



## Chief Mission Officer

### Leadership Profile

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*WittKieffer*

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## The Opportunity

Thank you for your interest in the Chief Mission Officer role for Avera Health. Before you read the following position description, we want to tell you why this role is important to Avera and why we think it is a great opportunity for the right leader.

The heart and soul of Avera is our mission. We take our commitment to our communities, our people, and our patients seriously. We have been committed to rural health care for more than 100 years and we excel at it. For the populations we serve, high quality, affordable health care is synonymous with Avera. Critical to our success in this important work is infusing the mission, vision, values, beliefs, and history of the Benedictine and Presentation Sisters into our Catholic Health ministry. The Chief Mission Officer provides strategic direction in leading this work and serves as a key member of the Senior Leadership Team. This role reports to the Avera President and CEO and works closely with the Avera System Members.

The Chief Mission Officer models, leads, and assists Avera and all senior leaders to sustain, deepen awareness of, and fully realize Avera's identity as a healing ministry of the Catholic Church and to support Avera's broad strategic and organizational commitment to our mission, vision, and values. The new leader will be accountable for the development and implementation of strategic processes and initiatives associated with all things mission, including formation, ecclesial relations, Catholic ministry identity, Ethical and Religious Directives, stewardship, clinical pastoral education, ethics, and workplace spirituality and solidarity. The Chief Mission Officer provides strategic insights and counsel in partnership with the Sisters, leaders, and others across all ministries and key initiatives.

This position is responsible for the conceptualization, development, promotion, implementation, and measurement of a full continuum of activities designed to enrich spiritually and culturally the leadership and employees of Avera. Within Avera, the Chief Mission Officer coordinates and participates in the ministry's ongoing ecclesial relationships with local diocesan bishops and the larger Catholic community. The Chief Mission Officer collaboratively participates in the discernment, due diligence, and assessment of new and existing partnerships and affiliations. This position provides leadership in building an integrated culture of innovation and mission transformation initiatives that support clinical, administrative, and business objectives focused on consumer engagement, patient experience, and population health in alignment with our mission, vision, and values.

The Chief Mission Officer will need to demonstrate a superb ability to balance both the business and mission needs of the system. We seek a seasoned, spiritually astute mission leader with a broad understanding of the Catholic faith tradition and developments currently shaping Catholic health delivery. The ideal candidate will be a system thinker and team player with a proven track record of aligning mission integration with organization and operating strategy, while leading complex organizational changes that support an enterprise-wide commitment to mission. Candidates should have a minimum of five years of progressively responsible leadership working in a Catholic mission services program in a healthcare related field.

We look forward to learning more about you through this process and sharing more about our mission and our commitment to continuing Avera's unique fusion of whole person care and spirituality.

With sincere regards,



James F. Dover, FACHE  
President and CEO

Sr. Mary Kay Panowicz, OSB  
System Members Chair | On Behalf of the Avera System Members

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## Organization Overview

Avera Health is a large rural health system based in Sioux Falls serving South Dakota and the surrounding areas of Minnesota, Iowa, Nebraska and North Dakota. Avera's 545-bed tertiary hospital, Avera McKennan Hospital & University Health Center, is located in Sioux Falls. Five other regional centers are located in Aberdeen, Mitchell, Pierre, Yankton—all in South Dakota—and Marshall, Minnesota. Avera employs 20,500 at 315 locations. These include 37 hospitals, 200 primary and specialty care clinics, and 40 senior living facilities in addition to home care and hospice, sports and wellness facilities, home medical equipment outlets and more.

Avera's 1,230 providers offer 60 medical specialties with signature patient care programs including oncology, cardiology, orthopedics, and gastroenterology as well as solid organ transplant, bone marrow transplant and cellular therapies, behavioral health and addiction care, women's and children's services, emergency medicine and robust primary care.

As a Catholic health care ministry, Avera carries on the legacy of the Benedictine Sisters of Yankton, S.D., and Presentation Sisters of Aberdeen, S.D., delivering care in an environment guided by values of compassion, hospitality, and stewardship.

**Mission: Avera is a health ministry rooted in the Gospel. Our mission is to make a positive impact in the lives and health of persons and communities by providing quality services guided by Christian values.**

Avera is the health ministry of the Benedictine Sisters of Yankton and the Presentation Sisters of Aberdeen. In the 1880s, courageous Sisters from both orders came to Dakota Territory from Switzerland, Ireland, and elsewhere in the United States to minister to settlers and American Indians on the Plains. They came on a mission of education which soon expanded to include health care, in the face of epidemics that included diphtheria and influenza.

Sharing in the ministry of Jesus, the Presentation Sisters proclaim the Good News with missionary zeal in a spirit of love and joy. They share a common spirit, mission, commitment to the poor, and dedication to building a just world for all. In 1775, Nano Nagle founded the Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Ireland. Nano is known for educating the poor and caring for the sick and aged. In 1901, 1906 and 1911 respectively, the Presentation Sisters founded St. Luke's Hospital in Aberdeen, S.D., St. Joseph Hospital in Mitchell, S.D., and McKennan Hospital in Sioux Falls. As their health ministry expanded, Presentation Health System was established.

The Benedictine Sisters trace their roots back to St. Benedict, a fifth-century Italian monastic whose rule included a commitment to stability, hospitality, and prayer. Knowing that the divine presence is everywhere, they listen attentively in all circumstances for sounds of the Lord guiding them as a community and as individuals to actions on the Lord's behalf. Over the centuries, the Benedictine men and women have established schools, hospitals, and orphanages; given spiritual counsel; taught agricultural methods; copied sacred and secular texts; and carried the Gospel to mission lands. The Benedictines founded Sacred Heart Hospital (Yankton, SD), St. Mary's Hospital (Pierre, SD), St. Benedict Hospital (Parkston, SD), and formed the Benedictine Health System of Yankton.

In 2000, the Benedictine and Presentation Sisters merged their health ministries in a co-sponsorship model under the name Avera, derived from the Latin word meaning "to be well." Sisters remain involved in Avera leadership, holding operational and governance roles.

### Values

Avera seeks to heal the whole person—body, mind and spirit—as we live out our three gospel values of Compassion, Hospitality, and Stewardship.

- **Compassion:** The compassion of Jesus, especially for the poor and the sick of body and spirit, shapes the manner in which Avera's employees, physicians, administrators, volunteers, and sponsors deliver health care.

We express compassionate care through sensitive listening and responding, understanding, patience, support, and healing touch.

- **Hospitality:** Jesus' encounters with individuals were typified by openness and mutuality. The Avera community expresses hospitality by means of a welcoming presence, attentiveness to needs, and a gracious manner, seasoned with a sense of humor.
- **Stewardship:** Threaded through the mission of Jesus was the restoration of all the world to right relationship with its Creator. In that same spirit and mission, the members of Avera treat persons, organizational power, and Earth's resources with justice and responsibility. Respect, truth, and integrity are foundational to right relationships among those who serve and those who are served.

### **Moving Health Forward**

Avera is moving health forward, both as an organization and as individuals, for better health. Avera continues to look ahead with renewed focus, to grow and enhance health ministry by investing in research, innovation, and facilities. Avera seeks engagement with consumers not just in single, disconnected episodes of care, but across their lifespan. Avera serves as a trusted health partner, listening to the health needs and goals of its communities, and helping at every stage of life through care and health insurance coverage to help people feel their best, so they can be their best. When medical and insurance needs arise, Avera is a loyal, caring, and trusted health care partner. Avera has a passion for connecting the health needs and goals of persons and communities with hope filled and innovative solutions that empower them to reach those goals. Avera uses the latest technologies and evidence-based practices as their partner in health.

### **Awards and Recognitions**

Avera facilities have received [numerous recognitions](#) for quality of clinical care and service. Each hospital is accredited by the Joint Commission, and many care programs hold specific accreditation. Among its recognitions as a system, Avera has achieved:

- 15 Top Health Systems by IBM Watson Health based on quality and patient satisfaction data (2019, 2021)
- Forbes list of America's Best-in-State Employers 2023
- Customer Approved Award for senior care by NRC Health, a health care intelligence firm based in Lincoln, Nebraska (from 2019/2020, which reflects the most current list available from NRC)
- Level 10 Most Wired Health Care Organizations by the College of Healthcare Information Management Executives (CHIME)
- Avera McKennan Hospital & University Health Center is a Magnet-designated hospital, with the fifth designation since 2001
- Several Avera hospitals are rated 5-star facilities by the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS): Avera St. Luke's Hospital, Avera Queen of Peace Brady Health Rehab, Avera Heart Hospital, Avera Sacred Heart Hospital, and Avera Marshall Regional Medical Center. Lakes Region Healthcare, an Avera Partner in Spirit Lake, Iowa, is also a CMS 5-star hospital.
- Several Avera hospitals have been designated as a Top 100 Critical Access Hospital or Top 100 Rural & Community Hospital
- Several Avera senior care centers have earned the CMS 5-Star Rating for Long-Term Care Centers and/or the U.S. News & World Report Best Nursing Homes designation
- Avera Cancer Institute earned three-year accreditation through the Commission on Cancer, a quality program of the American College of Surgeons, and three-year certification through the QOPI® Certification Program
- Avera has been recognized for its hospice program by the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization

- As part of the American Business Awards® in 2023, Avera was awarded Gold Stevie® Awards for its “Ask the Question” suicide awareness campaign and “Moving Health Forward” branding campaign. “Ask the Question” also received a Grand Stevie Award as the Highest Rated Nomination of the Year.

### **Avera Medical Group**

More than 1,200 physicians, advanced practice providers, and allied health professionals collaborate to deliver comprehensive, seamless care through Avera Medical Group. Through more than 200 primary and specialty care locations, Avera Medical Group strives to improve the health of communities across the Upper Midwest through ease of referral to specialists, advanced technology and best-practice care, virtual visits, evening and weekend urgent care, and a seamless care experience. Avera Medical Group provides health care expertise that sets community standards and exceeds expectations in a way that is caring, convenient, affordable, and accessible.

Through Avera’s Service Line concept, Avera physicians from across the system collaborate to identify best practices that result in consistent care, which in turn builds quality and reduces cost. More cohesive transitions of care are the result of stronger relationships among physicians that in turn improve outcomes and create higher quality experiences for patients.

### **Avera Health Plans**

Avera Health Plans, founded in 1999, is Avera's provider-owned health insurance division that is dedicated to helping the people and communities it serves by providing cost-effective, innovative health plans. With over 75,000 members totaling more than \$300 million in annual premium revenue, Avera Health Plans offers employer group, individual, and Medicare Supplement plans. As part of the dedication to provide care and services to those in need, Avera Health Plans has participated in healthcare.gov since it began in 2014, after the passage of the Affordable Care Act. Through the ACA and healthcare.gov, individuals and families can take advantage of unique benefits such as guaranteed coverage and reduced costs.

### **Financial Summary**

Key highlights of Avera’s financial profile are as follows:

- Liquid cash and investments of \$1.4 billion as of fiscal year end June 30, 2023, with resulting cash on hand of 197 days.
- Total revenue of \$2.9 billion for the year end June 30, 2023.
- Operating EBIDA margin of \$185.6 million, or 6.4%, at June 30, 2023.
- Operating margin of \$45.5 million, or 1.6% at June 30, 2023.
- Outstanding public debt rated AA- by both S&P Global and Fitch.

### **Philanthropy**

In 2020, Avera centralized Avera hospital foundations into a singular and more powerful fundraising entity, Avera Foundation. Philanthropic support has been part of Avera’s health ministry for more than 130 years, as the Sisters were joined by their neighbors and friends when they began caring for the ill, poor and marginalized. Avera McKennan was founded in 1911 thanks to Helen Gale McKennan, who upon her passing, directed a \$25,000 gift in her will for a new hospital in Sioux Falls that would care for all. Numerous other hospitals and facilities have similar stories of generous benefactors who stepped forward to join the Sisters in this noble work. Individuals, organizations and corporate partners who wish to support Avera often direct their gifts toward a local hospital or project, or a certain area of care, such as hospice, pediatrics, cancer services, or addiction care. At the local level, community councils in each of Avera’s six regions support local philanthropic priorities.

## Governance

Like other Catholic healthcare organizations, Avera has a twofold governance structure which includes the Avera System Members and the Avera Board of Directors. Each of these entities has certain responsibilities and reserve powers.

As noted, the Benedictine and Presentation Sisters joined their health ministries in 2000 in a unique co-sponsorship model under the name Avera. The primary mechanism through which the Sponsorship Members exercise their sponsorship of Avera Health is through the appointment of the System Members. The two sponsoring religious communities select three members of their respective orders to serve as Avera System Members for a set term. In 2022, the System Members were expanded to include three laypersons who have engaged in education and spiritual formation in preparation for effectively leading a Catholic healthcare ministry.

The primary purpose of the System Members is to oversee and ensure that Avera's mission is alive and evident at all times. The System Members select the Avera President and CEO, and the Avera President and CEO reports directly to the System Members. The System Members also appoint the Avera Board of Directors, approve expenditures beyond a certain amount, and give voice to Avera's Catholic identity and mission direction.

The Avera Board of Directors make-up includes Sisters, physicians, and persons from the communities Avera serves. The Board of Directors' purpose is to work with the Avera President and CEO to oversee implementation of Avera's mission and strategic plan, approve annual budgets and certain levels of system expenditures, approve key operational initiatives, and champion the Avera brand.

Regional boards function as champions in their respective communities for the Avera brand and voices of local input for Avera leadership. They work with the respective regional President and CEO on local initiatives in their communities.

For more information on Avera, visit [www.avera.org](http://www.avera.org).

## Position Summary

The Chief Mission Officer provides executive leadership supporting shared responsibility for fostering Avera's Catholic identity as a health ministry of the Church. This leader promotes a culture of integrity throughout Avera, fosters clarity about—and commitment to—the Mission, Vision, and Values, and integrates elements of Catholic identity into all aspects of strategy, operations, organizational culture, and service. The Chief Mission Officer functions as a strategic integrator and strategic influencer and as a collaborative member of the senior executive leadership of Avera.

## Reporting Relationships

Reporting to the President and Chief Executive Officer, the Chief Mission Officer is supported by a team including:

- Avera Health Vice President of Mission
- Manager of Formation and Cultural Competence
- Regional mission leaders in collaboration with the regional Presidents

## Responsibilities

The successful Chief Mission Officer candidate:

- Directs the Mission Leadership Development Program and supports the Avera Leaders in Ministry Program. Collaborates with leaders throughout Avera to develop and integrate mission formation opportunities into orientation, training, and education.
- Provides consultation and support to the sponsored facilities and Avera Medical Group's Vice Presidents of Mission regarding the integration of mission, vision, values, beliefs, and history of the Presentation Sisters and the Benedictine Sisters into the Catholic health ministry.
- Promotes collaboration of the Mission Department with all centralized services of Avera health to ensure mission values and content are included in all five keys: ministry, people, quality, service, and stewardship.
- Provides an annual report to the System Members on mission integration with Avera.
- Works effectively as a team member in a dynamic executive environment where collegiality, subsidiarity and sharing responsibility is highly valued in a matrixed organization.
- Coordinates and/or participates in the development of guidelines and policies regarding Catholic identity, mission, ethics, and social justice.
- Provides guidance to Avera Health Clinical Pastoral Advisory Group or its successor.
- Provides administrative support to the Mission and Strategic Development Committee and the Financial Performance Committee of the Avera Health Board.
- Serves as liaison to the Diocese of Sioux Falls as directed by the President/CEO.
- Oversees and/or develops performance criteria for regular assessment of the organization's mission effectiveness and values integration.
- Provides administrative support and ongoing mission education for the Avera Health Board and develops ongoing mission education for all sponsored facility boards and Avera Medical Group service lines.
- Provide leadership as a system leader to embrace Ministry formation and spirituality in the workplace. Help define ways to extend mission across all patient care settings and within leadership development.
- Establish and maintain effective relationships with local bishops and their staffs as well as external constituents in Catholic health care, Catholic theology, health care mission and corporate responsibility.



- Participates in Catholic Health Association programs and committees related to mission, ethics, theology, governance, and sponsorship as appropriate.
- Serves as Avera Health liaison to sponsored hospital board of directors as designated.
- Submits reports and performs other duties as designated by the President/CEO.

## Goals and Objectives

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

- Build a strong working and collaborative partnership with Avera's President and CEO, System Members, Board, and across Avera and the leadership team. Be seen as a resource and trusted sounding board across the organization and the Diocese. Maintain a positive dialogue and relationship with the institutional church.
- In partnership and collaboration with others, identify and outline initiatives and programs that advance the mission within Avera. Ensure that the entire Avera organization truly embraces the mission and that it is actively carried out in the hands of all colleagues.
- Provide leadership as a system leader to embrace ministry formation and spirituality in the workplace. Help define ways to extend mission across all patient care settings through leadership formation and development.
- Either directly or through contracted experts and support, oversee ethics education and reviews, providing consultation and advice to the organization on all ethics questions, inquiries, and complaints. Engage in discussions around proposed legislation and related activities that have ethical implications to the programs and services Avera provides within the communities served.
- Assess the current resources and recommend a strategy and functional structure for mission services within Avera that further supports system leadership and the regional ministries. Develop future mission leaders through mentoring and focused succession planning. Demonstrate alignment around the development of collaborative relationships, teambuilding skills, effective management of people, and the facilitation of crucial conversations, addressing conflict in an appropriate and productive manner.
- Maintain a strong presence both internally and externally, staying abreast of developments and future trends. Be an active and engaged participant locally, regionally, and nationally in relevant associations and organizations.

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## Candidate Qualifications

### Education/Certification

- Master's degree required. An emphasis in theology is preferred.

### Knowledge and Work Experience

- Demonstrated understanding of the Mission and Values of Avera.
- Practicing Roman Catholic committed to the Catholic healthcare ministry. Consistently models right relationship with God, self, and others.
- A minimum of five years of progressive work experience with administrative, management, or governance responsibilities in a healthcare field is required. Administrative/operations management or leadership in a Catholic mission services program is preferred.
- Highly developed interpersonal and communicative skills to interact tactfully and persuasively with parties internal and external to Avera and to make effective presentations before groups.
- Possess a high emotional intelligence, be relationship oriented, and have the ability to navigate differing cultures and politics across the organization.
- Ability to develop educational curriculum and learning tools as well as educate effectively on mission, values, and clinical/organizational ethics issues. Sound principles of interactive planning, participatory management, and influence management. Advanced skills in leadership group decision-making processes, negotiating, and problem solving.
- Highly developed analytical and problem-solving skills to help resolve issues related to mission integration and Church relations. Demonstrates a positive track record of forging positive relationships in working with Church hierarchy.
- A high degree of comfort and confidence working within a matrix organizational structure and operating model. Exceptional ability to build commitment, influence others, and drive large scale organizational and cultural change throughout the organization.
- Broad understanding of healthcare operations and a track record of integrating the practicalities of the business aspects of healthcare with mission.
- Comply with all applicable laws, regulations, and standards associated with, but not limited to: South Dakota, Iowa, and Nebraska Departments of Insurance; Minnesota Department of Commerce; Office of Personnel Management; Department of Health and Human Services; and the Center for Medicare & Medicaid Services, NCQA, and industry standards.
- Willingness to travel.

### Leadership Skills and Competencies

- Must have a personal values system and style that reflect and model the mission, vision, and values of Avera. The Chief Mission Officer will understand, support, and be successful within a values-driven culture. The leader must uphold Avera's values of compassion, hospitality, and stewardship.
- Commitment to the daily application of Avera's mission, vision, core values, and social principles to serve patients, their families, and our community.
- Uphold Avera's standards of Communication, Attitude, Responsiveness, and Engagement (CARE) with enthusiasm and sincerity.

- Uphold the Ethical and Religious Directives and maintain confidentiality.
- Articulate and demonstrate the importance of integrating our Catholic teachings and traditions at every level of the organization.
- A strong track record of building collaborative and trusting relationships across multiple sites/entities. A personality and style that quickly develops trust and credibility. Accessible, politically astute, and able to work effectively in complex and ambiguous environments.
- A hands-on approach and reputation for follow through. Decisive, intuitive, and results oriented. Recognizes and values processes but is not constrained by them. Transparent and capable of fostering a culture that cultivates agile decision making.
- An actively engaged, self-aware, and approachable executive, who has an advanced awareness of self and others. A true servant leader who demonstrates personal humility and the ability to celebrate successes and learn from failures with equal grace.
- Demonstrate a highly evolved ability to delegate, hold people accountable, empower, and liberate the potential of all those who serve the ministry.
- A willingness and ability to take prudent risk and the courage to speak the hard truths. This will include the ability to explain complex issues in clear terms throughout the organization.
- Exceptional communication and listening skills and a track record of establishing and maintaining an organizational climate that models inclusion, respect, openness, and clarity of purpose. A visible comfort and desire to interact with people at all levels in the organization.
- A calm, open, and accessible personal style. A consensus builder with superb facilitation skills and ability to thoughtfully encourage input and ideas from others. A team player who is collaborative and collegial. A person of the highest level of integrity.
- Highly organized and disciplined with a strong work ethic and sense of urgency. Demonstrates self-initiative and self-confidence. A highly intelligent, quick study who embraces delegated responsibilities and initiates change.
- Proven ability to develop strong and enduring relationships and engage, challenge, and mentor others. Possesses core management skills that include the ability to interface effectively with line executives, staff, and senior executives.
- A sense of humor and a high degree of energy combined with a good work/life balance.

## The Community

Avera covers an expansive region totaling 72,000 square miles and approximately 100 communities across its footprint. The system is headquartered in Sioux Falls, S.D., one of the fastest-growing cities in the Midwest. The region offers a small-town feel with big city amenities. It has been recognized nationally for its economic climate and has benefited from a strong philanthropic community that supports a wide range of causes and needs throughout the region.

### Sioux Falls, South Dakota

With a lesser tax burden compared to other cities in the region, Sioux Falls is a welcoming and thriving business community that has been named by Forbes as one of the top Small Cities for Business and Careers each of the last 15 years.

The population of Sioux Falls' Metropolitan Statistical Area is nearly 300,000, yet the area is full of rolling plains visible for miles and miles.

The downtown area is the pulse of this city, with the Big Sioux River flowing between the streets full of restaurants, shops, businesses, bars, and cafes. Sioux Falls residents are fortunate to have an abundance of sports options and outdoor activities from which to choose, regardless of the season. The city is known for its outdoor activities and green spaces, with many parks, recreational fields and complexes, as well as world-class hunting grounds during the season. The city has about 80 different parks to choose from. The largest is Great Bear, with 220 acres of land for picnics, hiking, jogging paths and more. For those desiring a blend of outdoor activity and exercise, groomed trails are available for cross-country skiing. In addition, a world-class bike trail system is perfect for running, biking, or in-line skating to explore the city, get outside and find peace in nature.



With plenty of independent restaurants offering everything from Mediterranean to Mexican cuisine, the diversity and culinary talent in Sioux Falls has earned it the title of "the Paris of the Plains", and the New York Times has proclaimed Sioux Falls the place of "newfound culinary fame."

Not only does Sioux Falls offer an exceptional business climate, gorgeous park systems and endless food and entertainment options, it also offers one of the most competitive educational environments in the country. Sioux Falls' educational offerings are near the top in several national rankings. From public and private preschools to post-secondary opportunities in technical education and four-year degrees and beyond, Sioux Falls has it all.

For more information about Sioux Falls, please visit: [www.visitsiouxfalls.com](http://www.visitsiouxfalls.com) and [www.siouxfalls.org](http://www.siouxfalls.org).

## Procedure for Candidacy

Please direct all applications, nominations, and inquiries to the WittKieffer consultants assisting Avera with this recruitment, preferably via e-mail, to [araphael@wittkieffer.com](mailto:araphael@wittkieffer.com).

**Donna Padilla**  
**Executive Partner & Market**  
**Leader**  
**630-575-6135**

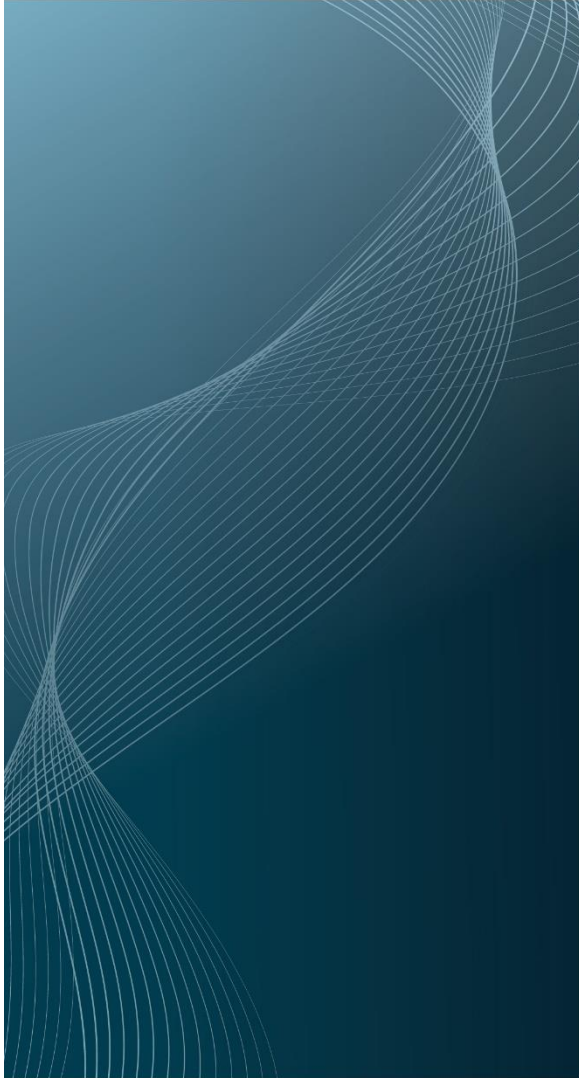
**Michelle Johnson**  
**Senior Partner**  
**320-260-2727**

**Angela Raphael**  
**Senior Associate**  
**301-578-2047**

*Avera 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 Avera 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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