

# SUNSPOTS

A NEWS MAGAZINE SERVING HFMA FINANCIAL MANAGERS



## In This Issue

Meet Four Exceptional Healthcare Executives

## The Executive Roundtable

by: Jim Grigsby CPAM and Christine Johnson FHFMA

*Modern Healthcare's April 7 issue featured The 2008 Top 25 Minority Executives in Healthcare; four of the honorees are Floridians:*



**Rainier Gonzalez**  
*CEO, Pacer Health Corporation*  
*Miami Lakes*

Gonzalez has managed the operations of hospitals within the Pacer hospital system since its inception, totaling 178 licensed beds and approximately \$45 million in net revenues. Pacer was ranked 185 out of the top 500 Hispanic owned businesses by Hispanic Business Magazine. The magazine also awarded Gonzalez with the Entrepreneur of the Year "Rising Star" award in January 2007 for his accomplishments in turning around financially distressed hospitals.

He holds a bachelor's degree in political science from Florida International University. He earned his law degree, *magna cum laude*, from the Indiana University School of Law and worked as a law clerk for the Honorable Federal Judge Denny Chin of the Southern District of New York.

*The Sunspots editors arranged an interview with these nationally acclaimed executives; we hope you are as impressed with them as leaders and people as we were.*

**SUNSPOTS: WHAT WAS THE EVENT OR MOMENT THAT STEERED YOU TO AN EXECUTIVE CAREER IN HEALTHCARE?**

**MIYAMOTO:** My father, for most of his career, was a social worker and later a hospital administrator with the Veteran's Administration (V.A.). We lived hospitals and healthcare 24/7, a number of times in residence on the grounds of hospitals. So I grew up in and around healthcare systems, and advancing along the healthcare leadership course seemed natural.

**GONZALEZ:** When I was first approached by a Louisiana hospital facing severe financial distress, the people there were confident that we could save it from going under if we used the proper management techniques. They believed we could fix it and we did and that's what brought me into the career I'm in today.

**GRANT:** I have always been a keen and enthusiastic student in the sciences (from high school on) and have focused my attention and energy in all areas of health care. After graduating with a Master of Science degree, I was associated with the Jamaica Public Health Department developing nutritional programs and policies.

Over the years I have taken advantage of several great opportunities in healthcare which has helped me to hone my management, operational and financial skills. I have always had exceptional rapport with a diverse array of people which made leadership a lot easier as I progressed through my career.

**REED:** I don't know that there was one event in particular. I've always had an interest in improving patient care on a larger level than what can only be done in private practice. Expressing that interest opened the door to opportunities that allowed me administrative exposure.

**SUNSPOTS: INTERESTING. CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT THE OBSTACLE YOU TAKE THE MOST PRIDE IN OVERCOMING?**

**GONZALEZ:** Managing different skill sets and personalities is an obstacle I take pride in overcoming. Transforming corporate cultures and aligning them to adapt with management's strategies is one of those daunting, yet rewarding challenges.

**REED:** My greatest obstacle can only be me. Placing limitations on myself in the beginning – fearing failure as I transitioned from private practice to administration was an obstacle to my personal success. Once I embraced the willing mentors that surrounded me as well as embracing and acknowledging my talent and blessings, my perceived challenges were just that – perception.

**MIYAMOTO:** I've had the wonderful privilege to serve with leaders and mentors – both in and outside of healthcare. And I've had the hard opportunities to serve with some quirky, some bad, and a few very oppressive executives (haven't we all?). I've learned from them all – and constantly strive to be like my mentors.

**GRANT:** There were several small obstacles along the way as I relocated with a young family from Jamaica to Florida but nothing that I could not overcome. As a single parent, raising two daughters was my single greatest achievement. One is now a science teacher and the other is a first year medical student at Duke.

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**SUNSPOTS: WHAT IS THE MOST ENJOYABLE ASPECT OF YOUR CURRENT POSITION?**

**REED:** I love making a difference for people – always have. One of the most rewarding aspects of this position is receiving letters from grateful patients, realizing that we have been successful in making a difference in someone's life when they are most vulnerable. I also enjoy informal and formal leadership development – growing leaders and seeing people succeed is very fulfilling.

**GRANT:** Keeping in touch with employees (aside from meetings) and having little side conversations; hearing about their families and what's going on in general. I enjoy these moments; employees know that I do – so conversations are easy and comfortable. I truly keep an open door policy.

**MIYAMOTO:** People. Those who humbly serve, the unbelievably brilliant, the egomaniacs, the creative, and normal folks using their individual gifts to do good.

**GONZALEZ:** The people. Working with such a diverse group of people both internally and externally is one of the most enjoyable aspects of what I do. I learn a great deal from each of them and value the perspectives and initiatives they bring to the table.

**SUNSPOTS: TAKING THAT COMMON THREAD OF MANAGING PEOPLE, HOW DO YOU HELP BRIDGE THE UNDERSTANDING GAP BETWEEN FINANCIAL MANAGERS AND CLINICAL MANAGERS?**

**GRANT:** I have a standing, monthly, meeting with all managers, nursing managers, and clinical staff. Presenters include my Chief Nursing Officer, Chief Operating Officer, and Chief Financial Officer. All aspects of the Medical Center's financial status – monthly and year-to-date are discussed. The

managers are encouraged to pass on and discuss this information at their staff meetings. True surprises – so far – have been few and far between.

**GONZALEZ:** I have them educate each other on their individual vernacular. The first thing to understand is that each has specific words and phrases of which the other may not understand. It's important to help bridge this gap by making sure that when people are communicating that they understand the same vocabulary.

**MIYAMOTO:** Focus on our patients. They and their families are our common denominator and our purpose for creating, coordinating, and continuously improving all of our clinical and financial systems.

Smart design of systems, leadership development, and learning across and deep within our organizations are critical to the success of all of our professions, disciplines, departments, divisions, and institutions coming together to serve one patient at a time.

**SUNSPOTS: DR. REED, HOW DID YOUR PHYSICIAN BACKGROUND HELP ADVANCE YOUR ADMINISTRATIVE CAREER?**

**REED:** The field of medicine is both science and art – every patient comes with a different set of circumstances that are uniquely their own and therefore makes some aspect of their care unique to them. Administratively, many of the issues that I deal with are not black and white – they are shades of grey. Being able to accept this and looking at the nuances of circumstances has been very helpful.

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## The Executive Roundtable

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### SUNSPOTS: WHAT BOOK DO YOU KEEP WITHIN ARM'S REACH AND WHY?

**REED:** My – I am a book lover. Only one? My Bible stays at my bedside. My journey is all about the blessings God has bestowed upon me so the word of God stays close at hand. Most recently I'm reading *The Four Obsessions of an Extraordinary Executive* by Patrick Lencioni – the reasons are probably fairly apparent!

**MIYAMOTO:** The Bible. It's both reassuring and fascinating to associate its lessons to life and many circumstances within the health system. Of course, close at hand are all of the best business and leadership books published over the past 2000 years too.

**GRANT:** There are two books that I now keep within arm's reach: *Hardwiring Excellence* and *Results That Last* by Quint Studer. These two books are relevant to healthcare. They provide stories, ideas, proven tools, and techniques that guarantee excellence into hospital leadership, improved customer relations, and how we can make positive changes that emphasize the human side to healthcare.

**GONZALEZ:** There's no book, per se, however, my laptop and iPhone are kept within arm's reach because in today's ever-changing world of technology I prefer to immerse myself in new narratives on the fly. Additionally, online journals and business publications engage me in new ways of thinking about healthcare management.

### SUNSPOTS: AS A MENTOR, WHAT ADVICE DO YOU GIVE ASPIRING HEALTHCARE EXECUTIVES?

**MIYAMOTO:** Do the best you can for your patients and organization. Learn from your mistakes. Try not to repeat your mistakes. If you want to see big mistakes, I'll show you mine. Pass it on.

**GRANT:** Focus and listen to people, be patient and flexible, have empathy, and keep your attention on the objectives and results.

**GONZALEZ:** Be honest. Honesty and the ability to accept the complexities of the healthcare industry are the keys to success. Understanding your own limitations and realizing there is much more to healthcare than you may ever know will aid you in being a better leader.

**REED:** If you invest yourself in what you do – with both competence and passion, the sky is the limit. Be patient, pursue excellence. There is nothing that speaks louder than results.

### SUNSPOTS: WHAT MAJOR CHANGE WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE IN HEALTHCARE AND WHY?

**REED:** There are many issues that confront healthcare today. One of the more recent dynamics is the complexities of the relationships between physicians and hospitals. Physicians can simultaneously be partner and competitor. To the extent that hospitals and physicians cannot align themselves because of competing realities, patient care suffers. I would like to see more creative opportunities that allow physicians and hospitals to align incentives that are mutually beneficial to each other and thus healthcare.

**MIYAMOTO:** I would like to see Ascension Health's strategic direction achieved for "Healthcare that leaves no one behind". One hundred percent access and 100 percent coverage would mean that all persons, particularly those who are uninsured or underinsured, receive healthcare services and health insurance that creates and supports the best journey to improved health outcomes for each individual, financed in an adequate and sustainable fashion.

**GRANT:** The insurance issues and problems associated with the number of uninsured and underinsured in the country. Availability of quality health care should be a right not a privilege.

**GONZALEZ:** True transparency of where our healthcare dollars go. The healthcare business is so capital-intensive and the majority of patients and consumers are not given enough information to understand the reasons behind their medical bills and costs. Allowing them to see where the money goes and the true breakdown is something I'd like to see occur in the healthcare future.

**SUNSPOTS: LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO HEALTHCARE.**

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Celebrate Mardi Gras  
with Region V Dixie  
February 17 - 20, 2009  
Renaissance Riverview Plaza Hotel  
Mobile, AL

hfma alabama chapter  
healthcare financial management association

Jammin' at the Dixie

<http://hfmadixie.org> Online Registration begins August 1st, 2008.

The Renaissance Riverview Plaza, located in downtown Mobile, has reserved a block of rooms for the Healthcare Financial Management Association for the dates of Monday, February 16, through Friday, February 20, at a rate of \$100 (plus tax) per night, single and double occupancy. Current lodging rates are 14%. Reservations may be by phone or internet through Marriot. Marriot Reservations can be reached at 800-422-3296, just ask for HFMA or Healthcare Financial Management. Reservations can be made online at [www.marriott.com](http://www.marriott.com) - JAM. In Mobile, AL, using the city search, choose the Renaissance Riverview Plaza, then place the group code of "Hfmdixie" in the box indicated. The site will guide you from there.