Skyland Trail

Chief Clinical Officer

Leadership Profile

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The Opportunity

Skyland Trail, a nationally recognized nonprofit mental health treatment organization based in Atlanta, Georgia, seeks a visionary and strategic leader to serve as its inaugural Chief Clinical Officer (CCO). This is an extraordinary opportunity to shape the future of a highly respected, evidence-based treatment center that has been a trusted resource for individuals with serious mental illness for more than three decades. The CCO, reporting to Skyland Trail's President and Chief Executive Officer, will serve as the senior-most clinical leader, guiding multidisciplinary therapy teams and advancing the organization's mission to help clients live meaningful lives with chronic mental health disorders.

Founded in 1989, Skyland Trail has grown into a holistic treatment community serving adults and adolescents ages 14 to 17, with five campuses, 108 residential beds, and more than 500 patients annually. Skyland Trail offers a continuum of care, including residential treatment, day treatment, outpatient services, and family therapy. The organization is distinguished by its whole-person approach, serene campus environment, and robust scholarship program which provides more than $2 million annually in financial aid to patients and families. Research is a cornerstone of Skyland Trail’s model. The organization is a trailblazer in outcomes research, partnering with Emory School of Medicine to advance the understanding of effective mental health treatment.

The Chief Clinical Officer will provide strategic and operational leadership for all clinical programs, overseeing a team of approximately 50 professionals delivering therapy, adjunctive services, vocational support, and care coordination. The CCO will design and implement innovative treatment protocols, optimize patient throughput, and standardize care delivery across campuses. They will collaborate closely with senior leadership to define clinical priorities, align service models with best practices, and ensure quality, safety, and efficiency. The CCO will join Skyland Trail during a time of growth and expansion and thus get to be a key influencer on programmatic development, implementation of new clinical modalities, and the definition of the future of the organization.

The successful candidate will bring a track record of progressive leadership in the mental health treatment space, with experience building multidisciplinary clinical programs, advancing evidence-based treatment models, and supporting outcomes research. They will be a mission-driven leader with strong clinical expertise, an ability to inspire teams, and a commitment to driving successful growth and expansion. The next CCO will be collaborative, relationship-oriented, and passionate about improving access, outcomes, and quality of life for individuals and families affected by mental illness. An active, unrestricted clinical license in the relevant field (e.g., Licensed Clinical Psychologist, Licensed Clinical Social Worker, Licensed Professional Counselor, or equivalent) is required.

Organization Overview

Located in Atlanta, Georgia, Skyland Trail is a nationally recognized nonprofit mental health treatment organization serving adults and adolescents ages 14 to 17. A voluntary, residential treatment community, Skyland Trail was created as an alternative to traditional treatment facilities, to help its clients find new ways to live a meaningful life with a chronic mental health disorder. First opening its doors in 1989, Skyland Trail has grown to become a trusted resource for people with mental health diagnoses, not just in Atlanta, but across the US. Today, they are a nationally acclaimed, holistic, evidence-based treatment center for individuals with serious mental illness. Skyland Trail owns and operates five campuses encompassing 108 residential beds and serves over 500 patients annually.

Campuses

Charles B. West Campus - Skyland Trail's main campus, the Charles B. West Campus, serves all adult patients with psychiatric services and therapy sessions. The campus also includes a gym, dining room, meditation pavilion, gardens, greenhouse, and trails. Charles B. West Campus is located in Brookhaven.

Rollins Campus – Also located in Brookhaven and adjacent to the main campus, the Rollins Campus includes 32 private residential bedrooms and bathrooms; community, recreation, and dining areas; a courtyard and gardens; as well as treatment spaces for group and individual therapy. The Rollins Campus is home to:

Dorothy C. Fuqua Center - The Dorothy C. Fuqua Center includes Skyland Trail's admissions department and is the first stop for adults enrolling in its programs. It also includes a training and education center where community and professional education activities are hosted. Client services, including vocational services and cognitive training, take place here, and it is also the location of some administrative offices.

Glenn Family Wellness Clinic - The Glenn Family Wellness Clinic, located in the Dorothy C. Fuqua Center, is certified as a Behavioral Health Home by the Joint Commission. All adult clients receive an initial physical exam and continue to receive primary care services throughout treatment. Patients do not need a prior relationship with Skyland Trail to make an appointment for wellness services.

South Campus - Skyland Trail South Campus, in Decatur, serves adults and offers 24 private residential bedrooms and bathrooms along with onsite dining, shared community living spaces, expansive gardens, and 24/7 nursing staff support.

North Transitional Living Campus - Skyland Trail North provides transitional living apartments for adult clients in day treatment or intensive outpatient programs. Clients share two-bedroom, single bathroom apartments with kitchenettes and living rooms. The campus, based in Atlanta, also includes a larger community kitchen, dining area, common room, and gardens.

J. Rex Fuqua Campus – Based in Atlanta, the J. Rex Fuqua Campus for adolescents (14-17 year olds) includes individual and group therapy rooms, art and music therapy rooms, a learning lab, and a dedicated space for patients to complete their schoolwork, a kitchen and dining area, and offices for clinical and administrative staff. A two-story residential hall includes 26 private patient rooms as well as a common living area, family room, kitchen, and nurses' station. Outdoor spaces and specialized areas for recreational activities encourage fitness and socialization.

Programs

Through a multidisciplinary, whole-person approach, Skyland Trail treats individuals with diagnoses including mood disorders, anxiety and trauma disorders, personality disorders, psychotic disorders, and co-occurring substance use disorders. Based on a model of evidence-based psychiatric treatment, Skyland Trail offers

residential treatment that includes individual therapy, group therapy, vocational services, adjunctive therapies, and primary care support on its bright and serene main campus. They also offer family services, including family therapy, for both adult and adolescent patients, offering many opportunities for families to not only support their loved one's progress in treatment but to work toward strengthening the family system as well. With the majority of patients transitioning from an inpatient psychiatric facility, Skyland Trail prioritizes creating an open and welcoming community for individuals to continue their healing journey. Additionally, Skyland Trail offers both day treatment (also known as partial hospitalization) and outpatient care as a step-down for those ready to reintegrate into daily life with continued support from Skyland Trail. Skyland Trail accepts all major insurance plans, as well as private pay, and maintains a robust scholarship program that allocates over $2M per year in financial aid for patients and their families. The following additional services are offered by Skyland Trail:

- Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (TMS)
- Outpatient Groups for Adolescents and Parents
- Primary Care & Wellness Clinic
- Vocational Services
- Life Enrichment Adult Program (LEAP) Social Club for Adults
- Adult Alumni Program
- Comprehensive Assessment
- Continuing Education for Mental Health Professionals

Research

Research is a critical component of Skyland Trail's mission. The Skyland Trail research team, led by the Outcomes and Research Director and overseen by the Chief Medical Officer, partners with academic and healthcare organizations to help advance the understanding of effective mental health treatment. The research team leads studies on patient outcomes and analyzes data from the client community.

Skyland Trail is a trailblazer in the area of outcomes research, which is an integral part of its evidence-based treatment model. Its robust outcomes and research program utilize evaluative instruments considered to be the gold standards in the mental health field to measure the effectiveness of its treatment programs.

Training

Skyland Trail supports the mental health professional pipeline by training and educating future mental health professionals. The Skyland Trail internship program engages dozens of students each year, including graduate students pursuing master’s degrees in social work or clinical counseling, recreational therapy students, and trainees in art and horticultural therapy.

Four to six medical students from Emory University School of Medicine complete a rotation in psychiatry at Skyland Trail each year. A new partnership with Emory University School of Medicine in 2023 brings psychiatric fellows to Skyland Trail to train with Skyland Trail psychiatrists. Finally, partnerships with Skyland Trail's Research and Outcomes Department provide on-the-job learning opportunities for Emory Rollins School of Public Health Earn and Learn (REAL) students and Oglethorpe University undergraduate psychology student interns.

History

Skyland Trail was founded on the determination of Atlanta business leader Charles B. West to fill a void in mental health treatment. In the early 1980s, the dominant treatment model in Atlanta was hospitalization for acute cases, aimed at stabilization. There was no residential psychiatric treatment program with the goal of offering therapies, together with the skills needed to reintegrate into the community.

Through a friend's experience, Mr. West recognized the need for the latter approach. He was nearing retirement from the family business, West Lumber Company. Turning his energies to the new cause, in 1982, he established The George West Mental Health Foundation, named after his father, and recruited a committed board of directors. The board examined programs and innovations nationwide that focused on long-term recovery, rather than short-term stabilization.

In 1989, the first facility, a treatment residence called Skyland Trail, opened. This name quickly became the foundation's identity. In 1991, Skyland Trail added aftercare to support reintegration into community life. Through a strategic plan adopted in 1995, Skyland Trail effectively invented a new model for treatment and service delivery, emphasizing comprehensive community-based therapy.

Following this plan, a second residence was added for short-term clients, and the original residence became focused on long-term treatment. These residences were subsequently renamed Skyland Trail North and Skyland Trail South. The Skyland Trail Health and Education Center opened in 1999, the result of a capital campaign that surpassed its objective by raising $13.5M to build a state-of-the-art headquarters and day treatment facility.

By its 10th anniversary, Skyland Trail was gaining a national reputation. Over the next several years, it won the American Psychiatric Association's Gold Award, the Rosalynn Carter Caregiver Award, and the Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta's Managing for Excellence Award. In 2004, Skyland Trail collaborated with the Emory University School of Medicine's Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences to host the "Innovations in Mental Health" symposium. This event initiated a new round of Skyland Trail breakthroughs, including an on-site primary care clinic to integrate mental health treatment with medical care; creation of an outcomes research program to study client results over extended time spans; and development of a "best in class" employment program to help clients find and sustain a satisfying career path.

A major campus expansion and renovation was accomplished in 2007 with the opening of the Dorothy C. Fuqua Center in 2010, the renovation of the Health and Education Center, and the purchase of green space adjacent to Skyland Trail South.

A fourth capital campaign in 2014 enabled the acquisition of land adjacent to the main campus and the construction of the Rollins Campus for young adults. The Rollins Campus opened in October 2015 with a residential wing featuring 32 private rooms dedicated to young adults aged 18 to 24, as well as a treatment wing with additional therapeutic space and a dining hall for all adult clients.

In 2019, Skyland Trail completed construction on the J. Rex Fuqua Campus and opened a residential treatment program for adolescents aged 14 to 17.

The Future of Skyland Trail

In its ongoing dedication to planning for the future needs of its constituents, Skyland Trail is pushing forward on the implementation of its 6th strategic plan, addressing what our patients and families need to thrive, adding to the science of mental health, investing boldly in our staff, volunteers, and community, and expanding its impact through education and outreach. The plan identifies four core areas that embrace all facets of Skyland Trail:

- **Clinical Innovation/Treatment**: Seeing patients realize their potential and preparing them for a lifetime of accomplishment beyond graduation; providing the right care at the right time;
- **People and Culture:** Recruiting and retaining a diverse, talented staff and volunteer base; investing in scholarship; building a culture where people thrive and want to work;
- **Resources:** Investing in infrastructure and expanding access to care to support sustainability and growth; increasing financial solvency and creating opportunities to improve efficiency and scale;

- **Brand/Reputation:** Promoting Skyland Trail as a leader in whole-person care and prevention; reinforcing this brand through excellence, innovation, and expanded impact.

These four core areas will lay the foundation for growth and focus in the coming years, serving as a blueprint for sustaining and building upon Skyland Trail's proven strengths and leveraging them in new ways for significant impact.

Position Summary

The Chief Clinical Officer is a newly created role to bring visionary, strategic leadership to Skyland Trail's clinical programs. Serving as the clinical expert on Skyland Trail's leadership team and senior-most leader for all therapy teams, the CCO will work with the senior leadership team to guide the future of the organization. The CCO leads a team of approximately 50 FTEs providing individual and family counseling, adjunctive therapies, vocational services, and care coordination. They will oversee current clinical operations for Skyland Trail, as well as support programmatic development for current and future growth initiatives.

Reporting Relationships

The Chief Clinical Officer:

Reports To: Skyland Trail's President & CEO

Partners With:

- Chief Medical Officer
- Chief Operations Officer
- Senior Leadership Team

Other Key Relationships:

- Board Program Committee
- Board Financial Aid Committee

Responsibilities

The successful Chief Clinical Officer candidate will be responsible for the following:

Clinical Leadership and Strategy:

- Lead the design, implementation, and ongoing evaluation of clinical programs, ensuring they align with the organization’s mission, values, and strategic objectives.
- Provide visionary leadership to a multi-disciplinary team of clinicians and clinical support staff, fostering a culture of excellence, ethical practice, continuous quality improvement and safety.
- Develop and implement evidence-based treatment protocols and ensure they are applied consistently across all services.
- Develop and implement strategies to optimize patient throughput across all levels of care, ensuring timely transitions and maximizing access for new admissions while maintaining high-quality, individualized treatment.
- Collaborate with leadership to define and refine the organization’s clinical priorities and service delivery models according to evolving best practices, organizational resources, and reimbursement scenarios.
- Ensure clinicians provide timely and effective documentation to support payer authorization and reimbursement.
- Develop and implement strategies to standardize care delivery and processes across all campuses, ensuring quality, consistency, efficiency, and adherence to best practices.

- Attend Board meetings and serve as staff liaison to the Board Program Committee.

Clinical Compliance:

- Ensure that clinical services are compliant with all relevant federal, state, and local regulations, as well as accreditation and licensing standards.
- Oversee the risk management process for clinical services, including the development of safety protocols and response strategies.
- Work proactively to identify opportunities to maximize insurance authorizations and reduce private pay burden on families.

Team Management and Development:

- Foster team cohesion and collaboration across clinical programs/campuses such that resources, expertise, and innovation are shared in ways that improve clinical performance.
- Ensure clinical and clinical support staff receive ongoing supervision and performance evaluations, providing mentorship and training as well as professional development opportunities.
- Develop leadership within the clinical programs to ensure the organization is consistently building internal leaders.
- Develop and implement clinical supervision programs for clinicians to enhance their professional skills and promote clinical best practices.
- Work closely with nursing and psychiatry to achieve program and clinical objectives.

Client Care and Outcomes:

- Advocate for the delivery of client-centered care, ensuring that treatment plans are individualized and responsive to the unique needs of clients.
- Collaborate with the research and outcomes team to monitor the effectiveness of clinical interventions and outcomes, using data to assess program impact and continuously improve care delivery.
- Ensure that clinical services are culturally competent and accessible to a diverse range of clients.
- Engage patient families in care, utilizing family satisfaction and other data to design clinical program that meets families' needs.
- Work to achieve high levels of patient and family satisfaction by ensuring care is responsive, respectful, and aligned with client and family needs and expectations.

Collaboration and Partnership:

- Serve as a key member of the senior leadership team, contributing to the overall organizational strategy and decision-making processes.
- Function effectively as an interdepartmental leader, educating other departments on clinical processes and initiatives and fostering collaboration and buy-in as well as facilitating the needs of support teams.
- Develop and maintain strong relationships with external stakeholders, including community partners, referral sources, government agencies, and funding bodies.

- Support fundraising and marketing efforts.

Fiscal and Resource Management:

- Work with the COO and senior management team to ensure that clinical operations remain financially sustainable, including budget development and resource allocation.
- Identify opportunities for grant funding, new program development, and other initiatives that align with the organization's clinical mission.
- Continually assess the EMR system and other technological tools to identify opportunities to enhance operational efficiency and clinical care delivery.

Goals and Objectives

The following goals and objectives have been identified as priorities for the Chief Clinical Officer over the first 12 to 24 months:

- Provide an in-depth assessment of the current organizational structure for clinical services and implement change, where necessary, including decisions surrounding leadership roles and hiring.
- Working closely with other leaders within Skyland Trail, drive positive change in clinical metrics such as bed occupancy rates, length of stay, and patient satisfaction.
- Foster connections across the distinct programs and functions under the span of control of the CCO to drive internal communication and consistency in culture, standardized processes, and the sharing of resources.
- Facilitate Skyland Trail's capital campaign and growth objectives, serving as a clinical expert for fundraising efforts and programmatic development.
- Create a culture of accountability, productivity, and supportive of growth and expansion.
- Working with the CMO, assess the current clinical care models and implement change where necessary to drive the highest quality of care, efficiency, and cost effectiveness.
- Establish themselves as a trusted and respected leader within the clinical services teams, across the organization, and with external clinical and academic partners.
- Work collaboratively with the Research and Outcomes team to align clinical services workflows with research needs and drive participation in and support of research objectives.

Candidate Qualifications

Skyland Trail's Chief Clinical Officer must be a highly relational, charismatic, strategic clinical leader, who is passionate about building evidence-based behavioral health programs. To that end, the following credentials, skills, and competencies are essential:

Education/Certification

- Active, unrestricted clinical license in the relevant field (e.g., Licensed Clinical Psychologist, Licensed Clinical Social Worker, Licensed Professional Counselor, or equivalent).

Knowledge and Work Experience

- At least ten years of leadership experience within a respected, evidence-based mental health treatment program. Experience working in the residential space will be seen as a value-add.
- Proven experience in program development, outcomes measurement, fiscal responsibility, and clinical supervision.
- Experience managing multidisciplinary teams, including clinicians, support staff, and operations personnel.
- Expertise in mental health treatment modalities, including evidence-based practices for individuals with complex mental health and substance abuse needs.
- Expertise in delivery/teaching evidence-based model-adherent psychotherapies.

Leadership Skills and Competencies

- Strong leadership and team management skills with the ability to inspire and motivate a diverse clinical workforce.
- Knowledge of regulatory standards, accreditation processes, and industry best practices.
- Excellent communication, interpersonal, and negotiation skills, with the ability to engage with a wide range of internal and external stakeholders.
- Ability to analyze complex data and make data-driven decisions to improve service delivery and clinical outcomes.
- Strong organizational and problem-solving skills, with the ability to manage multiple priorities in a fast-paced, nonprofit environment.
- Demonstrated ability to manage and optimize financial performance, including P&L responsibility, with a focus on balancing operational efficiency, budgetary constraints, and the delivery of high-quality services.
- Proven expertise in leveraging technology and data analytics to streamline operations, enhance service delivery, and support strategic decision-making for improved efficiency and outcomes.

The Community

Atlanta, Georgia

Atlanta offers a unique blend of small-town Southern charm and the sophistication of world-class amenities found in a modern international city. Metro Atlanta is home to nearly five million people and more than 137,000 businesses. Its vibrant economic growth attracts hundreds of companies and thousands of well-educated job seekers annually. The area's low cost of living, high employment rates, and strong, diverse industry base will ensure its continued record-setting growth. Metro Atlanta's openness has proven to be an alluring magnet for the world's foremost companies. Metro Atlanta ranks among the top five in the nation in net new job growth for the last decade, adding nearly 460,000 new jobs. Metro Atlanta is forecasted to be the third-largest job generator over the next decade.

Atlanta is home to 16 Fortune 500 companies. Many iconic brand-name companies call Atlanta home, including The Coca-Cola Company, Chick-fil-A, Delta Airlines, Genuine Parts Company, The Home Depot, Mercedes-Benz North America, NCR, Newell Brands, Southern Company, and United Parcel Service.

Metro Atlanta is also home to the world-renowned U.S. Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, Arthritis Foundation, as well as several distinguished universities, including Emory University, Georgia Institute of Technology, and Morehouse School of Medicine. Atlanta is fast becoming a leading center for healthcare technology and innovation. Approximately 300,000 students are enrolled in the 54 two- and four-year colleges and universities in the Metro Atlanta/Athens area.

Atlanta is home to several professional sports teams, including the Atlanta Braves (MLB), Atlanta Falcons (NFL), Atlanta Hawks (NBA), and Atlanta United (MLS). The Atlanta Hawks reached the 2021 NBA finals. Atlanta has hosted the Olympic Games, the Super Bowl, the Final Four, and the College Football playoffs. There are also numerous arts and cultural venues:

- Atlanta Botanical Gardens
- The Carter Presidential Center
- Imagine It! Children's Museum
- The Fernbank Museum
- Georgia Aquarium
- Georgia's Stone Mountain Park
- Martin Luther King Jr. Center and National Historic Site
- Woodruff Arts Center
- The World of Coca-Cola
- Zoo Atlanta
- Alliance Theatre
- Atlanta Ballet
- Atlanta History Center
- Atlanta Opera
- Atlanta Symphony Orchestra

Atlanta offers a vibrant balance of culture and professional and personal opportunities for all. For more information about Atlanta, please visit:

https://discoveratlanta.com/

https://www.exploregeorgia.org/city/atlanta

Procedure for Candidacy

All applications, nominations, and inquiries are invited. Please direct all communication to the WittKieffer consultants assisting Skyland Trail with this recruitment, preferably via e-mail, khaddock@wittkieffer.com.

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Skyland Trail 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.

The material presented in this leadership profile should be relied on for informational purposes only. This material has been copied, compiled, or quoted in part from Skyland Trail documents and personal interviews and is believed to be reliable. While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this information, the original source documents and factual situations govern.

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