

Former NHS Exec Returns to Tahlequah as System's CNO

TAHLEQUAH, Oklahoma – Northeastern Healthcare recently made changes to its leadership team in an effort to improve the quality of service offered to patients. Amy Waller, MSN, RN, returns to Northeastern Health System (NHS) to serve as the system's Chief Nursing Officer (CNO), and Donna Dallis, the system's VP of Patient Care for the past nine years, will now serve as the VP of Quality and Risk Management, areas of great interest to her.

Prior to accepting the CNO position at Palo Pinto General Hospital in Mineral Wells, Texas, Waller worked at NHS for 12 years in various positions, including as the director of the Critical Care Unit and Cardiovascular ICU, Associate VP, and later VP, of Clinical Operations.

"Amy is an exceptional leader," said Jim Berry, NHS's Executive Vice President and Hospital Administrator. "Her years of CNO experience outside of NHS have given her a different approach to nursing administration."

As CNO, Waller plans to focus her attention on nursing due to the changing climate of healthcare and the current staffing shortages plaguing most healthcare institutions in today's COVID environment.

"I have had the opportunity to work at many levels throughout my career," said Waller. "I have been on the front lines and behind the scenes. Each experience has provided a different perspective and taught me to be open to new ideas. Healthcare is always evolving, and as leaders, we have to evolve with it."

Waller and her husband, Louis, enjoy traveling and spending time with friends and family, including their four children and two grandchildren.

"I am happy to be back as part of the NHS family," said Waller.

Waller fills the CNO position formerly held by Donna Dallis, MS, RN, CPHRM, who began her 31-year career at NHS as an LPN. Throughout those 31 years, Dallis has advanced her education and her career, serving in many key leadership roles, including Quality Assurance and Risk Management, before serving as the system's VP of Patient Care for nine years.

"I love nursing and I hope I have shared my love of nursing and healthcare with those I have worked with," said Dallis. "I am proud of the growth and accomplishments of NHS, from a small, rural hospital, to a system with many specialties. We have increased our ability to take care of patients, lessening the burden of travel for our patients and their families."

Dallis will now serve as the system's VP of Quality and Risk Management, areas she has been passionate about since she held the position for five years prior to serving as VP of Patient Care. As the Quality and Risk VP, Dallis will identify, assess for, correct, and monitor all aspects of patient care, working to mitigate hazards and threats.

"Healthcare has changed over the last 30 years, for better or for worse. Length of stay has decreased and the acuity of the patients has increased," said Dallis. "We have to increase our focus on all of the details."

The leadership changes became necessary for the continued growth of the health system. Dallis will oversee the quality and risk management of the hospital as well as Northeastern Health System's affiliates.

"Donna is excellent in the quality and risk role," said Berry. "She has pursued certification in risk and knows quality assurance from her past NHS experience."

Dallis and her husband of 45 years, James, enjoy camping, traveling and spending time with family, especially their grandchildren Savannah, Draeuh, Colbee, Asher and Eden.

“These two women have proven their dedication to improving healthcare at NHS,” said Berry. “I look forward to working with them in their new roles as they lead our team to enhanced patient care and safety.”

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