



Market CHRO

Leadership Profile

June 2026

Prepared by Jennifer Sonneland and Jason Petros



Contents

The Opportunity	01
Organization Overview	02
Position Summary	05
Goals and Objectives	08
Candidate Qualifications	09
The Community	10
Procedure for Candidacy	11

The Opportunity

UW Health Northern Illinois offers an exceptional opportunity for a seasoned human resources executive to help lead a respected community-based health system at an important moment in its continued evolution. Rooted in more than a century of service in Rockford, the organization combines deep local trust with the scale, expertise, and academic connectivity of the broader UW Health enterprise, creating a leadership platform that is both mission-driven and highly strategic.

UW Health seeks a Market CHRO who can align human capital strategy with enterprise priorities and translate shared goals into practical, high-impact workforce solutions. This role requires a resilient, disciplined leader with the grit to navigate complexity, respond to evolving workforce realities, and drive meaningful organizational progress.

As a community hospital and regional provider, UW Health needs an executive who can lead with steadiness and sound judgment while quickly building credibility with leaders, physicians, and staff. Success in this role will depend on the ability to strengthen culture, elevate leadership capability, and advance workforce strategies that support organization performance, stability, and growth across the market.

The ideal candidate is a contemporary human resources leader who embraces operational rigor, anticipates future workforce needs, and understands compensation and people practices that support both business performance and an exceptional employee experience. This leader will ensure that talent, engagement, workforce planning, and organizational effectiveness are recognized not simply as support functions, but as critical drivers of long-term success.

For the right executive, this position offers the opportunity to make a visible and lasting impact within a proud community institution backed by the resources and reach of a leading regional health system. UW Health values services, accountability, and continuous improvement, and seeks a leader who brings both strategic perspective and perseverance to advance those priorities.

Following a rebrand in 2021 and 2022, the organization was recognized by Forbes as the 10th-best large employer in Illinois in 2024 and rose to number five in 2025. The next Market CHRO will play an important role in helping the organization continue that upward trajectory and strive for the top ranking in the state.

Organization Overview

UW Health Northern Illinois

UW Health has long served the people of northern Illinois, helping build healthier communities through a combination of locally focused care and the resources of a leading academic health system. Across the region, UW Health provides comprehensive services that include primary care, outpatient clinics, advanced specialty care, and hospital-based services.

As a regional health care leader, UW Health delivers emergency, surgical, and inpatient care through its hospitals in Rockford and Belvidere, while offering primary and specialty care at more than 30 outpatient locations. The organization is also recognized as a leading provider of cancer treatment in northern Illinois, and UW Health Women and Children's Hospital – the only dedicated women and children's hospital in Rockford – offers maternity care, pediatric specialty services, and a level III NICU.

UW Health has received numerous national recognitions for quality and workplace excellence, including Magnet recognition, Top 100 Hospital honors, and Becker's "Top Places to Work in Healthcare."

In 1981, the SwedishAmerican Foundation was established to continue the health system's philanthropic tradition. Today, the Foundation raises funds to promote SwedishAmerican's mission: through excellence in healthcare and compassionate service, we care for our community. Through the SwedishAmerican Foundation, our donors invest in our hospital, clinics, and our community.

For more information, click [here](#).

UW Health in Northern Illinois

- Patients: 179,000+
- Surgeries: 10,000+
- Outpatient visits: 1M+
- Emergency department visits: 83,000+
- Staffed beds: 322
- ICU beds: 30
- Employees: 4,300+
- Physicians: 180+
- Advanced practice providers: 130+
- Registered nurses: 1,300+
- Volunteers: 100+
- Charity care: \$7M
- Total community benefit: \$141M
- System revenue: \$1B



UW Health

- Patients: 867,000+
- Surgeries: 85,500+
- Outpatient visits: 4M+
- Emergency department visits: 245,000+
- Staffed beds: 1,281
- ICU beds: 172
- Virtual visits: 258,300+
- Employees: 26,500+
- Physicians: 2,000+
- Residents and fellows: 800+
- Volunteers: 981+
- Contributions to UW School of Medicine and Public Health: \$76M+
- UW School of Medicine and Public Health extramural research support: \$621M+
- Charity care: \$46M
- Total community benefit: \$415M
- System revenue: \$6.3B

UW Health is a nationally recognized regional health system that includes:

- UW Health SwedishAmerican Hospital, a 322-staffed-bed community-based hospital that includes a heart hospital with 94 beds.
- Women and Children's Hospital, which offers maternity care, pediatric specialties, and a Level III NICU.
- Belvidere Hospital, a 34-bed inpatient/outpatient hospital.
- University Hospital, a 687-staffed-bed regional referral center that is home to the UW Health Transplant Center, one of six centers nationwide that offer pediatric and adult transplants for all five major organs; heart, kidney, liver, lung and pancreas and the only UNOS-certified center in Wisconsin, level one adult and pediatric trauma centers, a certified burn center and cancer care provided by UW Health | Carbone Cancer Center, Wisconsin's only National Cancer Institute (NCI designated comprehensive cancer center).
- American Family Children's Hospital, a nationally ranked facility offering a cancer team at the forefront of developing newer, more effective treatments and comprehensive pediatric heart services that include a collaboration between UW Health Kids and Children's Hospital of Wisconsin called Forward Pediatric Alliance that offers the combined strength to advance the health of pediatric and congenital heart disease patients from fetal life through adulthood.
- 105 primary and specialty outpatient care locations.
- Seven medical centers.
- Partnerships that include Quartz Health Solutions and integrated health systems: UW Health, UnityPoint Health-Meriter, Gunderson Health Systems, and Aurora Health Care.
- Joint ventures and affiliations that include cancer centers, congenital heart, inpatient rehabilitation, surgery centers, dialysis programs, home health, infusion, and many other programs.

National Recognition:

- U.S. News & World Report's Best Hospitals: #1 hospital in Wisconsin for the 14th year in a row, 8 specialties ranked as best, and 4 specialties rated as high performing.
- Optum rated UW Health Transplant Center "excellent" for the following transplants: Blood/ Marrow, Heart, Heart/Lung, Kidney, Kidney/Liver, Kidney/Pancreas, Liver, Lung, Pancreas.
- Magnet®-designated facilities: University Hospital, East Madison Hospital, American Family Children's Hospital, SwedishAmerican Hospital.
- Recognized by Becker's Hospital Review as providing exceptional cancer care, orthopedic care, and neuro and spine care.
- Forbes named UW Health a "best" employer in both Wisconsin and Illinois.
- Becker's Hospital Review named UW Health a top place to work in health care.
- National Association of Specialty Pharmacy (NASP): UW Health Specialty Pharmacy awarded Specialty Pharmacy of the Year.
- The University Hospital Stroke Center in Madison, WI, is certified by The Joint Commission as a Comprehensive Stroke Center.
- Practice Greenhealth: 7 national awards for achievements in environmental stewardship and sustainability.
- Human Rights Campaign Foundation: Leader in LGBTQ+ Healthcare Equality.

Position Summary

The Market CHRO will lead the human resources function in cultivating and enhancing a culture of cohesion and collaboration, employee excellence, engagement, and leadership. The Market CHRO, in collaboration with Market Senior Leadership and System HR Leadership, leads the development and implementation of human resource strategies and initiatives with an intentional focus on alignment to the System and Strategic Playbook.

The Market CHRO will develop and maintain strong relationships and trust at every level and be able to translate stakeholder needs and activate change to elevate the people functions and drive performance and human capital impact. The Market CHRO will provide overall administration, direction, coordination, and evaluation of the human resources functions and activities of UW Health Northern Illinois ("UWHNI") and is specifically responsible for talent acquisition and workforce planning; employee relations and recognition; associate health, daycare center, HR business partner functions, change management, as well as Security and Guest Relations (including volunteers, guest escorts, interpreter services and chaplains). Collaborates with leaders to align support across organizational development, total rewards, and organizational improvement.

The role is also a critical member of the senior management team of UWHNI and the HR function of UW Health. It is a 9-member senior leadership team, and the role is essential to leading the future of work and workforce for the market. This role will present to the Swedish American Health System Board of Trustees and various committees of the board on human resource strategy and related issues.

UW Health is committed to the highest standard of customer service principles for its patients, visitors, and staff members. Staff will serve as role models by practicing exemplary behaviors when working with patients, visitors, and fellow staff members.

Reporting Relationships

Reporting to the CEO of UW Health Northern Illinois and matrixed to the System VP/CHRO, direct reports include the Director of Talent Acquisition, the Director of Security, and the Director of Ryan Jury Child Development Center.

Responsibilities

The successful Market CHRO candidate will be an:

Administrative Leader

- Provide overall leadership, direction, and coordination of operations, finances, space, and human resources for all operating areas within the range of responsibility.
- Develop and/or implement appropriate institutional policies and procedures to enhance efficient and effective operations and delivery of services within areas of responsibility.
- Translate strategic plans and budget targets into action plans that guide resource allocation and the coordination and direction of personnel; direct operations in areas of responsibility to achieve the annual operating plan.
- Provide leadership, guidance, support, and direction to the department managers/directors in their fiscal care efforts to ensure optimal use of resources and provide effective service.
- Effectively lead and administer the following responsibilities and activities:

- Provide executive leadership and oversight for system-wide security and guest relations operations, ensuring a safe, secure, welcoming, and service-oriented environment for patients, families, visitors, staff, learners, and physicians across all UW Health locations.
- Lead the development, implementation, and continuous improvement of security, workplace violence prevention, emergency preparedness, guest relations, and service recovery strategies, policies, programs, and operational standards in alignment with organizational goals and regulatory requirements.
- Partner collaboratively with operational, clinical, facilities, legal, risk management, and external community stakeholders, including law enforcement and emergency response agencies, to support organizational readiness, crisis response, and a positive patient and visitor experience.
- Direct the operational, financial, and people leadership responsibilities for the security and guest relations functions, including workforce planning, performance management, budgeting, technology oversight, and continuous improvement initiatives that promote safety, accountability, professionalism, and service excellence. work to continuously enhance the delivery of human resource services through improvement processes that maintain the highest levels of service, efficiency, and effectiveness.
- Effectively use and enhance workforce planning tools and strategic forecasting models, and related monitoring.
- Administer and enhance employee feedback processes, including formal and informal options.
- Oversee the investigation of all employee complaints or allegations dealing with issues related to legal, policy, practice, or values violations.
- Oversee and ensure application of effective organizational design principles and guidelines.
- Oversee and enhance a comprehensive array of human resource management policies, programs, and practices that effectively link human resource strategies with business strategies, coordinating the implementation across the organization to ensure continuity and consistency.
- Oversee affirmative action plans and programs to ensure that UW Health meets regulatory requirements and advances its diversity representation to mirror the community.
- Oversee human resource management compliance and direct the Human Resources-related functions to be consistent with TJC standards and State and Federal statutes and regulations.
- Establish a solid cooperative relationship with operational leaders by providing the information, tools, and services necessary to carry out their human resources management responsibilities and ensure that the human resources processes are compatible with and support operational needs.

Strategic Planner

- Participate in the development of the institutional strategic plan to ensure accomplishment of the mission and vision of UWHNI.
- Provide executive leadership for the “Staff and Provider Well-being” and “Social Impact and Belonging” strategic competencies within the strategic plan.
- In conjunction with UW Health HR leadership, UW Strategy, and UWHNI Senior Leadership successfully implement an HR Operating Model and corresponding metrics, service level agreements, and guiding principles on how UWH-WI and UWH-NI partner and resolve conflict. Overall, HR services/processes for NI are approved by the UW Health Workforce Committee (formerly Position Control Committee).
- Annually develop a workforce plan that meets the short, middle, and long-term needs of UWHNI.
- Drive regional growth by leading people strategies that expand UW-NI's healthcare footprint.

Advisor

- Serve as an advisor and consultant to the Chief Executive Officer, System CHRO, and Senior Leadership Team on matters within areas of responsibility.
- Provide advice and information to the UWHNI Board of Directors on matters within areas of responsibility.
- Support the CEO in the development of a high-performing senior leadership team.
- Provide leadership for the design and implementation of an exceptional leadership development model.

Educator/Facilitator

- Contribute to establishing a learning environment conducive to the provision of educational and research experiences to students, house officers, faculty, and staff.
- Support the educational and professional development opportunities to staff, students, and interns within areas of responsibility.
- Contribute to the institution's knowledge of the latest trends, practices, and state-of-the-art technology applicable to assigned areas of responsibility.

External Stakeholder

- Act as a liaison and representative of the institution about human resources matters with community groups, local and regional health care colleagues, and other relevant individuals and organizations.
- Act as a liaison and representative of the institution about human resource matters with the UW Health Northern Illinois Board of Directors and UW Health Northern Illinois Committees.

Goals and Objectives

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

- Build strong personal and professional credibility across UW Health Northern Illinois and the broader UW Health system. Foster meaningful relationships with HR teams and their leaders, and serve as a trusted advisor to the CHRO, UWHNI President, and other key stakeholders on all human resources matters.
- Lead efforts to further strengthen and evolve the HR function at UWHNI by building on its current foundation. Assess opportunities for enhancement, define a clear path toward continued high performance, and partner with local leaders to support a more integrated HR service-delivery approach.
- Enhance talent acquisition strategies, processes, and technology to strengthen recruitment outcomes and elevate the candidate experience. Expand and deepen partnerships with community organizations, educational institutions, and other sources to build robust talent pipelines.
- Align internal and external resources to strengthen workforce stability and resilience. Assess and advance workforce planning, employee and physician engagement, and leadership development initiatives.
- Develop and implement local service level agreements that ensure strong customer service and strategic HR support. Establish scorecards and key performance indicators that help guide performance and reinforce desired cultural outcomes.
- Promote and advance social impact and belonging UWHNI and the broader system through intentional hiring practices, leadership development, and targeted organizational initiatives.
- Develop and implement a comprehensive recruitment and retention strategy that addresses workforce challenges and positions the organization competitively in key labor markets.
- Leverage employee and physician engagement data to identify opportunities, implement targeted improvements, and drive measurable gains in engagement across the organization.
- Build and lead a high-performing HR team that is engaged, innovative, and motivated to partner with operational leaders, driving strong performance while fostering a caregiver-focused culture.

Candidate Qualifications

Education/Certification

- Bachelor's degree in human resources, business administration, or a related field is required.
- Master's degree in human resources, business administration, or a related field preferred.

Work Experience

- A minimum of seven (7) years of progressively responsible management or supervisory level experience in human resources in a complex and progressively human resources environment is required.
- Experience in healthcare is preferred.

Leadership Skills, Knowledge, and Competencies

- Broad knowledge of current health care administration, systems, practices, and principles.
- Effective leadership abilities –
 - Record of initiating change and innovation
 - Strategic thinking, planning, and problem-solving
 - Superior communication skills, both in written and verbal presentation
- Practical human relations abilities to effect collaborative alliances, promote teamwork, and ensure a high level of internal and external customer satisfaction and engagement.
- Ability to succeed in a complex environment where decision-making may be diffused and ambiguous.
- Demonstrated exemplary presentation skills to engage and motivate organizational stakeholders.
- Proven success in developing a large, high-performing staff, establishing performance standards, and transitioning staff through organizational change, emphasizing the ability to recruit and manage a culturally diverse workforce.
- A high degree of professionalism and competency in dealing with various individuals, including physicians, senior executives, hospital administration, and external constituents.
- Experience in preparing operating and capital budgets.
- An ability to organize and present data in a concise and easily understood manner, often to professionals, physicians, and board members.
- Be recognized as a positive change agent.
- Proven success as a dynamic and empowering leader who possesses a positive attitude to instill a vision for excellence with innovation and creativity.
- Conflict management and resolution skills.
- Skilled developer of relationships and partnerships.

The Community

Rockford, Illinois

In northern Illinois, the city of Rockford is home to those who enjoy the small-town benefits of living in a big way. Located within Winnebago County, Rockford lies between Chicago and the Mississippi River and is the largest city in Illinois outside the Chicago metropolitan area. Rockford is the fourth-largest city in the state and is well known for its extensive park system, numerous outdoor activities, gourmet restaurants, a diverse array of entertainment and art, sports, and boutique shopping.



Rockford serves as the gateway to the recreational treasures of northern Illinois and southern Wisconsin, as well as the urban riches of Chicago, Milwaukee, and Madison. Rockford has a legacy of its own, strong in manufacturing, modern technology, entrepreneurship, and innovation. There are several excellent public and private schools in the area and surrounding communities.

The city is a safe, welcoming community with a wide variety of activities and boasts an arts and culture scene. The Forest Preserves of Winnebago County are one of the best systems in Illinois, with more than 10,000 acres of recreational areas, hiking trails, lakes, rivers, and forests to explore. Canoeing and kayaking on the Rock River and throughout the region continue to grow in popularity. The Riverfront Museum Campus features three museums in one location, including the Burpee Museum of Natural History, the Discovery Center Museum, and the Rockford Art Museum. A different kind of art, the natural gardenscape at Anderson Japanese Gardens, is continually ranked as one of the top Japanese gardens in the United States. Rockford is also home to the Rockford IceHogs professional hockey team and the Rockford Rivers collegiate baseball team.

The Rock River forms the traditional center of Rockford and is its most recognizable natural feature. One of its largest tributaries, the Kishwaukee River, joins the Rock River at the southern end. Neighboring communities that border Rockford and are considered integral parts of the Rockford metro area, each with its own uniqueness, include Loves Park, Belvidere, Machesney Park, and the villages of Winnebago, Roscoe, Rockton, Poplar Grove, New Milford, and Cherry Valley.



Procedure for Candidacy

All applications, nominations, and inquiries are invited. Applications should include, as separate documents, a CV/resume and a letter of interest. Review of applications has begun and will continue until the position is filled.

Please direct all nominations and applications to Jennifer Sonneland and Jason Petros through the WittKieffer Candidate Portal by clicking [here](#) or via email at jsonneland@wittkieffer.com. Candidates can also find this portal via the WittKieffer website at www.wittkieffer.com and select the "Become a Candidate" button.

<p>Jennifer Sonneland</p> <p>Consultant</p> <p>314-680-3474</p>	<p>Jason Petros</p> <p>Executive Partner & Solution Leader, Global Search</p> <p>630-575-6156</p>
--	--

Compensation Range

The anticipated base salary is expected to be in the high-\$200,000 to low-\$300,000 range, along with market-competitive incentive compensation and benefits. This compensation level is a good-faith determination of anticipated compensation at the time of this job advertisement and may be modified in the future.

UW Health Northern Illinois 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 UW Health Northern Illinois 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.

All images and logos used in this leadership profile were attained from UW Health Northern Illinois and/or are owned by WittKieffer Inc. via Getty Images.



WittKieffer is the premier executive search and advisory firm developing inclusive, impactful leadership teams for organizations that improve quality of life. For more than 50 years, we have operated exclusively at the intersection of not-for-profit and for-profit healthcare delivery, science, and education – the Quality of Life Ecosystem. Through our expert executive search services as well as our Professional Search, Interim Leadership, and Leadership Advisory solutions, we strengthen organizations that make the world better.

Visit [WittKieffer.com](https://www.WittKieffer.com) to learn more.

WittKieffer