



## **Bruce A. Bartoo, MPA, CFRE**

### ***President & Chief Gratitude Officer***

Founded by long-time healthcare executive and chief philanthropy officer, Mr. Bruce A. Bartoo, MPA, CFRE, the Gratitude Health Group is intensely focused on unleashing the power of gratitude to enhance healthcare and create much deeper respect for patients, families, and community members by bringing previously unrealized value to healthcare organizations. Having created and perfected an innovative "culture of gratitude" in his most recent executive role as the Senior Vice President & Chief Philanthropy Officer at a major health system in the MidAtlantic region, Bruce brings unique background, experience, and perspective to leading change and improving results that create high impact in numerous ways.



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During the 13+ years he served in this leadership role, Bruce envisioned and led an innovative team to implement a focused strategy which created awareness around the power of patient and family gratitude, resulting in total annual philanthropic support growth of over 600% (all accomplished without adding a single FTE within the philanthropy function across the ten-hospital health system). In addition, the health system's philanthropy program was recognized as a "High Performer" by the Association for Healthcare Philanthropy for 13 consecutive years - the only healthcare organization in the world to consistently receive such recognition during that time period.

Simultaneous with transformational philanthropy revenue growth, additional important benefits of enhanced patient/family experience and reductions in clinician burnout became a natural outgrowth from the health system fully embracing the innovative and proprietary *culture of gratitude* which was built and implemented across the organization. One additional aspect of transformation was Bruce's visionary leadership in creating the first-ever Medical Director of Philanthropy role for the health system. This function was instrumental in creating lasting partnerships with clinicians, as the physician leader who held this position successfully inspired clinical teams to become gratitude champions.

Earlier in his career, Bruce developed a deep passion for the power of gratitude in healthcare, where he served in executive roles leading philanthropy enterprises in several other healthcare organizations, bringing innovative approaches to focusing on gratitude and how it often serves as the primary inspiration for patients, families, and community members to make philanthropic investments which advance the work of care teams for whom they are grateful. These roles included serving as foundation president & system chief philanthropy officer at a Catholic health system based in the Midwest, as well as chief philanthropy officer at three other health systems and hospitals, including a children's hospital.

Bruce also has comprehensive experience in higher education advancement, political campaign financing and management, and has served his community as an elected local town council member and leader. He earned a Master of Public Administration degree from Drake University (IA) and a Bachelor of Arts degree from Westminster College (PA). Bruce is also a longtime Certified Fund Raising Executive (CFRE), as well as a 32+ year member of the Association for Healthcare Philanthropy, where he previously served on the Board of Directors, and has chaired numerous regional and international conferences for the membership organization.



Bruce understands that gratitude is a powerful emotion, strongly believing that the healthcare industry will find great additional value in recognizing and facilitating the power found in expressions of gratitude from patients, families, and community members. When this power of gratitude is successfully unleashed, significant additional value is realized in healthcare through:

- + ENHANCED PATIENT EXPERIENCE
- REDUCED CLINICIAN BURNOUT
- + EXPANDED PHILANTHROPIC SUPPORT

When patients and families are grateful for care experiences, and they wish to express their gratitude in meaningful ways, facilitating that gratitude helps ensure that those patients and families feel respected and honored as it relates to their feelings and emotions. Far too often in healthcare, expressions of gratitude from patients and families are dismissed with seemingly humble comments such as “it’s my job” or “no big deal” – responses that can frequently be viewed by patients and families as disrespectful (despite the best intentions of care team members).

A *culture of gratitude* creates an effective and transformational process for triaging gratitude to ensure that patients and families are heard and respected, and their expressions of gratitude are shared appropriately with care team members. When that happens, care team members feel honored, more validated, and appreciated, helping to address the epidemic of clinician burnout that is unfortunately a continuing reality across every healthcare organization. Care teams deserve to know they have a positive impact on patients and families every day. Patients and families often want to express gratitude, and we must ensure they can do so in whatever way is most meaningful to them.

The pathway to building a successful *culture of gratitude* in any healthcare organization can often be found through launching an innovative gratitude-inspired philanthropy program. Such a program will reprioritize activities from lower value transactional and traditional fundraising activities to higher value direct engagement with patients, families, and community members who are inspired to invest through philanthropy in advancing the work of care teams for whom they are grateful. Clinician partnerships with the philanthropy team are critical to implementing a gratitude-inspired philanthropy program in any healthcare organization.

The Gratitude Health Group has developed an innovative and proprietary education and training program to guide healthcare organizations in successfully building this culture.



IDENTIFY. ACCEPT. CONNECT.

A unique innovative and motivating program offered exclusively by the Gratitude Health Group, the **Institute for Gratitude in Healthcare** was created to serve as an expert and proprietary training and education program that serves to teach clinicians and other healthcare professionals about the power of gratitude in healthcare. Through focused and exceptionally relevant engagement settings, our powerful program serves to inspire clinicians and care team members to most effectively respond to expressions of gratitude in healthcare settings.



Patients and families are frequently grateful for care experiences in healthcare settings, but often their expressions of gratitude are dismissed, minimized, and/or unintentionally disrespected by well-intentioned care team members who may not have ever considered how to best respond to those expressions, leading to a potentially negative impact on how patients and families reflect upon and evaluate their care experiences. Denying someone the opportunity to meaningfully express gratitude can cause feelings of frustration and disappointment, resulting in a less-than-ideal patient/family experience, which might unfortunately serve to lower patient satisfaction survey scores.

Inspiring healthcare providers to understand the power of gratitude in healthcare is critically important to the patient experience. Our unique model of training and inspiring clinicians is summarized by only three simple words:

## **IDENTIFY.** **ACCEPT.** **CONNECT.**

The Institute serves as a conduit for inspiring healthcare providers to understand and embrace those three key words. When expressions of gratitude from patients and families are dismissed with comments such as “it’s no big deal” or “it’s my job” (responses that may seem humble but are less than ideal), the positive attributes associated with care experiences might possibly be jeopardized.

Through our Institute, we teach, motivate, and inspire healthcare providers to:

**IDENTIFY** when gratitude is being expressed by a patient or family member (don’t miss it!), followed by coaching those providers in best practices relating to how they might best

**ACCEPT** that gratitude rather than dismissing it. The training also includes inspiring healthcare providers to take the critically important next step to

**CONNECT** those who are grateful to a colleague on the philanthropy team so the process of appropriately *triage gratitude* can be effectively accomplished.

By inspiring, educating, and training clinicians, other care team members, administrators and executives, Board members, and other healthcare professionals about why and how to successfully facilitate expressions of gratitude, we together ensure that those patients and families feel honored and respected. As clinicians **IDENTIFY** gratitude, **ACCEPT** it appropriately, and **CONNECT** those who are grateful to a professional colleague from the philanthropy team who has the expertise to *triage* that gratitude, healthcare organizations will quickly recognize that many will choose to express their gratitude in meaningful ways, which may include responding enthusiastically when invited to consider a philanthropic investment to support the work of the care teams for whom they are grateful.

As part of the Gratitude Health Group, Bruce’s work through Institute has had significant success in training, educating, and inspiring clinicians, care teams, philanthropy teams, c-suite executives, senior managers, and Board members in this innovative and transformational approach to recognizing the power of patient and family gratitude in transforming healthcare across the world. In addition, Bruce has also frequently presented on the topic of patient and family gratitude in healthcare at professional



conferences, seminars, and for other healthcare organizations and philanthropy associations in the United States, Canada, Germany, and Australia.

In 2024, the Gratitude Health Group launched a series of **Healthcare Gratitude Summits** that invite healthcare leaders, clinicians, Board members, and others in the industry to assemble and explore how organizations might more effectively unleash the power of gratitude in healthcare. These Summit sessions serve to create an innovative and transformational dialogue that will ultimately enhance patient experience, reduce clinician burnout, and expand philanthropic support in healthcare.

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