Do you recall the moment you decided to work in health care? Was it something you knew you wanted to do growing up or did you pursue this career later in life?

I’ve worked in health care for more than 35 years and have as much passion for what I do now as I did in the beginning. Throughout my career, I have tried to purposefully surround myself with people who have that same passion. With respect to our pillars – people, quality, service, growth and financial – people comes first. In order to achieve and sustain excellence, the drive must come from within each of us.

When Hurricane Michael, nearly a Category 5 hurricane, struck Panama City, Florida on Oct. 10, 2018, the Bay Medical Sacred Heart team pulled together to protect patients and one another. In the hours and days that followed, they demonstrated remarkable acts of caring to ensure the safe evacuation of 231 patients to other hospitals, while continuing to care for patients in the ER. Despite facing tremendous threats, they served others above themselves.

Many of those same Bay Medical employees, approximately 84 percent, live in the area most devastated by the storm leaving some without homes and transportation. Several of you have reached out to ask how you can help Bay Medical employees as they work to rebuild their lives after the storm. We will be sharing information soon about how you can help by donating paid time off (PTO) that will directly support our employees who have been impacted. We are also working on a program for those of you who would like to offer monetary support.

I wanted to work in health care to help people. I know that your spirit of generosity will ensure Bay Medical team members feel cared for and supported, as we work together to rebuild lives.

In 72 hours, Hurricane Michael grew from a 40-mile-per-hour tropical storm to a 154-mile-per-hour Category 4 hurricane. It set its course for the Florida Panhandle with Panama City expected to take a direct hit. Less than two miles inland, Bay Medical Sacred Heart sat in the heart of Panama City awaiting the approaching storm. Leaders met to review the detailed incident plan at 9 a.m. Wednesday, Oct. 10. More than 1,500 people, including 231 patients and 70 pets, took shelter in the hospital as the pressure dropped and the outer bands of the hurricane circled overhead. Everyone waited within the newest part of the hospital, which was built to withstand a Category 3 hurricane. Nurses stayed with each patient.

Within minutes of the hurricane making landfall, the doors to the ER blew in. At 12:38 p.m. it was confirmed all patients and employees were safe. Updates were provided through Facebook and Twitter to employees, patients’ families and the community to remain in contact before, during and after the storm. Lunch was served and patients received medications on schedule. Physicians, nurses and staff cared for patients and one another, unsure if their own homes remained.

Two of the hardest hit areas of the hospital – the fourth and fifth floors – were evacuated. Staff moved patients one at a time down each flight of stairs on bed sleds. There was no power, running water and the phones were down. There was a satellite phone, connected to a bridge conference line with Ardent leaders, state and local agencies and Bay Medical command center.

Through the chaos and destruction, Bay Medical rose to the challenge.

Click this link to view a video we created to help share their story.

Online Security News for You
Adding another layer of defense to protect your online identity, multi-factor authentication (MFA), can help keep you safe both at work and at home. MFA is a tool that adds an extra layer of protection on top of your user name and password.

To authenticate that the user of an online account is who they claim to be, MFA adds an additional step (factor) to verify that the user is accessing their own account. In many cases, this is a code that is sent via text or app to be entered in addition to a password to gain access.

At home you can enable MFA to protect your Facebook, Google or other accounts through security settings. We encourage you to use MFA to keep your online identity secure while at work too. If you have computer-related security questions, please reach out to SecurityAwareness@ardenthealth.com.
Creating Lasting Service Excellence

Consistency matters to create service excellence in every one of our facilities and clinics. This is the purpose behind Ardent Service Excellence, a company-wide approach to how we treat our patients, their families and one another. Training on the core components of the program include what your personal connection to the purpose is, standard patient greeting, purposeful hourly rounding, bed-side shift report and senior leader rounding.

Since creating the foundation for Ardent Service Excellence more than a year ago:
- 1,143 leaders have attended training
- 9,889 employees have attended the purpose course
- 11,031 employees have completed standard greeting training
- 6,681 employees have completed purposeful hourly rounding training
- 287 executive leaders have attending senior leader training
- Hundreds of senior rounds have been conducted

Creating a lasting service-excellence culture requires commitment in the short-term and long-term. While we have successfully launched the program in all of our markets, we must maintain the daily work to ensure the core elements of the program become and remain the standard for which we deliver care and customer service. Communication supports that work.

To connect with you on a consistent basis, when and where it is convenient for you, and to keep you informed and inspired, we launched the Ardent Service Excellence Podcast, hosted by Ardent EVP and Chief Operating Officer, Paul Kappelman. Along with special guests each month, Paul will highlight a connect to purpose story, success stories from our markets and important information. In the first episode, Ardent President and CEO, David T. Vandewater, shares his personal experience with senior leader rounding and why all leaders, whether they have a formalized rounding practice in place or not, should be open to this new system. To listen to the podcast, click here.

Open Enrollment Began Nov. 5

You will be automatically re-enrolled in your current medical, dental, vision, life and disability elections. No action will be required unless you want to make changes to your current coverage or contribute to a 2019 Dependent Care, Health Care Flexible Spending Account or a Health Savings Account.

Prior to annual benefits enrollment opening on Nov. 5, you have received a benefits guide as well as an email including details about the 2019 changes. Annual enrollment is your chance to review all the benefits Ardent offers and ensure you are making choices that will meet you, and your family's health and financial needs. We encourage you to review the 2019 annual enrollment materials to know more, choose better and live well.

If you are an employee at UT Health East Texas, annual benefit enrollment begins Nov. 5 - 16. You have received a blog from HealthFirst announcing the enrollment along with a link to the electronic benefit guide. Printed benefit guides will be available Monday, Nov. 5 and you will be able to obtain them from your HR department. This guide includes new features introduced for 2019.

This is a great time to review the benefit options offered and make certain your coverage is appropriate for you and/or your family needs.