscan Health (now MercyOne Waterloo and MercyOne Elkader) into MercyOne.
- ***Consistent, inspirational leadership*** – Bob has demonstrated exemplary efforts to nurture a climate of innovation, care and service excellence within MercyOne. It is clear he genuinely enjoys working with others and always tries to lift the spirits of those around him. His quick wit and loyalty have endeared him to his colleagues. He epitomizes servant leadership and inspires the MercyOne leadership teams to give back and pay it forward. Even during these tremendously challenging times, Bob projects a warm, cheerful, positive attitude. With these amazing leadership skills, I have seen him resolve conflicts and manage difficult situations with remarkable patience and admirable tact. A specific example of his inspirational leadership and his commitment to service excellence is the development of the Mercy Experience Department where 7,000 colleagues and providers completed patient experience training in two months.
  - ***Extraordinary commitment to Iowa communities and to our profession*** – Besides performing his leadership responsibilities at an exemplary level, Bob has demonstrated an extraordinary commitment as an ambassador for MercyOne. He is also a tireless champion for the communities MercyOne serves, for the public we serve and for the profession he loves. I have never worked with anyone with his level of high energy. Outside of MercyOne, Bob's community and professional organization efforts are far-reaching. They include:
    - Current board memberships on the Des Moines Performing Arts (and chair of their Finance Committee), Iowa Business Council (and chair of their Career Ready Workforce Committee), Greater Des Moines Partnership and Greater Des Moines Committee.
    - Member of the Catholic Health Association Advocacy and Public Policy Committee.

- Participation on several national CEO panels and author of several articles about health care for national publications.
- Previous board memberships on the IHA Board of Officers and Trustees and several IHA committees, Des Moines University and the United Way of Central Iowa.

Although the challenges facing our health care systems are daunting, Bob has continued to exemplify the MercyOne Mission and has enhanced systems of care for the people of our state. These are the leadership characteristics that represent all that is good within MercyOne and within the Iowa Hospital Association.

It has been a privilege to know and work with this dedicated leader and I highly recommend Bob Ritz for the IHA Excellence in Leadership Award. Of course, if you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

## **IHA involvement**

### ***Event attendance:***

- 2021 IHA All-District Meeting
- 2021 IHA Annual Meeting

### ***Board/Council memberships:***

- IHA Board of Officers and Trustees, 2015-2018 and 2019-2020
- Trustee Certified, Classes of 2018 and 2020
- District E Chair, 2016
- IHA PAC Committee, 2016

### ***IHA PAC Contributor:***

- 2022
- 2021
- 2019
- 2018
- 2017