Candice L. Saunders, FACHE  
President & CEO, WellStar Health System

Candice L. Saunders is the President and CEO at Marietta, Ga. based WellStar Health System and is a Fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives (FACHE). As President & CEO of the largest integrated health delivery system in Georgia, she oversees the health and well-being of WellStar’s patients across the state.

Saunders, who began her career as a critical care nurse, is a strong patient advocate and has built her career around improving access, implementing new care models and programs to address community health needs, and integrating health delivery processes to improve operational efficiencies and enhance the care experience.

Saunders joined WellStar in May 2007 as President of WellStar Kennestone Hospital and was promoted to Executive Vice President & Chief Operating Officer for WellStar Health System in 2013. She assumed the role of President & CEO in 2015.

Under Saunders’ leadership, WellStar has been recognized as an innovative leader in delivering safe, high-quality healthcare to the patients and communities served. Through an emphasis on strategic growth, WellStar acquired six additional hospitals in 2016 and expanded its clinically integrated network, WellStar Clinical Partners, expanding its footprint and creating a highly integrated network to ensure thousands of Georgians have access to the right care, at the right place and time. In addition, WellStar has become known as a great place to work and was listed on FORTUNE Magazine’s 100 Best Companies to Work For three years in a row. Additionally, WellStar is ranked as a top employer for female executives by the National Association of Female Executives and has a spot on Working Mother Magazine’s Best Companies list.

Saunders devotion to shaping the delivery of care and influencing healthcare policy at the local, state and national levels is evident through her leadership at the American Hospital Association (AHA) where she serves as a Trustee and Chair of AHA’s Regional Policy Board for Region 4, and at the Georgia Hospital Association where she served as Chair from 2015 – 2017. She has been recognized by numerous organizations for her leadership and has been named to Modern Healthcare’s Top 25 Women Leaders, Georgia Trend Magazine’s 100 Most Influential Georgians and Atlanta Business Chronicle’s Most Admired CEOs lists. She has been honored as a Woman of Distinction by Atlanta Magazine, Healthcare Champion by the National Association of Female Executives, and recipient of the W. Daniel Baker Leadership Award by the Georgia Hospital Association.

Prior to joining WellStar, Saunders was Vice President of Clinical Strategy and Service Lines for Inova Health System in Falls Church, Va. She also served as Chief Operating Officer of Inova Fairfax Hospital, an 833-bed medical complex. At Emory University School of Medicine, Saunders held overall administrative responsibility for the Department of Medicine Clinical Programs. She also managed the Emory Heart Center and Cardiology programs. Saunders has also held key leadership roles in nursing and physician practice administration in both academic and community settings in Ft. Lauderdale, Fl.

She has a bachelor’s degree in nursing from the University of South Florida in Tampa and master’s degrees in business administration and health services administration from the University of Alabama at Birmingham. Saunders lives in Cobb County with her husband. They have two adult sons.

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