

Aim is to fill the position this summer

UCHealth CEO Search Finds no Shortage of Candidates

By Erin Emery

The search for a new president and chief executive officer to lead University of Colorado Health is careful, confidential and conscientious.

It's not like the five-member search committee tasked with finding a new CEO posts an ad on Monster.com and calls it a day. Finding a world-class leader to oversee \$2.2 billion in annual revenues, 15,000 employees, and five hospitals along the Front Range requires considerable due diligence, effort and time.



Chris Osborn, vice chair of the UCHealth Board of Directors, chairs the committee conducting a search for a new president and CEO of UCHealth.

Since the five-member search committee began its pursuit last fall, a pool of talented and experienced candidates has been identified. In the coming weeks, the committee will begin narrowing that pool with the intention of finding a new leader sometime this summer.

"To date, we've had a phenomenal response with an incredible, very capable list of candidates interested in UCHealth," said Chris Osborn, vice chairman of the UCHealth Board of Directors and chair of the search committee. He is the immediate past chair of the board of Poudre Valley Health System and is CEO and founder of a number of growth companies.

In the early days of the search, the committee selected a globally-respected executive search firm and conducted a survey of employees to determine what attributes they consider most important in their future leader.

Getting it right. The search firm conducted 90 face-to-face interviews with key stakeholders within UCHealth and the communities it serves to gain a greater understanding of the qualities they desire. After gathering that input, the committee crafted a "role description" that is used to communicate the opportunity at UCHealth to potential candidates.

It's a role that is coveted by health care's elite leaders.

"We've been told by our search professionals that this is likely one of the most attractive opportunities for leadership in health care today," Osborn said. "And that is because the organization has historically done so well, but even in this interim period with Dr. Bill Neff and the senior executive team, the health system continues to make great strides.

"You've got a fantastic health system that has nationally and globally recognized achievement in the area of quality and nursing excellence, and you get to live in Colorado," he added. "There are

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very few places where the community of the health system as a whole, which includes the communities that we serve, the medical school, and the professional physician communities, are as healthy as ours are given the level of change going on in health care.”

The five-member search committee is comprised of Osborn; Dr. Richard Schulick, professor and chair of surgery at the University of Colorado School of Medicine; Neff, who is chief medical officer and interim CEO; Lilly Marks, board member of UCHealth, chair of University of Colorado Hospital’s Board of Directors and executive vice chancellor of the Anschutz Medical Campus; and Mary Rhinehart, a member of UCHealth’s Board of Directors and CEO of Johns Manville.

Under the microscope. They meet at least twice a month. Sometimes, the meetings last for several hours; other times, the committee has a quick meeting by phone. The search firm, with four senior professionals dedicated to finding a CEO for UCHealth, has provided the committee with written reports on potential candidates, though there are no names attached to the reports – that’s confidential for now.

The reports are chock-full of information, including full backgrounds on the candidates that have been independently verified. The reports contain feedback from interviews and face-to-face meetings that the search firm has completed during pre-screening of candidates. The search firm also provides its perspective with respect to “candidate fit and why the candidate has interest and what the candidate might have to offer the organization,” Osborn said.

Complete confidentiality during the process is critical.

“Much like a person’s health record, a person’s employment background and their interests require the respect of confidentiality,” Osborn said. “The vast, vast majority of candidates for a role like ours are gainfully and happily employed by an organization that really values them, and if confidentiality is breached, we lose the opportunity to recruit them, or we put their career at risk and neither of those outcomes is okay.”

The confidentiality of candidates, Osborn said, is a “tough balance but critical to getting the best to invest in our opportunity. That is a good part of the reason we have the search committee members we do, to field the questions, filter the interests and explore what’s needed from

many parts of the UCHealth team – Senior Executive Group, the School of Medicine, the university and the community hospitals.”

In the coming months, the committee will narrow the pool and then select finalists with whom to meet. Ultimately, the decision about whom to make an offer will be the responsibility of the entire board, not the committee. The board will take feedback from the search committee, Senior Executive Group and a select panel of physicians from the school and hospitals before making a final selection.

Osborn acknowledged that finding a new CEO to lead UCHealth is a hefty responsibility that comes with a lot of work.

“It is exceptionally engaging, and we have a committee that is loyal and dedicated that works exceptionally well together,” he said. “I would hope that anyone within the UCHealth system understands the level of commitment that the board has in finding a leader of the caliber that this team deserves – a leader who can continue to grow a legacy of really awesome performance.”