

Michele Leroux

Chief Human Resources Officer



Introducing Michele Leroux, Chief Human Resources Officer

Halton Healthcare is a leading healthcare organization serving our communities with compassionate, quality and integrated community hospital care. A priority of the organization is to respond to the care needs of our communities.

As part of this commitment, we are proud to introduce **Michele Leroux** as Chief Human Resources Officer to guide the organization as it continues to grow and expand, particularly in this crucial period of challenge and change in healthcare.

Michele Leroux joins Halton Healthcare's Senior Leadership Team with nearly two decades of experience of human resources (HR) leadership in both the private and public sectors. Michele came to Halton Healthcare after six years at Hamilton Health Sciences where she most recently held the position of Vice President, Human Resources. Prior to that her career included 13 years at McMaster University and roles in the private sector, including at Ford Motor Company.



Q&A

Q: Do you have a personal philosophy that you live by?

A: I grew to realize the importance of relationships and authenticity very early in my career. Ultimately, as an HR Professional, I've learned to understand that an organization's people are vital to its success, so we need to take care of and support our team members. This allows them to focus on their work and how they contribute to our vision of providing 'exemplary patient experiences, always'.

My belief in people as our most valuable resource is why I stay in healthcare. I need to believe in what we do and that we can make a real difference in people's careers and work experience at Halton Healthcare. HR plays an important role in supporting a safe working environment that fosters personal growth and success. We want to empower and develop our people.

I have a very real understanding of how healthcare, in particular, has been a challenging place to work, especially over the past two years. I remind myself and others in HR that when people reach out to us for help, we don't necessarily know what they have experienced that day, or what they're dealing with - always be kind, considerate and helpful to each other while upholding our values.

I feel I must stay true to my values – it's a crucial part of who I am. The value I find most important is integrity and knowing that I made that best decision with the information I had at the time. That includes asking questions, checking in with my team, my peers and others and doing my research - so we can do our best every day to make Halton Healthcare a place where we are all proud to work.

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Q: What are your most important strengths?

A: I am a very optimistic and extroverted person. I really enjoy people and working with others. Despite what may be going on, I try to find a silver-lining in every challenge and be a positive influence.

I also pride myself on having a keen sense of humour, which is often accompanied by a loud hearty laugh. In fact, I use humour and laughter to deal with stress – when appropriate, of course. I think this stems from not taking myself too seriously and understanding, as I said earlier, that you never really know what people are going through. I am also constantly reminding myself to be thankful for all the good things in life with family, friends and work.

Q: What are your early priorities in your new role?

A: Being new to this organization, I look forward to understanding Halton Healthcare's culture across its three hospitals and communities, meeting its people and learning about all the many programs and services.

I believe that we have a responsibility to our workforce to support their health, safety and well-being. Vacations are vital for recharging – especially in challenging times. It is equally important that our people know about all the resources available to them and that it is ok for them to reach out if they need help. I'm focused on taking care of our people, which is also a big part of what excites me about Halton Healthcare's new strategic plan and its overall purpose – To Care. This plan resonates with my personal values, beliefs and aspirations. It has tangible goals around engaging our workforce by embracing diversity, equity and inclusion in the work environment and advancing how we deliver care by inspiring an innovative culture.

Q: What do you see as your biggest challenges?

A: The sector we work in right now is challenging. The staffing shortages and the supply chain interruptions across Canada extend well beyond the walls of our organization or even healthcare.

Unfortunately, there are no magical or quick solutions. It's not just about retention and recruitment - and the solutions are not all HR related. I believe that we can navigate through them by working collaboratively as an organization and as a sector. We can find creative solutions and capacity by engaging the people who do this work every day and leveraging that knowledge.

Q: As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up, and why?

A: I thrive on interacting with people, teamwork and building relationships. I have always admired the teaching profession. As a child I wanted to be a math teacher. Fortunately, I was able to find a role in HR which is all about lifelong learning and I get the opportunity to speak and mentor people at various points in their careers. Nothing gives me more joy than to help someone recognize their potential.

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Q: What is the best piece of advice you have ever been given?

A: I was very lucky to have had a number of great mentors as I started new roles – three pieces of advice that I still carry and pass it on to others:

1. It is okay to say that you do not know the answer and need to look into it. None of us can know everything so it is best to step back rather than provide incorrect or incomplete information.
2. Relationships, trust and integrity are imperative to my role.
3. Surround yourself with people who have complimentary and even different strengths and experiences. It is wonderful to be able to leverage and appreciate those who have different skills and perspectives than you. That's how you get the best possible solutions.

Q: Any final thoughts?

A: I am very excited about joining Halton Healthcare and the opportunity to be part of such an amazing healthcare team. I know the organization is known for a thriving and collaborative culture of excellence. We need to build on this by continuing to put our people - our staff, physicians and volunteers - first and offering a supportive workplace focused on inclusion, development and recognition.

I also recognize that the world is not what it was before COVID-19 and nor are we as people. We are now facing some major supply chain and human resource shortages, and many of these factors are beyond our control. I am passionate about leading HR innovation, engaging staff and enabling technology, to help find creative solutions so we can continue to be responsive and care for our patients as well as our workforce.

I look forward to meeting and engaging with everyone throughout the organization and beyond, and to developing relationships and fostering partnerships to find innovative solutions.

I love a good challenge and I want to be part of the solutions!