



Shaping the Future of Care at Southlake

CEO Recruitment Consultation Report

October 2023



SOUTHLAKE
REGIONAL HEALTH CENTRE



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A Message from Southlake's Board Chair and Vice Chair

The nature of healthcare is changing in Ontario. Needs have never been greater, while resources are scarce.

In the past 20 years, Southlake has stretched to provide care to nearly 100,000 more people annually and we're expected to be in the top five busiest hospitals for senior's care in the next 20 years.

The hospital serves some of the fastest growing communities in Ontario and it's critical that Southlake is equipped with top talent to lead us through these challenges. That's why we undertook a community and organization-wide consultation to help inform a nation-wide search for Southlake's next President and CEO.

Appointing a CEO is one of the most important responsibilities of a Board of Directors and thanks to your help, we are armed with key insights and a wealth of information to help inform the recruitment process.

Over a three week period, members of the search committee met with more than 100 team members, including members of the hospital's Medical Staff Association, Nursing Council, Leadership Team and so much more. Southlake Foundation leadership, Board members, and Philanthropy Cabinet members were also consulted, along with members of the Southlake Community Ontario Health Team. A public survey garnered more than 120 responses from across the hospital's catchment area.

On behalf of the entire Board of Directors, we'd like to thank you for sharing your thoughts on the future of healthcare and how the next CEO should support our communities' needs. It's uplifting to have heard the shared optimism and willingness to collaborate to keep Southlake on a path of ongoing success.

While the search process is still ongoing, we are proud to share with you a summary of the key themes that resonated throughout the consultation.

It has been our goal from the beginning to undertake a comprehensive and thoughtful recruitment process, and this information also serves a dual purpose by helping the new CEO to understand the needs of the team they will lead.

We hope you find this summary informative as we work to find our next leader to help all of us deliver leading edge care to the patients we are privileged to serve.

Sincerely,

Marilee Harris,
Chair, Board of Directors

Diana Brouwer,
Vice Chair, Board of Directors



CEO Search Committee Membership

Marilee Harris,
Board Chair

Diana Brouwer,
Vice Chair

Patrick Horgan,
Past Chair

Dr. Eddie Chan,
President,
Medical Staff Association

Dr. Charmaine van Schaik,
Chief of Staff

Elizabeth Ferguson,
Chief Nursing Executive
& Vice President, People,
Interprofessional Practice
and Patient Experience

Tyler Chalk,
Vice President, Strategy,
Analytics &
Communications

Jennifer Ritter,
President & CEO,
Southlake Foundation

Naqi Ahsan,
Patient & Family Advisor

Consultation Approach

PUBLIC SURVEY

To officially kick off consultations to inform Southlake's search for a new President and CEO, an [opinion editorial](#) was placed in York Region Media Group publications on August 11, 2023 by Board Chair, Marilee Harris, which invited input through a public survey. This survey was also shared internally with Southlake and Southlake Foundation employees, medical staff, volunteers, and Patient & Family Advisors. The survey was promoted within the catchment area across the hospital's social media channels through a combination of organic and paid posts, as well as being posted on the hospital's website.

Over a six week period, the survey collected data through four open-ended free text questions:

- 1) From your perspective, what are the challenges, opportunities and key priority areas of focus associated with this President and CEO role and the future of Southlake?
- 2) What leadership attributes and competencies should the ideal candidate possess?
- 3) What experience should the ideal candidate possess?
- 4) If you were speaking to a good candidate for the role, what would you say about the organization and the opportunity to generate their interest?

A total of 124 anonymous responses were collected.

INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP FORUMS

Throughout September 2023, CEO Search Committee members held and participated in multiple interviews or consultation sessions with key stakeholders, including:

- Health system partners from the Southlake Community Ontario Health Team
- Medical Staff Association members
- Southlake Nursing Council members
- Southlake Leadership Team members
- Southlake's Corporate Patient & Family Advisor Committee
- Southlake Foundation Board of Directors and Philanthropy Cabinet members

In addition, each member of Southlake's Board of Directors and Executive Leadership Team was provided an opportunity to provide feedback directly to representatives from Boyden, who are supporting the CEO Search committee with executive search services. In total, more than 100 team members participated in interviews over a three week period.

OPEN DIALOGUE

During the course of the consultation period, a series of large employee and medical staff activities occurred to celebrate staff and hospital milestones, including an all staff town hall, summer BBQ and appreciation event, and press conference to unveil York Region's first PET-CT machine at the Stronach Regional Cancer Centre at Southlake. Either the Board Chair, Vice Chair, or both were present at these events and took the opportunity to speak with attendees about the CEO search, as well as provide individuals a chance to ask questions to them directly.



Executive Overview

Delivering a wide-range of community hospital services to northern York Region and south Simcoe County, as well as regional cardiac and cancer care programs to a broader geography isn't easy. It takes collaboration to guide nearly 6,000 staff, nurses, medical staff, volunteers, and Patient & Family Advisors to create an environment where the best experiences happen. A champion to deliver clinical excellence. And vision to deploy a \$550-million operating budget that protects Southlake's reputation as one of the Top 10 Hospitals in Ontario according to Newsweek magazine. Along with a focus on building culture, these were the top four thematic character traits heard during the consultation:

- Advocate for Excellence
- Collaborative Team Leader
- Visionary with Innovative Ideas
- Culture Connoisseur

Each theme is outlined in greater detail in the summary that follows in order to provide an overview of respondent's feedback. All comments were generalized and provided on a not-for-attribution basis in order to maintain respondent confidentiality.



Advocate for Excellence

Advocacy skills were consistently mentioned as a critical requirement in the next President and CEO. As Southlake's primary spokesperson, the President and CEO must have strong communications and relationship-building skills in order to influence on all fronts.

Frontline and back office staff must be equipped with the latest technologies and operate in top-of-the-line facilities, fit for purpose. Southlake's top advocate must be able to take the torch and lead us through the next steps in our transformation to become a leading two-site hospital system. Lobbying to maximize funding models and capital investments while supporting campaigns for fair compensation isn't easy, but it is imperative that Southlake maintain a safe and caring environment that respects those working in Ontario's healthcare system. This requires strong convictions rooted in integrity to align political and bureaucratic decision-makers to deliver results.

Southlake's President and CEO will be a local healthcare champion for integrated care for patients in northern York Region and southern Simcoe County. He or she must be prepared to act as local voice and community builder working with professional associations, labour and philanthropic partners, to promote leading edge care.



Collaborative Team Leader

In its nearly 100 year history, only five people have led Southlake. Each individual championed different causes, which helped to build the organization's esteemed history, but all shared a willingness to collaborate in order to lead a team to deliver leading edge care. Respondents were clear that the next CEO must maintain an openness to collaborate to build social license throughout the organization and community.

It was noted that the organization's next leader must remain visible, working internally and throughout the local healthcare system to nurture cross-functional relationships. This is important in order to maintain an approachable demeanor for team members to feel comfortable to bring forward new ideas and opportunities to address areas for improvement.

While it was noted that hospital leadership experience was critical, interpersonal competencies were considered equally as important in the next President and CEO. The successful individual must be a team player reinforcing stability throughout the organization by maintaining presence. It is always appreciated when the hospital's executive leadership seek input from the frontline and from those with lived experience. Southlake's next leader is encouraged to continue consulting with purpose to meet the evolving needs in Ontario's healthcare system.



Visionary with Innovative Ideas

It's no secret that the nature of healthcare is changing as the province shifts toward integrated care. Needs have never been greater, while resources are scarce. Ingenuity and an open-mind willing to take calculated risks that push established agendas to find new solutions is needed to overcome the challenges facing publicly-funded healthcare organizations in Ontario. Southlake's next President and CEO should have a proven track record of success that's balanced by a 'not afraid to fail' attitude.

Leading a 6,000 plus team of clinical, support and corporate services staff, medical staff, volunteers, and Patient & Family Advisors isn't easy. It takes a clear set of priorities and the ability to articulate business strategy in plain language to lead an organization of Southlake's size. The hospital's next leader must be able to rally others to a shared cause that empowers team members to achieve more.

While vision is critical to inspiring hospital workers, it's equally as important to reinforce confidence to the patients and community members Southlake serves. This requires big thinking, looking beyond our role as an acute care provider in order to foresee where healthcare is going in Ontario. The system's evolution is ongoing, currently pushing toward integrated care at scale through Ontario Health Teams. Southlake must continue to take pride in our contributions improving social determinants of health by delivering leading edge care, close to home.



Culture Connoisseur

“We’re like family,” is often one of the strongest themes repeated through Southlake’s annual employee and medical staff engagement surveys, team-building events and celebrations. While we may disagree like family (on occasion), Southlake is united in its shared purpose of building healthy communities through outstanding care, innovative partnerships, and amazing people, which the next President and CEO must continue to cultivate.

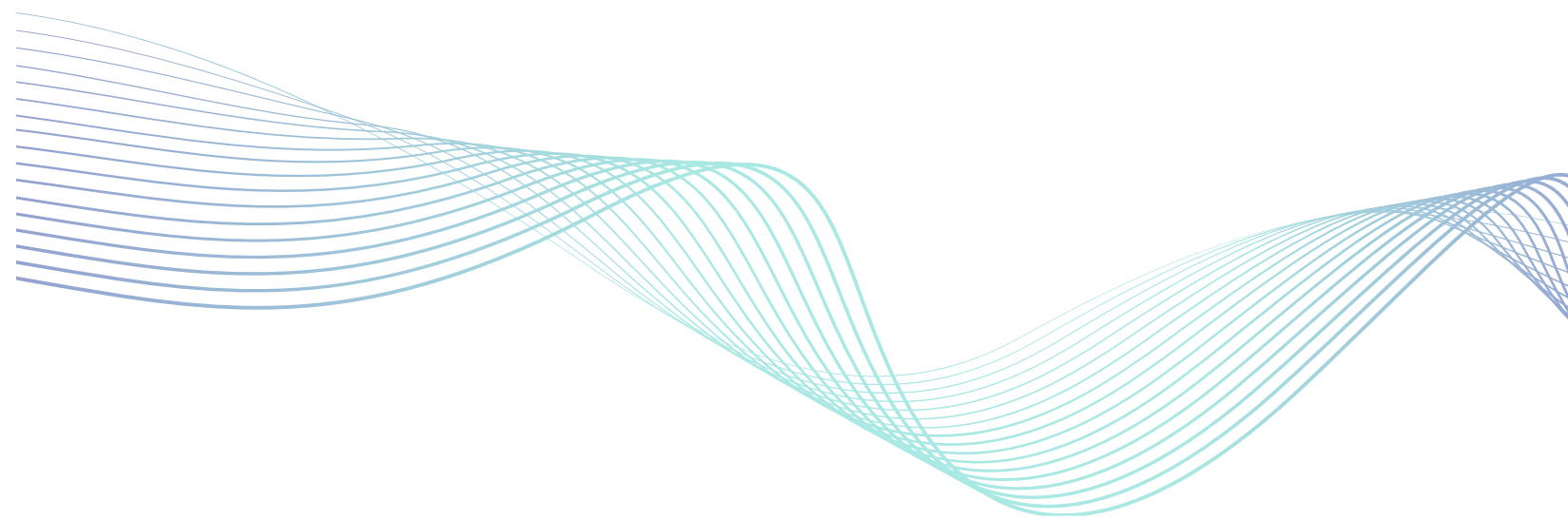
Like a family, we come from various walks of life, which the results from this consultation showed great appreciation for. Southlake’s welcoming culture and the strength of our diversity was exemplified regularly through shared values of compassion, empathy and integrity that characterize healthcare professions.

It was regularly noted that Southlake is a people-focused public service, which must be balanced by a business-oriented mindset in the next President and CEO. This is important as corporate culture adapts to address social causes important to the hospital’s workforce, including environmental sustainability, transparency, as well as diversity, equity, and inclusion. Southlake’s next President and CEO will be expected to champion these values and act as a culture connoisseur to keep the family united.

Conclusion and Next Steps

While each individual and group forum provided a unique perspective, it is reassuring to have found common and universal themes resonated throughout the consultation period. This is a strong indicator that foundational elements, such as a united workforce, universal values and a commitment to leading edge care, are well-established at Southlake. This will help to set the next President and CEO up for success.






More than 100 applications of interest were received to fill the position. It is clear Southlake continues to be a leading edge institution worthy of top healthcare talent from across the country. The Board of Directors will continue to work with Boyden Executive Search in the weeks ahead to identify a preferred candidate with the goal of announcing Southlake’s next President and CEO before the end of the year.



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