



Howard Brown
Health

Chief Operations Officer

Leadership Profile

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WittKieffer

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The Opportunity

Howard Brown Health (HBH) seeks an experienced visionary and forward-thinking operations executive to serve as its next Chief Operations Officer (COO)—a unique opportunity to shape the future of care delivery, advance health equity, and drive meaningful change in one of the nation's most dynamic cities and healthcare delivery markets in the United States. HBH recently celebrated its 50th anniversary, and this new leader will be pivotal in developing the organization's next chapter by driving innovation, elevating patient outcomes, and creating lasting impact for the diverse communities it serves.

HBH is a federally qualified health center (FQHC) that cares for more than 38,000 adults and youth each year across seven sites in Chicago, Illinois. HBH provides healthcare for all, regardless of age, race, sexual identity, or ability to pay. HBH has stood as a beacon of care and advocacy for LGBTQ+ and underserved populations



across the Chicagoland area. From its pioneering leadership in treating patients during the HIV epidemic to expanding access to comprehensive medical, dental, and behavioral health services, HBH has consistently been at the forefront of community-centered healthcare. Looking ahead, the organization remains committed to broadening its impact, strengthening primary care services, and continuing its vital work in sexual health for all who need care—while honoring its legacy of equity, innovation, and compassion.

The COO will report directly to the CEO and play a vital role on the Executive Leadership Team at HBH and its clinics. This mission-driven and resilient leader will have a strong passion for serving vulnerable populations and will be responsible for establishing the operational direction, policies, and goals for care delivery, in alignment with HBH's long-term priorities.

The COO will focus on developing standardized operating models across sites, emphasizing scaling best practices to ensure consistency, quality, and sustainable growth. As a strong systems thinker, the COO will lead efforts to integrate and align enterprise-wide medical, dental, behavioral health, and public health programs to deliver seamless, patient-centered care. This leader will design, develop, promote, and maintain a high-performance, team-based operating model that encourages accountability, continuous improvement, and organizational resilience.

Collaboration with clinical and operational leaders will be crucial to integrating care delivery and operations, ensuring that workflows, infrastructure, and resources consistently deliver a patient-centered experience. Strong communication skills will be essential for fostering transparency, trust, and collaboration within this complex, multidisciplinary organization. The successful COO will demonstrate the ability to engage stakeholders at all levels, navigate changes with confidence, and lead with clarity and empathy. Resilience, adaptability, and a steady leadership presence will be critical in advancing HBH's mission while managing operational complexities.

The COO position represents an exceptional opportunity for a mission-driven healthcare leader who possesses a systems mindset, operational rigor, and a deep commitment to patient-centered care.

Organization Overview

HBH is a federally qualified health center serving more than 38,000 adults and youth at seven health centers across Chicago. With an annual budget of over \$200 million, the agency serves more than 40,000 adults and youth in its diverse health and social service delivery system, focused around five major programmatic divisions:

- Primary medical care
- Dental care
- Behavioral health
- Research
- Community initiatives

HBH serves patients and clients through a multi-site operation. HBH utilizes the Epic electronic medical record. To learn more about HBH's services, please visit: howardbrown.org/services.

Mission

Rooted in LGBTQ+ liberation, Howard Brown Health provides affirming healthcare and mobilizes for social justice. We are agents of change for individual well-being and community empowerment.

Vision

Howard Brown Health envisions a future where healthcare and transformative social policies actualize human rights and equity for all.

Core Values

Howard Brown Health has identified four values that are at the core of our organization:

1. **Teamwork:** Working together with utmost respect, appreciation, and accountability.
2. **Excellence:** Striving for the best, with the highest level of professionalism, leadership, ethical standards, and open communication.
3. **Creativity:** Fostering a forward-thinking, innovative, and fulfilling environment.
4. **Advocacy:** Championing the healthcare needs of our community through responsive, client-focused initiatives.

Locations

HBH operates a robust network of clinics across Chicago, providing comprehensive care tailored to meet the diverse needs of the community. On the North Side, the flagship Halsted Center in Lakeview offers five stories of integrated services, including primary care, dental, and behavioral health, while nearby locations like the Sheridan clinic in Uptown, the Clark clinic in Edgewater, and the Broadway Youth Center in Lakeview specialize in everything from trans and pediatric care to walk-in STI testing and youth services. The West and South Sides are served by clinics in Woodlawn (55th St.), Englewood (63rd St.), and Humboldt Park (La Casa Norte), offering full-spectrum medical, sexual health, and behavioral services. HBH ensures affordability through a sliding scale payment system and broad insurance acceptance, while also focusing on specialized care like HIV prevention, gender-affirming treatments, and mental health support. In recent years, the organization has expanded its presence—most notably with the opening of the Halsted Center in 2023—while also consolidating some locations to ensure long-term sustainability. With seven main clinics citywide, HBH remains a vital and inclusive healthcare provider for Chicago's LGBTQ+ community.

Position Summary

Responsibilities

Executive Leadership

- Effectively translates HBH's mission and strategic priorities into clear, actionable operational plans in order to ensure coordinated alignment up, down, and across the organization, leveraging the COO's enterprise-wide visibility to drive measurable impact.
- Actively unifies clinical, operational, programmatic, and growth (support) departments by establishing shared priorities and reducing silos to build a cohesive, coordinated organizational direction.
- Consistently designs and sustains patient-centered operational systems to improve access and enhance coordination and support across teams; elevate the care experience through smooth, well-aligned processes; and enable providers to deliver maximum capacity, high-quality care at the top of their license.
- Ensures sound fiscal activities and financially sound decision-making.
- Assesses the need for additional services, program expansion, and contractual relationships, and develops business cases for the development of same in collaboration with other members of the leadership team.
- Adheres to standards of practice and ethical guidelines established by applicable professional bodies/organizations.

Operating/Practice Excellence

- Consistently ensures operational excellence through high-performing, reliable operations across all HBH sites to deliver safe, mission-aligned, excellent clinical care and customer service and to strengthen organizational stability.
- Effectively advances a culture of accountability and regulatory excellence by implementing the structures, standards, and oversight required to ensure compliance, mitigate risk, and protect HBH's operational integrity.
- Ensures the development, coordination, evaluation, and quality outcomes of the operations function in accordance with short- and long-term goals.
- Routinely monitors related policies, processes, and applicable federal and state laws and compliance mandates, and makes recommendations for operational updates toward ensuring consistent alignment.
- Analyzes local market trends to identify opportunities for growth and improvement.
- Collaborates with HBH providers as well as external resources and providers in the best interests of patients' continuity of care.

Supervision

- Actively cultivates an engaged, high-performing workforce by modeling principled leadership and developing operational talent to reinforce a culture rooted in accountability, collaboration, and mission-driven execution.
- Ensures consistent performance standards, skill-building, and a shared understanding of HBH strategy.

- Supervises, motivates, and supports direct and indirect reports by setting clear expectations, providing ongoing feedback, and communicating how contributions connect to departmental and organizational goals.
- Champions agencywide culture-building initiatives, with a focus on operational excellence and mission alignment across all sites and teams.

Goals and Objectives

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

- Build trustworthy and collaborative relationships with the HBH Center directors and clinicians, HBH's leadership team, nursing staff, and the broader clinical community.
- Assess and develop, in collaboration with executive leadership, a vision and plan for the implementation of quality, patient safety, and patient experience initiatives across HBH. Develop programs and frameworks to ensure consistent clinical competence and compliance.
- In partnership with the CMO, design and implement a clinical staffing model to efficiently deliver quality outcomes driven by industry benchmarks and in alignment with community needs. Optimize the organizational structure, policies, and operational processes of all HBH Center clinical departments and site locations.
- Establish greater consistency in the look, feel, and patient experience across all HBH sites, reinforcing a unified brand and care delivery model.
- Rebuild and strengthen core operational infrastructure by streamlining processes, reducing unnecessary variations, and improving efficiency across administrative and clinical operations.
- Strengthen cohesion and collaboration between operational teams and clinical areas, ensuring tighter alignment, shared accountability, and more integrated decision-making.
- Work collaboratively with the CFO to ensure financial sustainability through operational model optimization and revenue cycle management advancement.

Candidate Qualifications

Education/Certification

- Master's degree from an accredited institution of higher learning in operations management, finance, organization effectiveness, business administration, supply chain management, or a related discipline required. Terminal degree in the same preferred.
- Minimum of ten years of progressive operations leadership and management experience is required. Experience administering a collective bargaining agreement (CBA) and managing a unionized workforce required.
- Experience working with diverse communities, especially those impacted by HIV/AIDS, particularly within the LGBTQ community, is preferred. Experience utilizing Harm Reduction and Strength-Based approaches preferred.

Knowledge and Work Experience

- Experience in a healthcare setting preferred.
- Experience as a member of a management bargaining committee and/or chaired-role in contract negotiations preferred.
- Executive or senior clinical practitioner experience (nursing, MD/DO, etc.) preferred.

Leadership Skills and Competencies

- Proficient and functional knowledge of strategic planning and metric development, monitoring, and management.
- Ability to define, analyze, and diagnose key components of a problem to formulate a solution in a timely fashion.
- Demonstrates resilience and steadiness in the face of complexity, ambiguity, and change, maintaining focus and effectiveness during periods of pressure or uncertainty.
- Maintains composure and sound judgment in complex situations, adapting quickly to shifting priorities while sustaining momentum and performance.
- Innate propensity to analyze hypothetical situations, patterns, and/or abstract concepts to formulate connections and new insights.
- Ability to organize and influence people to believe in a vision while creating a sense of purpose and direction.
- Demonstrates initiative and willingness to begin working and seeing action plans to completion.
- Ability to prioritize and complete tasks to deliver desired outcomes within allotted timeframes.
- Ability to establish courses of action to ensure that work is completed effectively.
- Proficient and functional knowledge of care coordination principles.
- Innate propensity for inquisition and strong researching/inquiry acumen.

- Ability to demonstrate an understanding and acceptance of equity, inclusion, and diversity concepts, and that they are broader than just race, ethnicity, and gender.

The Community

Chicago, IL

Chicago, Illinois is the third-largest city in the United States. It is a dynamic metropolis known for its iconic skyline, rich history, and cultural diversity. Situated along the southwestern shore of Lake Michigan in the state of Illinois, Chicago serves as a major hub for business, transportation, education, and the arts. With a population of nearly 2.7 million residents and over 9 million in the greater metropolitan area, the city is a vibrant patchwork of 77 officially designated community areas—each with its own unique character, traditions, and cultural influences.

Founded in 1837, Chicago quickly grew into a center of industry and innovation, particularly following the Great Chicago Fire of 1871, after which the city was rebuilt with striking architectural ambition. Today, Chicago is world-renowned for its architecture, home to pioneering skyscrapers like the Willis Tower (formerly Sears Tower), the John Hancock Center, and modern marvels by architects such as Frank Lloyd Wright, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, and Jeanne Gang. The city's architectural legacy is celebrated through boat tours on the Chicago River and international design events.

Economically, Chicago has one of the most diverse economies in the country. Key industries include finance, healthcare, logistics, manufacturing, higher education, and a rapidly growing tech sector. It is home to the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago and the Chicago Board of Trade, as well as the headquarters of numerous Fortune 500 companies, including United Airlines, Boeing, and McDonald's. O'Hare International Airport, one of the busiest in the world, and Midway Airport ensure global connectivity, while the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) operates an extensive network of buses and the "L" train system that keeps the city well connected.

Culturally, Chicago is a powerhouse. It is home to world-class museums such as the Art Institute of Chicago, the Field Museum, the Museum of Science and Industry, and the Museum of Contemporary Art. The city's performing arts scene thrives with institutions like the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Lyric Opera of Chicago, and dozens of acclaimed theaters, including the Steppenwolf and Goodman. Chicago also holds a rich musical legacy, credited as the birthplace of electric blues, house music, and a long history of jazz, gospel, and hip-hop innovation. Major annual events like Lollapalooza, the Chicago Blues Festival, and Taste of Chicago draw visitors from around the world.

The city is also known for its food scene—ranging from iconic deep-dish pizza and Chicago-style hot dogs to a growing number of Michelin-starred restaurants and global cuisines reflecting the city's immigrant roots. Chicago is one of the most racially and ethnically diverse cities in the U.S., shaped by generations of African American, Latino, Polish, Irish, Italian, Chinese, South Asian, and Middle Eastern communities, among others.

Sports are central to Chicago's identity. The city is home to passionate fan bases for its professional teams, including the Chicago Bears (NFL), Bulls (NBA), Cubs and White Sox (MLB), Chicago Sky (WNBA), Blackhawks (NHL), and Chicago Fire (MLS). Sports history runs deep, with legendary moments like the Cubs' 2016 World Series win and Michael Jordan's dominance with the Bulls in the 1990s.

Ultimately, Chicago stands out as a city of neighborhoods—each with its own heartbeat. Whether you're exploring the historic streets of Hyde Park, the mural-lined alleys of Pilsen, the lakefront trails of Lincoln Park, or the bustling food scene of West Loop, Chicago offers a deeply layered experience of American urban life. It is a city where history, progress, creativity, and community intersect.

Procedure for Candidacy

All applications, nominations and inquiries are invited.

Please direct all applications, nominations, and inquiries to the WittKieffer consultants assisting HBH with this recruitment, preferably via e-mail, to wkerschner@wittkieffer.com.

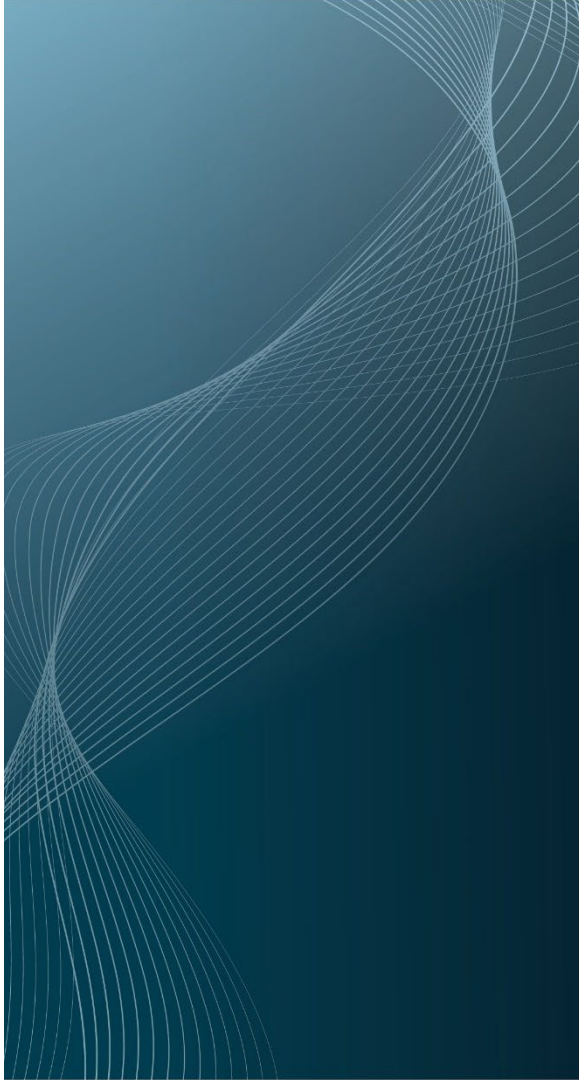
<p>Christine Pendleton</p> <p>Senior Partner</p> <p>630-575-6939</p>	<p>Vinny Gossain</p> <p>Principal</p> <p>630-575-6957</p>	<p>Wendy Kerschner</p> <p>Senior Associate</p> <p>630-575-6909</p>
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The anticipated base compensation range for this position is \$235,000 - \$275,000 annually, commensurate with the successful candidate's experience. Final determination of a successful candidate's starting pay will vary based on several factors, including, but not limited to, credentials and experience within the industry.

Howard Brown Health Center 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 HBH Center 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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