

IMPACT

Merging

Medicine

After a major merger turned Beaumont Health into Michigan's largest healthcare system, Dawn Geisert was tasked with melding the organization's compliance department. Now, she is ready to take her office to the next level.

By Porcshe N. Moran



**When Dawn Geisert took on a new role at Beaumont Health**, she knew it was an ambitious endeavor. In December 2015, Geisert stepped in as the senior VP and chief compliance officer, just a year after

Beaumont merged its operations with Botsford Hospital and Oakwood Healthcare to become Michigan's largest healthcare system for inpatient admissions and net patient revenue.

"Beaumont Health represented a unique chance for me to learn and grow," says Geisert, who came from the chief compliance officer position at Health Alliance Plan, a subsidiary of the Henry Ford Health System. "I was excited about the opportunity to take on a number of challenges and be part of the executive leadership team that was forming the largest healthcare system in Michigan."

Geisert's first task was to unite the compliance divisions of the original health systems into one standardized operation. She and her team spent more than three months building the framework for the consolidated department. They developed a strategic plan, cohesive policies, and training courses.

"As a leader, my responsibility is to help carry the message of us coming together as one Beaumont Health," Geisert says. "It can be difficult to change processes and create new policies. We are focused on bringing the best practices—from the founding systems and throughout the industry—into this new organization."

Geisert also had to establish an enterprise risk-management program that would capture and identify vulnerabilities across all areas of Beaumont Health. So, she organized a team of three compliance professionals to create an enterprise risk-assessment survey. The trio gathered more than seven hundred responses. Then, they collaborated with high-level health leaders at Beaumont to develop a register of the top fifty risks to the organization.

"We purposefully started out with a light approach to enterprise risk management so we could get something up and running pretty quickly," Geisert says. "We were able to gain some insights into what our risks are and how to mitigate them without getting bogged down in details."

Geisert's other responsibilities include directing the fraud, waste, and abuse prevention program; collaborating with the board of directors' audit and

Elizabeth DeBeliso

compliance committee; and leading the centralized accreditation team. She deals with issues that range from patient privacy and conflicts of interest to billing, coding, and regulation changes. However, she spends the majority of her time meeting with Beaumont's business leaders to discuss new programs and procedures from a compliance and risk perspective.

"My job entails several components that come together to help identify, mitigate, and manage risk throughout the organization," she says. "There is no typical day or week, and that is what makes it exciting to me."

Although the vastness of her position can be overwhelming, Geisert says taking things one step at a time and asking for help are the keys to her success.

"It is easy to get caught up in putting out the hottest fire," she says. "I find it helpful to partner with a project manager who has expertise in taking a vision and building out a set of deliverables with due dates. It keeps me and my team accountable."

The overall compliance team consists of thirty-nine employees, five of whom report directly to Geisert. She describes herself as an encouraging, enthusiastic, and motivating leader who strives to help her staff grow professionally. She builds trust and loyalty with her colleagues by being transparent and consistent in her communication. She uses a consensus management



**DAWN GEISERT**  
Senior VP, Chief  
Compliance  
Officer  
Beaumont Health

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**BEAUMONT HEALTH BY THE NUMBERS**

**8**  
hospitals

**168**  
health centers

**5,000**  
physicians

**35,000**  
employees

style, in which group members develop and agree to support decisions in the best interest of the whole.

“It is important to me to gather input from my team and to consider all relevant positions before making the final call,” Geisert says. “Even when we don’t agree, the other leaders that report to me appreciate that they have an opportunity for discussion and to understand my viewpoint.”

With the compliance infrastructure now in place, Geisert is setting out to increase the visibility of her department. Her goal is to cultivate critical relationships with the system’s business leaders. She says compliance professionals have to work against the misconception that they are a roadblock to progress. Geisert and her team prove their value by having regular meetings with Beaumont leaders and making every effort to find creative solutions that meet business objectives and satisfy applicable laws, regulations, and rules.

“The compliance department is here in a supportive capacity,” Geisert says. “We need to be good listeners and have a strong understanding of the work that is being done so that we can be more strategic and helpful when giving advice. My philosophy is to find a way to say yes and enable initiatives as often as possible.” **AHL**

Congratulations to Dawn Geisert, senior vice president and chief compliance officer at Beaumont Health for this well-deserved recognition.

HCCS, A HealthStream Company, is proud of our longstanding relationship and partnership with Beaumont Health and greatly appreciates Dawn’s ongoing direct support, guidance, and vision.