



HEALTH & WELL-BEING LEADERS SECTION NEWSLETTER

OUR STRATEGY

Purpose: A multidisciplinary group of professionals across higher education who seek to advance the role of the executive wellness/well-being leader to ensure a whole community/whole person approach to the well-being of the institutions we serve.

Vision: To grow campus health leaders to advance the strategic integration of health and well-being for the institutions they serve.

Mission: To provide advocacy, education, and collaborative opportunities for higher education executive leaders in health and wellbeing to advance their knowledge, skills, and abilities in executive leadership.

MEET THE 2025-26 HWEL EXECUTIVE TEAM!

Chair: C. Oliver Tacto, *Maryville University*

Past Chair: Anna Fitch Courie, *Clemson University*

Chair-Elect: Michael LaFarr, *University of Denver*

Secretary: Anu Räisänen, *Elon University*

Planner: LaNika Wright, *East Carolina University*

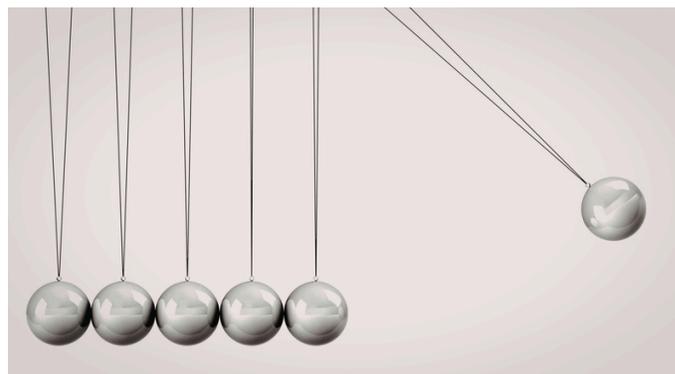
Planner-Elect: Laurel Halsey, *Colorado State Univ.*

Member-at-Large: Kristin Traskie, *Michigan State University*

Additional Support:

◆ **ACHA Liaison:** Robyn Buchsbaum

◆ **Board Liaison:** Michele Richardson, *Bowie State University*



A New Year of Momentum and Impact

Dear Colleagues,

As we step into 2026, I want to take a moment to celebrate all that we've accomplished together and share in the excitement for what lies ahead.

*We are kicking off this year with momentum and purpose. In just a few weeks, join us for our first professional development offering of the year: "**College Health Insurance Billing, Unpacked**," a timely and essential webinar offering critical insights for executive leaders navigating student health insurance strategy.*

*Launching this spring is one of our most ambitious and collaborative initiatives yet: The **Spring 2026 Data Leadership Webinar Series**, a powerful partnership among HWEL, the ACHA Mental Health Section, and the Center for Collegiate Mental Health (CCMH). This 4-part series will equip executive leaders with strategies for using campus mental health data to inform institutional-level decision-making. The series culminates in an in-person session at the ACHA Annual Meeting in Denver that you don't want to miss.*

*We have also continued to grow our HWEL community (now **over 635 members**) since our inception in May 2024. We invite you to stay engaged through ACHA Connect and our newly launched LinkedIn page. Let's continue building a robust professional network and a strong collective voice for executive leadership in campus well-being.*

Wishing each of you a year of continued impact, courage, and connection.

*"Start where you are. Use what you have. Do what you can."
—Arthur Ashe*

In partnership,

C. Oliver Tacto, DSW, MSW, MPH, CHES
Dean of Student Wellness, *Maryville University*
Chair, Health and Well-Being Executive Section



JANUARY 2026

Master Class Leadership Webinar Series:

College Health Insurance Billing: Unpacked



Joel Schwartzkopf,
DPAS, MBA, FACHE

University of
Washington



**Shannon
Kuykendall, CPC**

University of
Georgia



Padonda Webb,
DPN, RN, FNP-BC

North Carolina A&T
State University



LaNika Wright, PhD.
WHNP-BC, SANE- BC

East Carolina
University

Join us for an essential HWEL Master Class webinar this January focused on demystifying college health insurance billing – a critical operational area for health and well-being leaders in higher education. This session is designed to help you navigate complex billing landscapes, improve revenue strategies, and strengthen your clinic's financial and administrative processes.

Why Attend?

As billing requirements and payer landscapes continue to evolve, having a strong understanding of how health insurance processes intersect with student care is vital. Whether you're leading a campus health center or overseeing wellness systems, this webinar will provide practical guidance and real-world insight.

What You'll Learn:

Participants will gain actionable strategies and insight on:

- **Billing fundamentals** specific to college health settings (including common codes, payer requirements, and documentation expectations)
- **Operational workflows** that support accurate, compliant, and efficient billing processes
- Techniques to **identify revenue opportunities** while maintaining high-quality student care
- Best practices for **coordinating with insurers, vendors, and internal stakeholders** to streamline workflows and minimize denials

This session is ideal for executive leaders, clinic administrators, financial coordinators, and anyone involved in health center operations or student health insurance strategies.

Format: Internet live

Date: January 29, 2026

Time: 1:00 PM – 2:00 PM ET

Register: [ACHA Events](#)

Cost: FREE

(ACHA members)





Save the Date:
HWEL Aspiring Leaders Think Tank



We are excited to announce the first-ever **HWEL Aspiring Leaders Think Tank**, created for college health professionals who aspire to become future health and well-being executive leaders.

This dynamic virtual gathering will bring together emerging leaders and current executives for meaningful conversation, shared learning, and professional inspiration.

Participants will have the opportunity to:

- Learn from the journeys and insights of current health and well-being executive leaders
- Engage in dialogue with peers who share similar leadership aspirations
- Explore pathways, skills, and mindsets essential for advancing into executive-level roles

Whether you are just beginning to envision yourself in executive leadership or actively preparing for the next step, this Think Tank is designed to support your growth and connection to the HWEL community.

WE'RE LIVE ON LinkedIn

Health & Well-Being Executive Leaders Section

Follow **ACHA Health & Well-Being Executive Leaders Section** on LinkedIn for updates, insights, and opportunities to connect with campus health and well-being leaders nationwide.

Follow US ->

Follow Us on LinkedIn

Follow the official **ACHA Health & Well-Being Executive Leaders Section** LinkedIn page to stay up to date on upcoming webinars, spotlight stories, leadership insights, and national conversations shaping the future of college health and well-being. Let's build a stronger, more connected community—one post at a time.

[Follow us here](#)



Registration Now Open:
ACHA 2026 Annual Meeting

We're excited to announce that **registration for the 2026 ACHA Annual Meeting is officially OPEN!** Join health and well-being leaders from across the country as we gather in **Denver, Colorado**, for this transformative professional development and networking experience.

Explore the latest research, innovative practices, and leadership strategies shaping the future of college health and well-being.

Early bird registration is now open!

ACHA 2026

UPLIFTING RESILIENCE

Strategies in Campus Health and Well-Being

DENVER | MAY 26-30

Register by **April 16** to take advantage of discounted pricing.

Click to [Learn More](#)



Now Accepting Nominations

HWEL Leadership Elections (2026–2027)



The Health and Well-Being Executive Leaders (HWEL) Section is now accepting nominations for our upcoming leadership elections, and we invite you to consider stepping forward or nominating a colleague whose leadership would strengthen our community. Serving in an HWEL leadership role is an opportunity to shape the future of health and well-being in higher education, influence national conversations, and collaborate with inspiring executive leaders from across the country.

Open positions include:

- Chair-Elect (2026–2027) – 1-year term, followed by Chair in 2027–2028**
 This role provides strategic leadership for the Section, supports long-term visioning, and helps advance HWEL priorities across ACHA.
- Secretary (2026–2027) – 1-year term**
 The Secretary supports organizational continuity, communication and documentation, playing a key role in ensuring transparency and effective governance.
- Member-at-Large (2026–2027) – 1-year term**
 This role brings fresh perspective and representation to the leadership team, helping amplify member voices and support Section initiatives.

We encourage nominations that reflect the diversity of our field, including varied institutional types, identities, and leadership pathways.

 **Nomination deadline:** January 23, 2026

 **Submit here:** [Nomination Link](#)

This is your opportunity to help guide the future of HWEL and continue building a strong, innovative, and equity-centered community of practice. We hope you will consider lending your voice, vision, and leadership to this important work.

Nominate a Colleague for an ACHA Award – Deadline Extended!



Do you know an individual or team whose work has made a meaningful impact on college health and well-being? Now is the time to recognize and celebrate their leadership, innovation, and dedication.

The deadline to submit nominations for the **2026 ACHA Awards** has been **extended to January 16, 2026**, giving you additional time to honor those who are advancing excellence in our field.

These awards highlight outstanding contributions across research, leadership, practice, and service, and they provide an important opportunity to elevate the work being done on our campuses every day.

We strongly encourage HWEL members to consider nominating colleagues, partners, or themselves who exemplify transformational leadership and commitment to student and community well-being.

 **New Deadline: January 16, 2026**

 Learn more and submit a [nomination here](#).



🔍 Coming Soon: Spring 2026 Data Leadership Webinar Series



Get ready to dive deeper into the power of data-informed leadership in campus health and well-being. This spring, the HWEL Section is launching a brand-new **Data Leadership Webinar Series** in collaboration with the **ACHA Mental Health Section** and the **Center for Collegiate Mental Health (CCMH)**.

This 4-part series will explore how mental health and population-health data can inform high-level decision-making, institutional strategy, and systems transformation – all through the lens of executive leadership.

 **Dates and registration details will be announced soon**—so stay tuned!

Whether you're a seasoned chief wellness officer or an aspiring senior leader, this series is designed to strengthen your capacity to lead with clarity, compassion, and data-driven confidence.

💬 Let's Connect: Join the Conversation on ACHA Connect



Looking for a space to share ideas, ask questions, and learn from fellow leaders in college health and well-being?



Member Spotlight: Michele F. Richardson

*Director, Wellness
Bowie State
University*

With 17 years of experience in higher education, Michele F. Richardson brings a calm, centered presence to campus well-being leadership. As the Director of Wellness at Bowie State University, Michele blends **appreciation, communication, and collaboration** (her self-described leadership superpowers) to build spaces of belonging and care for students and staff alike.

Her favorite well-being practices? A soulful trio of prayer, music, and hot chocolate – all reminders that restoration can be both spiritual and sensory.

Michele's intentional approach to leadership reflects a deep understanding that wellness isn't just a program – it's a practice rooted in connection, gratitude, and joy.

ACHA Connect is your go-to platform for community, collaboration, and connection. Whether you're announcing a new initiative, seeking feedback on a strategy, or just looking to network with peers, you'll find meaningful engagement here.

🏠 Why Use ACHA Connect?

- Ask real-time questions and get insights from colleagues across the country
- Share upcoming events, publications, or open positions
- Build relationships with others who share your passion for advancing campus well-being

🗣️ **Let's build community, not just connections.**

Start a thread, reply to a colleague, or post a resource today. **JOIN THE CONVERSATION**