



Nightingale

Breaking Barriers and Building Trust: An Interview with Dr. Kendra Holmes

EDITOR'S NOTE: *Dr. Holmes was recently interviewed by the Missouri Primary Care Association (MPCA) for this article which was published in its June 12, 2024 email newsletter.*

Dr. Kendra Holmes is the President & CEO of Affinia Healthcare as of January 1, 2023. This role is historic for two reasons: Dr. Holmes is the first woman to lead Affinia as well as the first Black person to be selected as the organization's President and CEO in its 117-year history.

Dr. Holmes joined Affinia Healthcare in 2003 as a pharmacist and worked her way to the organization's Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer. She also spearheaded the

health center's most recent Joint Commission review which resulted in a Gold Award for its ambulatory care.

Dr. Holmes received her bachelor's and doctorate degrees in pharmacy at the University of Health Sciences and Pharmacy in St. Louis. She is also the recipient of the Community Health Centers Executive Management Fellowship from the Kansas University Medical Center.

Dr. Holmes, what motivates you in this job?

My philosophy is that healthcare is a right for everyone not a privilege. The community of under-served people that Affinia is working every day to help is what inspires me daily.

What is your vision for Affinia Healthcare in the next 5-10

years?

More expansion (laughing)! Actually, our goal is to change the narrative and culture around healthcare in underserved communities. There is fear and a lack of trust, especially in the Black communities we work with. Access isn't always the problem. If we can change the narrative, we can truly improve health outcomes.



Dr. Kendra Holmes

What do you see as your biggest challenge?

Beyond lack of trust, it's Medicaid redetermination. We worked so hard to get Medicaid expansion and now

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Affinia Healthcare is one of eight U.S. health centers selected to receive grant for urban garden project

Affinia Healthcare is one of eight community health centers across the U.S. selected to receive a \$30,000 grant to participate in the National Association of Community Health Center (NACHC) Innovation Incubator. The St. Louis-based community health center will use the funds to develop an urban garden to increase access to healthy foods in areas considered a food desert.

The urban garden is planned for the grounds adjacent to Affinia Healthcare location at 2524 Hadley and Grace Hill Chapel of the Episcopal Diocese of Missouri, with a start date to be determined. The Affinia Healthcare

Urban Garden will help address hunger in the 63106 zip code, which is considered a food desert.

The NACHC and global healthcare company, Abbott, selected eight community health centers to participate in the Innovation Incubator to find new ways to integrate healthy food into clinical care.

Affinia Healthcare's aim is to serve residents who have diabetes, pregnant women, unhoused individuals and other special populations with diabetes.

"We work to meet the needs of our patients by

See Urban Garden, cont'd on page 2



Trust, from page 1

that the redetermination process has started, we are seeing thousands of people losing coverage – and the main groups being impacted are women and children.

What is Affinia Healthcare’s brightest opportunity?

Our brightest opportunity is that Affinia Healthcare is trusted in the under-served communities in St. Louis. We have the ability to reach people and help them gain and keep trust, not just in our organization but the entire healthcare system.

What has been the most significant learning experience in your career?

During the COVID-19 pandemic – Affinia Healthcare prioritized people of color, which was necessary given that minority communities were some of the hardest hit by the effects of the pandemic. Affinia was able to put a monoclonal antibody infusion therapy center in St. Louis City to provide treatment for COVID-19 during a time when resources for that kind of care were scarce. While we talk about health equity and eliminating disparities, it was a major learning experience to deal with the

backlash that occurred with more affluent communities when we put our words into action.

What legacy do you hope to build for your organization?

In Affinia’s 117-year history, I am the first Black person and first woman to lead this organization. My legacy should be, I am not the last. My vision is to be constantly working to develop and mentor the next set of leaders who will go on to do bigger and better things.

Tell us about your family.

I get my passion for humanity from my mother. I am a people person and the people in my family are all in professions that help others. One of my sisters is a nurse, and the other a teacher and we all learned from our mother how important it is to take care of others.

Is there anything you would like to add?

The thing that keeps me up at night is rural Missouri. Affinia Healthcare’s centers are all urban – but rural Missouri has the same needs and barriers as we do, and they are not getting the attention and support they

need either. There is an impression that the issue is around race, but in fact, the division is truly about poverty and lack of resources. We have to do better and bridge the divide between urban and rural communities in the state.

Urban Garden, from page 1

providing necessary resources to support optimal nutritional health,” said Kristen Gore, Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Director. “Providing our community with this garden is an opportunity to help patients access fresh foods and see how these preventative measures can improve their health.”

Through a competitive process, the eight health centers across the U.S. were selected based on their submitted proposals. The health centers will also have a chance to win one of two additional recognition awards at a live competitive pitch session in the fall.

St. Louis City, County recognize stroke prevention efforts

The City of St. Louis Board of Aldermen and St. Louis County Executive Dr. Sam Page recently recognized Affinia Healthcare with resolutions in recognition of the community health system’s stroke prevention and awareness initiatives in high-risk populations.

The resolutions were presented in May as part of Stroke Awareness Month to Affinia Healthcare by Population Health & Social Justice Consulting, LLC Founder & CEO Dr. Fredrick Echols (at right). Accepting the proclamations on behalf of Affinia Healthcare are Dr. Melissa Tepe, VP & Chief Medical Officer (center), and Dr. Gabriel Msengi, Pharmacist.





Recognizing the excellent service and accomplishments of Affinia Healthcare staff!



Blevins



Curry



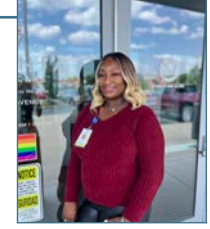
Jarrett



Mahoney



Mohamed



Moore

They Know Quality: Congratulations to the recent recipients of the **I Know Quality** awards! The biannual awards recognize staff who demonstrate exceptional quality in their work to support excellent patient care. The latest winners are:

Wes Blevins, Assistant Vice President of Information Services

Deanna Curry, WIC Certifier

Bethany Jarrett, RN Clinic Nurse Coordinator

Mimi Mahoney, RN Clinic Nurse Coordinator

Mohamed Mohamed, Outreach Manager

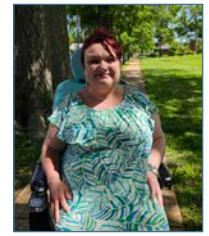
LaWanda Moore, Patient Care Coordinator

Chris Overmann, Assistant Vice President, Operations and Special Projects

Stephani Zellers, Community Health Worker



Overmann



Zellers



Jones



Gore



Winters

Thought Leaders Share Expertise: Three members of our staff recently led discussions and presented on issues critical to the community health space. **Susan Jones**, Mobile Health Unit Nurse, shared how the Jerry McLarty Connectivity Grant, provided by West Networks and Peplink, transformed our mobile health center operations. **Kristen Gore**, WIC Director, presented at part two of the National Nurse-Led Care Consortium and National Center for Health in Public Housing on Maternal Mental Health and Postpartum Care. Kristen's presentation focused on fostering a nurturing environment for breastfeeding mothers as well as approaches to lactation and breastfeeding education. **Jennifer Winters**, Assistant Vice President, Value Based Healthcare, was a presenter at the recent Unlocking Equitable Care with GLOBO + Affinia Healthcare: How Affinia Healthcare Transforms the Refugee Patient Experience, with GLOBO, our translation services vendor. Jennifer will present again at the Missouri Primary Care Association this fall.



Recognizing the excellent service and accomplishments of Affinia Healthcare staff!

Celebrating Excellence, Care & Compassion: Nurses of the Month

Affinia Healthcare launched its Nurse of the Month appreciation program to recognize members of the nursing staff and the vital role they serve in healthcare. Here are the honorees for April, May and June.

Denise Johnson - April: has been with Affinia Healthcare



Johnson

a little over a year, but has worked as a nurse for over 20 years. She comes from a family of nurses and is an advocate for teaching positive change to help those in the community with their health. Denise enjoys working at Affinia Healthcare because “it’s the perfect environment for health promotion for our communities.”

Denise is a graduate of Chamberlain College of Nursing with a bachelor’s degree in Nursing. She earned her master’s degree in Nursing from Webster University.

Hope Marie N’Diaye - May: Hope has been with Affinia

Healthcare for three years and nurse for five. Observing her mother ‘go above and beyond for her patients and families’, motivated Hope to enter the nursing profession. She earned her bachelor’s degree in Nursing from Saint Louis University. “Both of my parents are immigrants from West Africa, and it has been such a full circle moment now being able to care for our refugee and immigrant patients.”



N’Diaye

Kanette Turner - June: Kanette has been a nurse for 50 years! Influenced by her mother to go into nursing, Kanette loves helping and educating others about their health. She is the third oldest of 13 children and fondly



Turner

remembers helping her mother care for her siblings. “I’ve always been home helping my mother with my younger siblings. It pleases me to do what my mother loved doing.” Kanette earned her Nursing degree from St. Louis Community College-Forest Park and has worked for Affinia Healthcare for 11 years.



Rewarding Excellence: Congratulations to **Dorothy Burnett** (second from left) and **Victoria Braxton** of the Laboratory Services team. Dorothy was promoted to Laboratory Team Lead, and Victoria was promoted to Laboratory Assistant II/Trainer. They are shown here with Takisha Lovelace, COO, and Sylvia Scott (far right), Laboratory Team Lead.



Operational Excellence: **Dana Burrage** was promoted to Operations Coordinator where she provides administrative support for the Operations department. She is congratulated by her supervisor, Chris Overmann, AVP. Congratulations!

Casa de Salud Honors: President & CEO

Dr. Kendra Holmes was recognized by Casa de Salud as a Community Champion at the organization’s Zocaloco fundraising gala May 16. The mission of Casa de Salud is to facilitate and deliver high quality medical and mental health services for uninsured and underinsured patients, focusing on new immigrants and refugees who face barriers to accessing other sources of care.



Whitaker Foundation Summer Concert Series returns to St. Louis Place Park for successful run

Affinia Healthcare is proud to be the presenting sponsor of the Whitaker Foundation Summer Concert Series at the St. Louis Place Park, located between 21st Street and Rauschenbach.

This year, we partnered with the St. Louis Place Community Association to give away a 42-inch smart TV each week. Attendees were to view a brief video on HIV prevention and care and enter the drawing to win. Contest rules will be available at the event.

In addition to the music, there will be food trucks, and activities for children. Affinia Healthcare provided health screenings for high blood pressure, diabetes, HIV, and other conditions.

The concert lineup included tributes to R&B legends like Earth, Wind & Fire, Whitney Houston and St. Louis' own Tina Turner.





Employment Anniversaries

April

Elizabeth Harmann	8 Years	Darece Peete	1 Year
Elizabeth Howard	2 Years	Linda Prince	6 Years
Alexis Howell	8 Years	Porche Pruitt	1 Year
Bertha James	3 Years	Josefina Rebolledo	6 Years
Rajeev John	33 Years	Angela Schiefelbein	22 Years
Crystal Johnson	1 Year	Patrick Schoenwalder	8 Years
Kenyatta Johnson	9 Years	Patricia Smith-Finch	5 Years
Terri Jones	1 Year	Angeli Taveras	2 Years
Julia Kiehl	5 Years	Shanell Thomas	1 Year
Liyi Mendoza	1 Year	Latashia Williams	9 Years
Lawanda Moore	2 Years	Stephani Zellers	7 Years
Leslie O'Connor	5 Years		
Dr. Amanda Parsley	7 Years		

May

Latrice Adams	1 Year	Sandra McIntyre-Haines	7 Years
Taylor Banks	2 Years	Satoya Miller	3 Years
Dr. Mihiret Belihu	4 Years	Michelle Mullin	8 Years
Charlet Clay	8 Years	Tammy Neel	8 Years
Deanna Curry	14 Years	Antronette Phoenix	5 Years
Kenneth Darron	24 Years	Kierra Porter	5 Years
Cristina Gonzalez	8 Years	Andrew Raper	1 Year
Kalyn Johnson	1 Year	Jennifer Vipond	4 Years
Kwamina Jones	7 Years		
Latoya Lewis	10 Years		
Veta Lewis	7 Years		
Dejanique Mairidith	1 Year		

Employment Anniversaries

June

Kristy Brown	11 Years	Zerina Martin	10 Years
Lisa Brown-Hebron	9 Years	Victoria Martin	6 Years
Nicole Bryer	1 Year	Dr. Timothy McCann	8 Years
Cassie Calicutt	1 Year	Charisse Moore	6 Years
Linda Dennis	2 Years	Louise Peppers	17 Years
Arnisha Hall	1 Year	Mia Perry	1 Year
Anita Hardin	1 Year	Katherine Quinn	9 Years
Nykea Hatcher	3 Years	Lawanda Richardson	3 Years
Dejhae Henderson	1 Year	Dr. Heba Sarhan	2 Years
Kimberly Henry	8 Years	Tamonica Simmons	8 Years
Maria Hernandez	12 Years	Patricia Martin	9 Years
Don Hutcherson	6 Years	Tammy Thompson-Cohen	18 Years
Tina Jackson	7 Years	Antonio Thompson	7 Years
Hadia Jaffery	2 Years	Melanie Vaughn	7 Years
Lauren Johnson	5 Years	Laura Williams	2 Years
Veronica Lewis	9 Years	Kelvonda Williams	1 Year



New Roles: Linda Prince and Don Hutcherson were recently promoted to Senior Administrative Coordinators. Linda (2nd from left) is the Senior Administrative Coordinator for COO Takisha Lovelace (far left); and Don serves as the Senior Administrative Coordinator for Dr. Melissa Tepe, Chief Medical Officer. Congratulations!



AFFINIA HEALTHCARE™

Inspired by the Patients We Serve

Our Locations

4414 North Florissant Avenue	Affinia Healthcare Program Management Office
2220 Lemp Avenue	Affinia Healthcare at Normandy High School
3930 South Broadway Street	Affinia Healthcare at Lift For Life Academy
1717 Biddle Street	Affinia Healthcare at Confluence Aspire Academy
6763 Page Avenue	Fance Early Childhood Center
3396 Pershall Road	BJC Behavioral Health, 3309 South Kingshighway
3030 S. Grand	The Salvation Army Midtown Service and Treatment Center
St. Louis Dental Center	

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<https://www.facebook.com/affiniahealthcare>

<https://www.facebook.com/Affinia-Healthcare-WIC-Program-566603083429888/>

<https://www.facebook.com/stldentalcenter>

Follow us on **X** (formerly Twitter): <https://twitter.com/AffiniaHealth>

See our videos on **YouTube** (Affinia Healthcare)

Follow us on **Instagram**: https://www.instagram.com/affinia_healthcare/

https://www.instagram.com/affinia_midwifery

TikTok: www.tiktok.com/affiniahealthcare

Connect with the Affinia Healthcare Foundation on Social Media

Follow us on **Instagram**: https://www.instagram.com/affinia_healthcare_foundation/

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