

## What are the 'Secrets' to Being a Best Place to Work in Indiana?

By Jim Bickel, President and CEO, Columbus Regional Health



I have been very fortunate to spend the past 23 years of my career with Columbus Regional Health, with the past seven years as president and chief executive officer. I spent the first decade of my career in manufacturing, but knew in my heart that I wanted to be in the service sector.

While I did not specifically target health care, the work, the culture and the genuine sense of caring and compassion at Columbus Regional Health quickly convinced me I was where I wanted to be.

At the core of Columbus Regional Health is our commitment to valuing our workforce. Every member of our workforce – employees, physicians and volunteers – plays an important role in making a difference for patients who put their trust in our hands each and every day. Valuing the workforce is not only an organizational philosophy, but also my personal leadership value and commitment. These are not just words on paper to list alongside a company mission statement, but in fact a core value that guides nearly all of our strategic decisions in some way.

This culture of valuing the workforce cannot be established overnight, is built over time and reinforced in both good and bad times. “Would you do it again?”

has been asked numerous times about a decision made in the summer of 2008 – a decision to keep every member of our workforce on the payroll at a time when our hospital was closed due to a devastating flood.

My answer has and will always be, “Yes.” This was the hardest, yet at the same time the easiest leadership decision I ever made. It was easy because it aligned with our commitment to value our workforce. It was hard because of the great uncertainty of the flood’s long-term impact. Thanks to the hard work, commitment and tenacity of our workforce, we reopened after five months despite projections it might take over a year before the facility was ready for our patients.

Our top priority at Columbus Regional Health is providing the highest quality and safest care for our patients. In order to accomplish this goal, it begins with a workforce that is well-trained, aligned and engaged around our mission, vision and values. Health care is undergoing significant change with many obstacles and uncertainty.

We must be prepared to seize the opportunities amidst this change in order to make health care better for all. Columbus Regional Health can only successfully navigate the changing health care environment by having a workforce that is driven to give our patients the very best.

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