

# HEALING OUR FUTURE

Leadership for a Changing  
Health System



ANDREW N. GARMAN

## **Praise for *Healing Our Future***

"The American healthcare system of the future will be built increasingly on the strengths of teams, not individuals—an environment where everyone will be a leader. *Healing Our Future* will be useful for clinicians and others working in teams, as well as individuals considering the pursuit of their first formal leadership role. The book also contains valuable content and reminders for seasoned executives."

—**Thomas M. Priselac, President and CEO, Cedars-Sinai Health System**

"I have used this amazing leadership model successfully with my leadership team, resulting in a stronger team and excellent individual development and improvement. This comprehensive leadership model will support the success of individual leaders and organizations alike."

—**Cynthia Barginere, COO, Institute for Healthcare Improvement**

"Garman embraces the importance of developing leadership skills in everyone, not just those in leadership positions. He offers a crucial overview of healthcare fundamentals, along with practical guidance and resources. This is a must-have book."

—**Jeanne Armentrout, Executive Vice President and Chief Administrative Officer, Carilion Clinic**

"*Healing Our Future* is a transformative must-read for next-generation healthcare organization and system leaders. Dr. Garman offers a superbly crafted research-based leadership road map, and he delivers it in a clear, accessible, and compelling voice."

—**Annie Tobias, former Vice President, Learning and Engagement, Ontario Hospital Association, Canada**

"*Healing Our Future* is what we need for today and to help us achieve a better tomorrow. The book provides important information in an accessible format that will appeal to leaders at every career stage."

—**Christy Harris Lemak, PhD, FACHE, Chair, Department of Health Services Administration, University of Alabama at Birmingham**

"Sustainable healthcare delivery is a global challenge, and success increasingly requires leadership at all levels. Although written in the US context, *Healing Our Future* offers practical, evidence-based advice that can empower all aspiring leaders to help the health systems they work in to build a healthier future."

—**Ronald Lavater, CEO, International Hospital Federation**

“Leadership is like a fine wine, often taking time and experiences to develop. The development journey in *Healing Our Future* is structured in a way that ensures readers have practical and achievable solutions to evolve their thinking and leadership style, turning challenges into opportunities.”

—**Joseph Moscola, Executive Vice President, Enterprise Management, Northwell Health**

“*Healing Our Future* captures the essence of what is required for our leaders as they prepare for the healthcare challenges of the future. The seven disciplines elegantly capture and detail what should be the learning path for our leaders.”

—**Chris Newell, Senior Director of Learning and Development, Boston Children’s Hospital**

“Andy Garman explores the frailties of healthcare with insight earned from the intellectual rigor of thoughtful research tempered with the scars and bruises from resolute practice. His book presents readers with a blueprint for recognizing their purpose, strengthening competencies, and, lastly but most importantly, being value-driven passionate advocates for health in the community.”

—**Anthony Stanowski, President and CEO, Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Management Education**

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CHANGING HEALTH SYSTEM

ANDREW N. GARMAN



Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc.

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*To our kids, their generation, and  
the next two they will look after*



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## Introduction

Every time history repeats itself, the price goes up.

—*Anonymous*

**T**his is a leadership book for people who are more interested in making change happen than in formal leadership roles or titles. In health systems, as in other organizations, leadership has been evolving into a team sport: our environment has simply become too complex to be understood, let alone managed, by a small group at the top of a hierarchy. Regardless of whether “leader” is part of your title, or even in your job description, in the years ahead you will have increasing opportunities to lead. I’d like to help you prepare for these roles as they appear before you, so that you can pursue them with a greater sense of confidence and purpose.

This is also a book about the changing role of health systems in our society. If you are working in a health system, you are working with colleagues who care deeply and inclusively about the health and well-being of others. You are also part of the largest corner of our economy, a sector with both the potential and the responsibility to become a powerful vehicle for pursuing the healthier futures that we know are possible but not certain.

I started my own career as a clinical psychologist, focused mainly on helping individuals in distress find better ways to get their needs met. I did not plan to become a leader, or even to study leadership. Over time, I was doing more and more things that were leadership-like, and then studying leadership to figure out how to do them better. This eventually led to my being asked to run programs, then departments, and then, ultimately, an organization: the National Center for Healthcare Leadership. Over the course of nine years, I had the opportunity to lead numerous research studies examining excellence in healthcare leadership, and analyze the approaches of hundreds of health systems in developing their leaders. The more individuals and organizations I studied, the clearer the commonalities across them became. Cut through all the chaos of personalities and “secret recipes,” and every leadership model can be mapped to seven universal disciplines. Similarly, every successful leadership development activity involves a finite set of universal learning principles.

In this book, I provide approaches to help you develop into a more effective leader. I do not assume you are currently in a formal leadership role, or even that you aspire to be—only that you will periodically find yourself with the desire to pursue a greater good in the world, and you will need other people’s help along the way. The seven disciplines described in this book form an evidence-based “common language” of leadership—one that you should be able to easily map to any “local language” model you

organization or profession may be working with, and in doing so provide a stronger scientific foundation.

The first section begins with a glimpse into our more distant future, and how our health systems could evolve to help us navigate this future more successfully. I then describe how people become more effective leaders over time, and what the research has to say about what works best in making this happen. In section two, I introduce the seven disciplines. The first three—the enabling disciplines—relate to the “inner game” of leadership:

- **Values**—clarifying the greater goods you want to serve.
- **Health system literacy**—understanding how healthcare organizations work.
- **Self-development**—developing and maintaining yourself for success in the challenges leadership often entails.

The next four—the action disciplines—focus on leadership in action:

- **Relations**—understanding and supporting the individual needs of the people you work with.
- **Execution**—clarifying and monitoring the shared direction for action.
- **Boundary-spanning**—managing relationships between your collaborators and the outside world.
- **Transformation**—creating the urgency, vision, and trust needed for more fundamental changes of direction.

Each chapter in the section provides a description of the discipline, illustrates why it is important, and provides specific advice on how to raise your proficiency. In each case, I describe



many free and low-cost resources—online articles, videos, and courses—available to help you along the way. I also suggest places you can find good mentors to learn from, as well as additional tools, resources, and background that may be of more specific help, depending on what brought you to this book in the first place. The book concludes with two appendices. The first offers step-by-step advice on recruiting and engaging good mentors. The second provides more in-depth guidance on how to develop your skills in long-term thinking and foresight.

In the coming years, we will likely participate in some of the biggest social changes many of us have seen in our lifetimes. Our health systems stand to play a significant role in the many adaptive changes we need to make to heal our future. I hope you take this book as an invitation to help lead us there.

**SECTION I**

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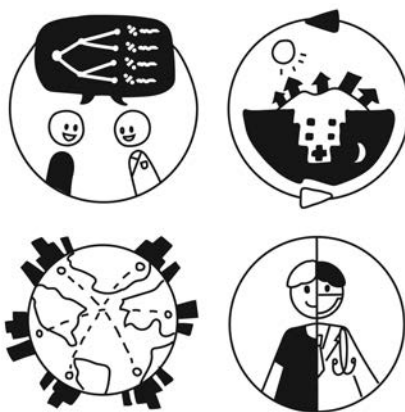
# Leadership in the Changing Health System



**B**efore diving into the nuts and bolts of effective leadership, I provide some context on why the subject is so important, and how it will become even more so in the years to come. In the first chapter of this section, I share some perspectives on how healthcare is likely to evolve in the decade ahead, based on trends that are already in motion today. With this background, you will be better prepared to identify areas that may be helpful for you to learn more about, and prepare to contribute to. In the second chapter, I summarize the factors that have the greatest influence on how leadership develops over time. With this context, you will be better prepared to put the concepts and recommendations in the later chapters into immediate action.

## CHAPTER 1

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# The Changing Health System

Say what you will about the year 2020. It was undeniably the gateway to a new decade and a glimpse of the road ahead. It is hard not to equate the whole year with the COVID-19 pandemic, and all of the changes that followed in its wake. For many people working within health systems, these changes meant working under conditions they were never trained for, and learning new skills on the fly. In many cases, it involved developing entirely new approaches to the delivery of care, and learning as quickly as possible from the experiences of peers across the country and the world.

As hard as people worked to mitigate the pandemic, they could only do so much within what their contexts allowed—and that context was a health sector already facing significant challenges. We had just begun to understand the severity of healthcare