



# Chief Nursing Officer – Lee, Wise, and Dickenson Counties, Virginia

Leadership Profile

January 2026

*Prepared by April Allen*

A decorative graphic consisting of numerous thin, overlapping, curved lines in a light blue-grey color. These lines originate from the left side of the page and flow towards the right, creating a sense of movement and depth. They are layered over a dark teal rectangular area at the bottom of the page.

**WittKieffer**

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## The Opportunity

Ballad Health seeks a dynamic, distinguished executive to serve as its next Chief Nursing Officer (CNO) for the Southwest Virginia Market, encompassing Norton Community Hospital, Lonesome Pine Hospital, Dickenson Community Hospital, and Lee County Community Hospital. This is a unique opportunity to join one of the nation's most respected not-for-profit healthcare systems and provide strategic leadership across a multi-hospital, community-focused market. Ballad Health is a \$2.6 billion integrated healthcare delivery system serving 29 counties across Northeast Tennessee, Southwest Virginia, Northwest North Carolina, and Southeast Kentucky, employing more than 12,000 team members and operating 2,950 licensed beds across 20 hospitals, including a Level I Trauma Center, a dedicated children's hospital, community and critical access hospitals, a behavioral health hospital, six cancer centers, and a broad continuum of outpatient, home care, hospice, and specialty services.

The CNO will provide executive oversight of nursing and clinical operations for approximately 220 licensed beds across the Southwest Virginia Market, including two cancer centers, an urgent care clinic, regional outpatient medical offices, and Internal Medicine and Family Medicine residency programs. Serving as a key member of the market and system leadership teams, the CNO will build and maintain strong, collaborative relationships with the Board of Directors, Medical Staff, executive leaders, employees, and community partners. Responsibilities include oversight of all nursing services, cardiopulmonary services, and the Black Lung Clinic, as well as leading strategic initiatives focused on nursing recruitment and retention, quality and safety, financial stewardship, service excellence, growth, and community engagement. This role offers a meaningful opportunity for an accomplished nursing leader to drive clinical excellence, strengthen the workforce, and make a lasting impact on the health of the communities Ballad Health serves.

## Organization Overview

### Ballad Health

Ballad Health is an integrated healthcare system serving 29 counties of Northeast Tennessee, Southwest Virginia, and Northwest North Carolina. The System was formed to improve the health of the people served in the market by the merger of two existing healthcare systems, Mountain States Health Alliance and Wellmont Health System. Ballad Health operates a family of 20 hospitals, including three tertiary medical centers, a dedicated children's hospital, community hospitals, three critical access hospitals, a behavioral health hospital, an addiction treatment facility, home care and hospice services, retail pharmacies, outpatient services, and a comprehensive medical management corporation.

### Ballad Health Facts and Figures:

- Twenty-one hospitals
  - 3 tertiary hospitals
  - 9 rural hospitals
  - 3 community hospitals
  - 3 critical access hospitals
  - 1 dedicated children's hospital
  - 1 freestanding inpatient behavioral health
- Serving 1.1 million residents in 29 counties
- 13,000 team members
- 88,000 annual inpatient discharges
- 383,000 annual emergency room visits
- 200+ clinics
  - Including 18 urgent care centers and a variety of physician specialties

### Ballad Health, Southwest Virginia Market

Ballad Health is the region's largest healthcare provider. The primary service area includes 21 counties in Northeast Tennessee and Southwest Virginia, with a secondary area extending to six counties in Western North Carolina and two in Southeastern Kentucky. The Southwest Virginia Market, part of the Northern Region, consists of four hospitals: Norton Community Hospital, Lonesome Pine Hospital, Dickenson Community Hospital, and Lee County Community Hospital.



**Norton Community Hospital** is a 129-bed not-for-profit hospital located in Norton, Virginia. The facility serves communities in Southwest Virginia and Southeastern Kentucky and provides a wide array of services through highly trained physicians and support staff. Norton

Community Hospital offers pulmonology services with a dedicated black lung clinic, emergency care, surgical services, inpatient and outpatient rehabilitation, diagnostic imaging, and a family birth center. The hospital is a member of the Virginia Hospital & Healthcare Association and is accredited by the American Osteopathic Association. Learn more about Norton Community Hospital at [www.balladhealth.org/NCH](http://www.balladhealth.org/NCH).



**Lonesome Pine Hospital** is a licensed 60-bed acute care facility that has served the residents of Wise County, Virginia, since 1973. The facility offers various services, including a 24-hour emergency department with 11 beds. The facility offers pain management, wound care, physical therapy, cardiopulmonary and respiratory services, including a four-bed sleep evaluation center. Lonesome Pine’s diagnostic imaging department utilizes state-of-the-art technologies, including computed tomography, ultrasound, magnetic resonance imaging. In August 2023, Ballad Health marked a significant milestone by commemorating 50 years of Lonesome Pine Hospital's dedicated service alongside the community and team members. In addition to the celebration, Lonesome Pine is set to undergo renovations aimed at expanding its capacity to serve and support the residents of Wise County. This investment reflects Ballad Health's commitment to sustainable healthcare at Lonesome Pine and encompasses enhancements to the emergency department, the expansion of a wellness center, and more.



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**Dickenson Community Hospital**, located in Clintwood, Virginia, is a 25-bed critical access, not-for-profit hospital serving patients in Southwest Virginia and Southeastern Kentucky. The hospital offers several specialties and services, including 24/7 emergency care, digital diagnostic imaging, full laboratory services, pulmonary services, and comprehensive inpatient and outpatient behavioral health services for the geriatric population.

Dickenson Community Hospital is also home to Dickenson Medical Associates, a 5,700-square-foot physician office.

**Lee County Community Hospital** opened in 2021, after a successful community effort to bring hospital services back to Pennington Gap, Virginia. Lee County Community Hospital is a critical access hospital that has been specifically designed to meet the needs of its community. The hospital offers acute and emergency services available 24/7, diagnostic radiology and lab services, outpatient cardiology, and additional rotating clinics for specialty care and telehealth access, and it also serves as an access point to the hospitals, services, and specialties of Ballad Health. Learn more about Lee County Community Hospital at [www.balladhealth.org/LCCH](http://www.balladhealth.org/LCCH).



### Northern Region

The NW Market is anchored by Holston Valley Medical Center in Kingsport, TN. The market delivers high-quality care to communities in Tennessee and Virginia, operating facilities in both states.

Holston Valley continues to be recognized among the nation’s best hospitals, most recently being named a Top 50 Cardiovascular Hospital by IBM Watson Health. This is the fifth time Holston Valley has received this honor.

Holston Valley was the first site in Tennessee to offer transcatheter aortic valve replacement (TAVR) surgery for patients who are at higher risk for open-heart surgery.

There will be continued facility expansion, building, and improvement projects, as well as significant enhancements to medical equipment, over the next several years in the market.

**Northern Region Statistics:**

- Discharges: 24,309
- Patient Days: 214,989
- ED Visits: 221,465
- Surgery Cases: 27,312
- Total Operating Revenue: \$1,337,457,473

**Hospitals:**

- Bristol Regional Medical Center
- Smyth County Community Hospital
- Johnston Memorial Hospital
- Russel County Hospital
- Dickenson Community Hospital (15 acute beds and 10 gero-psych beds), Critical Access Hospital
- Norton Community Hospital (117 acute beds, 11 rehab beds, and 1 hospice bed)
- Lonesome Pine Hospital (60 acute beds)
- Lee County Community Hospital (6 beds CAH)
- Indian Path Community Hospital (239 beds)
- Holston Valley Medical Center (505 beds)

**Southern Region**

Johnson City Medical Center (JCMC) is a 445-bed regional tertiary referral center for the entire service area and one of five Level 1 Trauma Centers in the state of Tennessee. Since 1911, JCMC has been dedicated to helping the people of the region attain their highest level of health. There are approximately 4,300 caregivers who work within the region.

The second hospital built in Tennessee, JCMC, is a comprehensive, acute-care teaching hospital affiliated with East Tennessee State University. JCMC is a major medical referral center and home to Highlands Emergency Air Rescue Transport (HEART), the region's largest fleet of dedicated emergency medical air ambulances with bases in Tennessee, Virginia, and Kentucky.

JCMC offers advanced surgical services, including orthopedics, vascular, cardiovascular, thoracic, and neurosurgery, as well as general surgery, with a focus on minimally invasive options. To support these services, JCMC has a 43-bed intensive care unit that provides specialized care for patients with cardiac, neurological, medical/surgical, and trauma conditions. Johnson City Medical Center also offers a leading cancer center, a specialized heart center, and advanced diagnostic imaging services.

JCMC offers a full range of specialty and subspecialty care services, along with some of the most advanced diagnostic and surgical techniques. JCMC provides private patient rooms and has separate specialized units for newborn, pediatric, medical, and surgical intensive care.

There will be continued facility expansion, building, and improvement projects, as well as significant enhancements to medical equipment, over the next several years in the market.

**Southern Region Statistics:**

- Discharges: 43,711
- Patient Days: 229,472

- ED Visits: 161,037
- Surgery Cases: 23,914
- Total Operating Revenue: \$972,844,102

### Hospitals:

- Johnson City Medical Center 585 beds (416 acute beds, 85 Children's acute beds and 84 psych beds)
- Niswonger Children's Hospital (included in the JCMC totals above)
- Woodridge Psychiatric Hospital (included in the JCMC totals above)
- Franklin Woods Community Hospital (80 beds)
- Sycamore Shoals Hospital (109 acute beds and 12 gero-psych beds)
- Greeneville Community Hospital (140 beds)
- Johnson County Community Hospital (2 beds Critical Access Hospital)

### Teaching Hospitals

Ballad Health is training and developing the next generation of healthcare innovators. Ballad Health's teaching hospitals combine medical education, research, and patient care in a unique environment that provides future generations of doctors, nurses, and other healthcare professionals with the experience necessary to establish strong foundations for their careers. Teaching hospitals include:

- Bristol Regional Medical Center (Bristol, TN)
- Holston Valley Medical Center (Kingsport, TN)
- Johnson City Medical Center (Johnson City, TN)
- Johnston Memorial Hospital (Abingdon, VA)
- Norton Community Hospital (Norton, VA)

For more information on Ballad Health Academics, please visit: <https://www.balladhealth.org/academics>.

### Ballad Health Medical Associates

Ballad Health Medical Associates (BHMA) is a provider group comprising over 750 physicians and advanced practitioners. BHMA employs multiple specialties, including primary care, hematology/oncology, pulmonary/critical care, urology, orthopedics, and many more. Led by a physician-dominated board of directors, BHMA is physician-led, patient-focused, and professionally managed. As the premier provider of healthcare services in Northeast Tennessee, Southwest Virginia, and select locations in Northwest North Carolina, Ballad Health offers the most up-to-date technology, including the Da Vinci surgical system. BHMA is dedicated to providing patients with the highest quality of care, continually seeking new ways to improve and adapt to meet patients' needs.

- Outpatient Visits: 1,556,483
- Telehealth Visits: 60,807 (within total above)
- Urgent Care Visits: 219,824 (within total above)
- Operating Revenue: \$248,171,781
- Practice Locations: over 200

### Ballad Health System Foundation

In 2015, a local health system was evaluating the potential relinquishment of local control over healthcare and the possibility of joining a larger system based elsewhere, thereby potentially leaving local healthcare in the hands of individuals who do not reside in the area. The other health system would likely have followed suit had this

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happened. The result would have been the loss of up to 1,000 jobs and the loss of local decision-making about local healthcare. Instead, leaders chose another path. By creating Ballad Health in 2018, the organization has been able to:

- Reduce the unaffordable cost growth of healthcare by reducing unnecessary duplicative costs and utilizing the savings to sustain access to care and improve the health of the region.
- Avoid the fate of many hospitals and health systems, which are closing or being sold, resulting in a loss of local jobs and access to care. More than 100 hospitals have closed nationally, and 400 more are projected to in the coming years, but Ballad Health is preserving rural hospitals and even opening new ones.
- Retain local governance, so the difficult decisions are made by people who live in the community, and whose healthcare is impacted by those decisions.
- Harness the resources of both legacy health systems to weather the challenges imposed by expected reductions in volume due to new payment models and low population growth.
- Connect community stakeholders to build a stronger future for the region by investing in child and family health.

**Ballad Health has helped create important resources that were not available before:**

- National Center for Rural Health Research at East Tennessee State University.
- Advanced higher education training programs for rural dentistry, addiction medicine counseling, and addiction medicine specialists.
- The nation's largest accountable care community, which spans two states and involves hundreds of organizations, including schools, churches, community organizations, and employers.

**Ballad Health's 10-year Plan:**

- Pay and Benefits: Spent at least \$150 million over 10 years to make sure pay and benefit gaps for the same positions, if any, are addressed between the legacy health systems.
- Behavioral Health: \$85 million to create capacity for residential addiction recovery services and develop community-based mental health resources, like mobile health crisis management teams and intensive outpatient treatment options.
- Academics, Research and Training: \$85 million to educate and train healthcare providers that are in short supply and build the research capacity of local universities and colleges to spur outside research investment.
- Key Population Health Needs: \$75 million focusing on moving upstream of health needs to create strong starts for children by mitigating adverse childhood experiences, reducing neonatal abstinence syndrome, reducing adult tobacco use, and establishing parental support programs.
- Rural Health Services: \$28 million to create access to other needed services not readily available in rural communities, including physician recruitment and the use of telemedicine.
- Children's Services: \$27 million to create pediatric emergency rooms in Kingsport and Bristol, sustain trauma and specialty readiness for Niswonger Children's Hospital, and expand pediatric telemedicine, mobile health, and specialty access.

Health Information Exchange: Enable \$8 million to allow healthcare providers both inside and outside of Ballad Health to easily share health information that improves patient care.

## Mission and Vision

### Our Mission

Honor those we serve by delivering the best possible care.

### Our Vision

To build a legacy of superior health by listening to and caring for those we serve.

## Our Values

### Creativity

We seek to discover and promote innovative ideas and the unique talents of each team member to bring value to our community.

### Caring

We listen with empathy and appreciation and respond with kindness and compassion.

### Honesty

We own our actions and practice the highest ethical standards with transparency and fair behavior.

### Respect

We appreciate the strengths of our community and practice true collaboration and skilled communication in everything we do.

### Faith

We nurture the mind, body, and spirit of each individual to inspire hope and improve the health and well-being of our community.

### Quality

We work as a team to bring best practices, advanced technology, and experiences to provide the highest-quality care. We devote ourselves to continuous improvement, service excellence, and a zero-harm environment.

## Awards and Accreditations

For additional information about awards and accreditations, click [here](#).

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## Position Summary

The Chief Nursing Officer (CNO) is a key member of the senior management team for multiple facilities and is responsible for the implementation of the hospital(s) Strategic Plan. Serving as the facility Chief Nursing Officer, the AVP, CNO holds both direct line authority and matrix responsibilities for nursing practice and nursing team members across assigned facilities.

The AVP, Chief Nursing Officer plans, organizes, directs, and monitors the activities of the Nursing Division and assigned departments. This role provides executive leadership to nursing teams by ensuring the delivery of a single, standardized model of nursing care across the facility. The CNO is accountable for the consistent development, implementation, and adherence to nursing policies, departmental procedures, and established Standards of Nursing Care.

In support of system priorities, the CNO actively participates in the Ballad Health Nursing Institute CNO Council, contributing to the planning and implementation of initiatives focused on nurse recruitment and retention, as well as the standardization of evidence-based clinical practice across the health system. The CNO collaborates closely with other system CNOs and service line leaders to establish and maintain consistent Standards of Care for Nursing Services throughout Ballad Health, ensuring optimal patient outcomes.

The AVP, CNO ensures the continuous and timely availability of nursing services for all patients and is accountable for compliance with Joint Commission (JCAHO) standards, state boards of nursing requirements, and all applicable local, state, and federal regulations. As an integral member of the management team, the CNO participates in performance improvement initiatives and collaborates on interdepartmental projects to enhance the quality of care while reducing costs.

Fiscal stewardship is a core responsibility of this role. The CNO develops and manages realistic annual operating and capital budgets, conserves organizational resources, and monitors expenditures to ensure alignment with approved financial parameters. This position is responsible for staffing flexibility and productivity management, as well as ensuring that departmental facilities and equipment are regularly inspected and maintained in optimal operating condition.

The CNO also plays a critical role in workforce development, supporting system-wide recruitment and retention strategies. The CNO is responsible for maintaining a qualified nursing workforce, overseeing subordinate managers and supervisors, and ensuring that ongoing education and professional development opportunities—including participation in Ballad Health-wide programs—are available. This leader fosters a work environment where team members are treated with dignity, fairness, and consistency.

Additionally, the CNO is accountable for promoting positive, collaborative relationships across departments and with all internal and external stakeholders, including patients, families, visitors, physicians, clergy, employees, and the broader community. The CNO maintains clinical and technical expertise while continually developing leadership capabilities through ongoing education and professional growth.

## Reporting Relationships

Reporting directly to the President of the Southwest Virginia Market, the Chief Nursing Officer has 7 direct reports and 221 FTE's.

## Responsibilities

The successful Chief Nursing Officer – Lee, Wise, and Dickenson Counties, Virginia candidate will:

- Serve as a senior executive leader across assigned facilities, providing strategic and operational leadership for nursing services and ensuring alignment with hospital and Ballad Health system strategic priorities.
- Plan, organize, direct, and oversee the Nursing Division and assigned departments, ensuring the consistent delivery of a standardized, evidence-based model of nursing care.
- Establish, implement, and ensure adherence to nursing policies, procedures, and Standards of Nursing Care in compliance with Joint Commission, state Board of Nursing, and all regulatory requirements.
- Collaborate with system CNOs, service line leaders, and the Ballad Health Nursing Institute CNO Council to advance systemwide clinical standardization, quality improvement, and nurse recruitment and retention initiatives.
- Ensure the continuous and timely availability of nursing services through effective staffing, productivity management, and operational oversight, while maintaining high standards of quality and patient safety.
- Provide fiscal stewardship by developing and managing operating and capital budgets, monitoring expenditures, optimizing staffing costs, and ensuring facilities and equipment are maintained in optimal condition.
- Lead workforce development efforts by recruiting, retaining, and developing a highly qualified nursing workforce; overseeing nursing leadership; and ensuring ongoing education and professional development opportunities.
- Foster a culture of collaboration, professionalism, dignity, and accountability by building strong relationships with physicians, administrators, staff, patients, families, and community stakeholders, while maintaining clinical expertise and advancing leadership capabilities.

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## Goals and Objectives

The following goals and objectives have been identified as priorities for this position:

- Build strong, trust-based relationships with the Senior Management Team, Board members, Medical Staff leaders, nursing leadership, and frontline teams across all facilities while gaining a deep understanding of each facility's culture, strengths, challenges, and strategic priorities.
- Align nursing and clinical operations with hospital and Ballad Health system strategic goals by assessing current policies, procedures, and practices and implementing a standardized, evidence-based model of nursing care across the market.
- Ensure full compliance with Joint Commission, state Board of Nursing, and all regulatory requirements while leading or supporting performance improvement initiatives that enhance patient outcomes, safety metrics, and reduce variation in care delivery.
- Evaluate and advance nurse recruitment and retention strategies; implement best practices that improve engagement, satisfaction, and retention; and promote a culture of dignity, fairness, accountability, and consistency.
- Assess leadership capability and succession readiness across nursing leadership; support ongoing education and Ballad Health-wide development programs; and mentor emerging leaders to strengthen leadership pipelines.
- Ensure the continuous and timely availability of nursing services through optimized staffing models that meet productivity standards while maintaining quality, safety, and staff well-being.
- Develop and manage operating and capital budgets; monitor expenditures and staffing costs; identify opportunities to improve efficiency, reduce costs, and reinvest savings into nursing care and workforce initiatives; and ensure facilities and equipment are well maintained.
- Promote strong interdisciplinary collaboration across departments, physicians, and support services to improve care coordination, patient experience, and operational efficiency.
- Act as a visible nursing leader internally and externally, strengthening relationships with patients, families, and community stakeholders while supporting initiatives that enhance the organization's reputation for quality, compassion, and access to care.

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## Candidate Qualifications

### Education/Certification

- A Bachelor's Degree from an accredited nursing program is required. A master's degree in nursing (MSN), health care administration, or business (MBA) is required. Consideration will be given to candidates currently enrolled in a program to achieve these degrees.
- Valid and active RN licensure in the appropriate state. Valid and active Nurse Executive certification preferred. AHA BLS required.

### Knowledge and Work Experience

- Minimum five years of progressive responsibility experience in health care, including three years in a supervisory role.
- The incumbent will be required to update technical expertise and to develop management/leadership skills through continuing education throughout tenure in this position.
- Knowledge of current leadership, management, and performance improvement concepts. Ability to develop and implement strategies to improve the delivery of care to patients. Knowledge of federal, state, and professional regulations that apply to the delivery of care. Demonstrated management skills: problem-solving, communication, human resources, and financial stewardship.
- A demonstrated ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with all constituents across the organization; the ability to function as a team leader and collaborative consensus builder.
- A contemporary knowledge of care delivery models, healthcare policy, and industry trends. An individual who keeps current with the profession and is active in professional organizations.
- A progressive, contemporary clinical leader who leads with confidence and can influence others across the organization without direct lines of authority, build consensus, and implement change.
- A humble, articulate, energetic, and participative leader who inspires trust, respect, and credibility.
- An outstanding communicator who possesses superb written and oral presentation skills as well as active listening skills.
- Proven ability to lead and manage through influence and change.
- Demonstrated ability to achieve performance outcomes through others.

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## The Community

### Wise County & Norton, Virginia

Located in the heart of Southwest Virginia, Wise County and the City of Norton offer a unique blend of small-town charm, natural beauty, affordability, and strong community values. For professionals seeking meaningful work, a balanced lifestyle, and a close-knit community, this region provides an appealing alternative to larger metropolitan areas.

#### A Welcoming, Close-Knit Community

Wise County and Norton are known for their friendly, welcoming residents and strong sense of community. Neighbors know one another, local leaders are accessible, and community events foster genuine connections. This is a place where individuals and families can quickly feel at home and make a real impact—both professionally and personally.



#### Affordable Cost of Living

One of the region's strongest advantages is its low cost of living. Housing is affordable, commutes are short, and everyday expenses are significantly lower than in urban and suburban markets. This affordability allows professionals to enjoy a higher quality of life, whether that means homeownership, financial flexibility, or more time spent with family and personal interests.

#### Career Opportunities with Purpose

Wise County and Norton offer opportunities across healthcare, education, public service, advanced manufacturing, energy, technology, and higher education. Many professionals are drawn to the area by roles that offer meaningful community impact, leadership visibility, and the chance to shape programs and services in a way that isn't always possible in larger systems.

#### Education & Workforce Development

The region values education and workforce development, with access to community colleges, higher education institutions, and workforce training programs that support both professional growth and lifelong learning. These institutions play an important role in regional innovation, healthcare advancement, and economic development.

#### Outdoor Recreation & Natural Beauty

Surrounded by the Appalachian Mountains, Wise County and Norton are a haven for outdoor enthusiasts. Residents enjoy hiking, biking, fishing, kayaking, camping, and scenic drives—all just minutes from home. The area's natural beauty supports a lifestyle that prioritizes wellness, balance, and connection to nature.

#### Arts, Culture & Local Flavor

The community has a growing appreciation for arts, music, and regional culture, including live performances, local festivals, farmers' markets, and Appalachian heritage events. Local restaurants, coffee shops, and small businesses add character and charm, while nearby towns and cities provide additional dining, entertainment, and shopping options.

**Family-Friendly Living**

Wise County and Norton are well-suited for families, offering safe neighborhoods, strong community support, and access to schools and youth activities. With less traffic, lower stress, and more time for what matters most, families often find the area ideal for raising children or settling into a slower, more intentional pace of life.

**Central Location & Connectivity**

While maintaining a rural feel, the region is within driving distance of larger cities in Virginia, Tennessee, and Kentucky, making weekend travel, cultural outings, and regional airports accessible. Remote and hybrid professionals also benefit from increasing connectivity and flexible work options.

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## Procedure for Candidacy

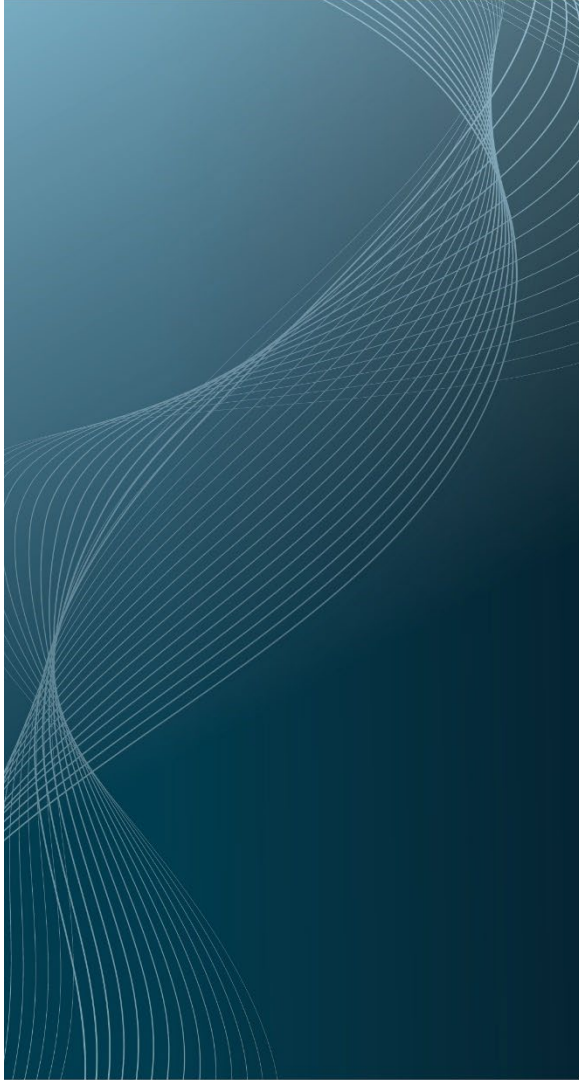
Please direct all nominations and applications to April Allen through the WittKieffer Candidate Portal by clicking [here](#). Candidates can also find this portal via the WittKieffer website at [www.wittkieffer.com](http://www.wittkieffer.com) and selecting the "Become a Candidate" button.

**April Allen** | Principal, Search (502) 296-8066

*Ballad Health values diversity and is committed to equal opportunity for all persons regardless of age, color, disability, ethnicity, marital status, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, veteran status, or any other status protected by law.*

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