



HERE'S A SECTOR THAT OFFERS A WIDE RANGE OF CAREER OPTIONS.

NICK PEZZAROSSO,  
HR SPECIALIST, NIH

AS A GROWING AND STABLE INDUSTRY IN TODAY'S ECONOMY, HEALTHCARE STANDS OUT AS A PROFESSION THAT OFFERS JOB OPPORTUNITIES. AND WHILE IT IS A SECTOR THAT IS MOST NECESSARY, IT IS ALSO ONE THAT OFFERS A WIDE RANGE OF CAREER OPTIONS. FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES THAT IS VERY GOOD NEWS.

BY BARBARA WOODWORTH

NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH (NIH)—  
IN THE VANGUARD OF  
PROACTIVE INCLUSIVITY

"NO ONE NEEDS TO BE TOLD THEY 'CAN'T'—EVERYONE 'CAN'," IS THE MANTRA TO WHICH NICK PEZZAROSSO ADHERES. DESPITE A PROFOUND HEARING LOSS, HE EARNED A MASTER'S DEGREE IN REHABILITATION COUNSELING FROM GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY AND SPENT TWO YEARS AS A CAREER CONSULTANT AT GALLAUDET UNIVERSITY BEFORE JOINING THE NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH (NIH).

As a career consultant, Pezzarossi worked with a

variety of students preparing them for life after college. While at Gallaudet he also partnered with students and a cadre of local federal human resources (HR) offices to pair students who met specific job requirements with organizations having available positions. "This experience led me to focus my career path on the field of HR," recalls Pezzarossi. He credits gaining valuable insight into the federal hiring process while working at Gallaudet with making him a good fit for his current position as human resources specialist, recruitment and placement at Bethesda, MD-headquartered NIH ([www.nih.org](http://www.nih.org)).

Stressing that the NIH has long been in the vanguard of proactive inclusivity when it comes to pursuing a

diverse workforce that includes persons with disabilities, Pezzarossi says attending a NIH-sponsored hiring event that targeted veterans and individuals with disabilities initiated his contact with the NIH. "I was intrigued by the event and submitted my résumé for consideration," he remarks.

Subsequently invited to interview, he recalls being impressed with Valerie Gill, director, client services division, office of human resources (OHR) and her staff. "From the get-go I felt the NIH would be an excellent fit for me as the organization's mission was very much aligned with my career aspirations," he comments. "Knowing I play a part to fill critical positions with applicants who could potentially make a difference in the lives of people through their research is most rewarding. I'm also impressed with the NIH emphasis on equitable work-life balance for employees as well as exhibiting an understanding of the importance of self-care and life outside of work."

Hopeful that people with disabilities will not consider their employment options limited, especially in the field of healthcare, Pezzarossi believes increased targeted recruitment could encourage individuals with disabilities to consider careers in healthcare. "A willingness to educate people who may not be familiar with working with differently-abled persons is an attribute most necessary for working with those with disabilities. So, too, is a passion for learning different skills and the flexibility to consider a wide variety of approaches in accommodating disabilities," declares Pezzarossi, who relies on American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters during meetings and training.

"For one-on-one communication, my facility with lip reading typically suffices," adds Pezzarossi, currently vice president for deaf and hard of hearing in government ([www.dhhig.org](http://www.dhhig.org)), a national advocacy organization for government employees who are deaf or hard of hearing. He further volunteers for the Washington, DC, nonprofit Deaf Abused Women's Network (DAWN) and was appointed to the NIH office of equal opportunity and diversity management disability employment program committee.

As director, client services division, OHR, Valerie Gill distinctly recalls Pezzarossi's impressive interview. Leading a dynamic network of HR professionals dedicated to providing staffing, recruitment, and classification services for 18,000 NIH employees, Gill supports the active approach to partnering with disability organizations to attract high-caliber candidates. "These partnerships have been a valuable resource for NIH managers and disability organizations' vocational counselors alike," she states.

"The commitment made by the NIH to employ persons with disabilities is substantial and ongoing," states Gill, who further points out that the NIH OHR corporate recruitment unit developed a disability recruitment forum to focus to gain insight from current employees with disabilities regarding the effectiveness of recruitment strategies for hiring additional candidates.

CVS CAREMARK—  
ACCESSIBLE TO WORKERS WITH DISABILITIES

WITH 200,000 COLLEAGUES IN 44 STATES, THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, AND PUERTO RICO, WOONSOCKET, RI-HEADQUARTERED CVS CAREMARK IS COMMITTED TO DEVELOP AN INCLUSIVE, DIVERSE COMPANY. ITS COMBINATION OF HEALTHCARE SERVICES AND OFFERINGS ENABLE CVS CAREMARK TO PROVIDE END-TO-END SOLUTIONS THAT IMPACT THE MORE THAN FOUR MILLION CUSTOMERS WHO VISIT CVS STORES EVERY DAY. WITH A CULTURE SHAPED BY ITS CUSTOMERS, TALENTED AND DEDICATED COLLEAGUES, AND CONTRIBUTIONS MADE TO THE THOUSANDS OF COMMUNITIES IT SERVES, "CVS CAREMARK ([WWW.CVSCAREMARK.COM](http://WWW.CVSCAREMARK.COM)) ENFORCES NON-DISCRIMINATORY HIRING PRACTICES



DAVID CASEY,  
VICE PRESIDENT,  
WORKFORCE  
STRATEGIES AND  
CHIEF DIVERSITY  
OFFICER,  
CVS CAREMARK

AND TAILORS ITS PHYSICAL WORKPLACES AND JOB DUTIES TO MAKE THE COMPANY MORE FRIENDLY AND ACCESSIBLE TO WORKERS WITH DISABILITIES," SAYS DAVID CASEY, VICE PRESIDENT, WORKFORCE STRATEGIES AND CHIEF DIVERSITY OFFICER.

CVS Caremark, he adds, also partners with the U.S. Department of Labor, Easter Seals, the Southwest Autism Research & Resource Center, Ken's Krew, and other organizations nationwide to recruit and train people with disabilities and help put them on solid career

paths with CVS Caremark.

In his current role, Casey leads the company's efforts related to talent acquisition, strategic diversity management, affirmative/EEO, and employee relations. Charged with developing and driving best practice diversity strategies designed to help the company ensure a workforce reflective of the many communities it serves, Casey remains committed to maintain a

culture of inclusion that meets—even exceeds—the needs of its ever increasingly diverse customer base. By partnering with nonprofits and government agencies to recruit and train individuals for careers with CVS Caremark, Casey oversees workforce strategies programs. These programs, in large measure, led the company to receive the Secretary of Labor’s New Freedom Initiative (NFI) Award in 2006 for exemplary

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and innovative efforts to recruit, train and hire people with disabilities.

For people with disabilities, Marileen Gabel offers this advice: “Believe in yourself, be strong, always smile, and do not view your disability as a limitation but rather an opportunity to prove yourself as a strong and capable individual.” Born with missing extremities (short arms with no fingers), Gabel adds, “I find it difficult to categorize myself as being disabled because I do not see myself as handicapped.”

Currently manager, contracts and pricing at CVS Caremark, Gabel recalls being asked early in her career to identify the number of words she was able to type per minute. Pointing out that her response was slow and accurate, she recalls, “The speed at which one types should not be considered a form of employment measurement. Given a chance, I will prove my speed and ability to succeed at typing or any other task.”

And succeed she did. She earned an associate’s in applied arts degree from the College of Lake Country, Grayslake, IL, and bachelor’s and MBA in business administration degrees from the University of Phoenix, AZ. She has been with CVS Caremark for 11 years.

According to Gabel, completing an MBA was one of

her most significant accomplishments. “This program not only enhanced my ability to lead and manage, it enhanced the knowledge and skills I needed for my role as a first level manager,” she explains. “I learned that the ability to anticipate and prepare for situations that involve different behavioral styles within a team is most necessary as it can impact deliverable objectives and directions.”

For Gabel, the desire to help those in need is what drew her to the field of healthcare. “It was a sector I was always interested in partly because of my family,” she remembers. “My father worked in the orthotics and prosthetics industry, while my mother worked with individuals who were developmentally challenged.”

Identifying healthcare as ever-evolving, Gabel sees numerous opportunities for people interested in helping people lead longer and healthier lives. “Within a changing world and economy, the healthcare sector allows people to give back to the public regardless of disability,” she contends, advising such individuals not to view disability as a limitation but rather as an opportunity to prove oneself as a strong and capable person.

As a manager, Gabel enjoys working with her staff and other colleagues. “The specialty pricing and reimbursement department works as a unit. It’s a family environment comprised of 20 individuals dedicated to working together to meet goals within the department and the organization,” says Gabel who, as a leader, stresses the importance of career development and continual learning as the backbone for advancement. She credits her past mentors who encouraged her to continue her education, saying, “Do so enabled me to be successful and move forward.”

**SUTTER HEALTH—  
EQUAL ACCESS FOR ALL PATIENTS  
AND EMPLOYEES**

WITH MORE THAN 15 YEARS OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE EXPERIENCE IN EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, MARIA CAUDILL IS WELL QUALIFIED TO SERVE AS DISABILITY ACCESS CONSULTANT FOR 48,000-EMPLOYEE SACRAMENTO, CA-HEADQUARTERED SUTTER HEALTH (WWW.SUTTERHEALTH.ORG). WITH A BACHELOR’S DEGREE IN MARKETING FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY, SHE BEGAN HER CAREER AS AN INSURANCE UNDERWRITER. AND WHILE SHE FULLY INTENDED TO REMAIN IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR, WHEN THEN GOVERNOR OF CALIFORNIA, PETE



MARIA CAUDILL, DISABILITY ACCESS CONSULTANT, SUTTER HEALTH

WILSON, APPOINTED HER DIRECTOR OF LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY AFFAIRS FOR THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF REHABILITATION, SHE ACCEPTED. “MY CAREER EVOLVED WHILE SERVING IN THAT CAPACITY,” RECALLS CAUDILL WHO, FOR 13 YEARS, PROVIDED COMMUNICATIONS AND EXTERNAL AFFAIRS EXPERTISE TO VARIOUS STATE DEPARTMENTS INCLUDING CALIFORNIA’S SOCIAL SERVICES AGENCIES, INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY INFRASTRUCTURE, AND PUBLIC HEALTH SYSTEM.

Throughout her career, Caudill was pleased to work with motivated, talented professionals. “They taught me that attitude means everything,” remarks Caudill, who despite using an electric wheelchair never considered herself disabled. “Early in my career I encountered employers with limited experience in working with employees with disabilities but many grew to overlook my wheelchair and recognize my proficiencies. With disability no longer viewed as a barrier, my career flourished,” she comments.

Because making a difference in the community is important to Caudill, she views quality healthcare as essential to every individual’s sense of well-being. “That’s what drew me to the sector and to Sutter Health, where I work with affiliates to implement a comprehensive program to help ensure that patients have equal access to superior health care services,” she states.

Pleased to be a part of an organization that is focused to serve the needs of its patients, employees, and the community, she adds, “Sutter Health is committed to transforming care and supporting fundamental change in healthcare delivery.”

With people living longer and healthier lives, Caudill sees the healthcare industry undergoing a challenging time of change. “As an agent of change, this sector offers what most other careers can’t match,” she says.

As for individuals with disabilities working in the industry, she encourages tenacity and positivity. “Stay in the mainstream and don’t let anyone or anything define what or who you want to be,” states Caudill who enjoys working with professionals committed to incorporating quality healthcare access for individuals with disabilities.

As assistant general counsel, Julie Raney manages Sutter Health’s disability access compliance program, which directs system-wide initiatives designed to improve Sutter Health’s network of doctors, hospitals, and other care services for individuals with disabilities.

Noting that in 2008, Sutter Health adopted comprehensive plans for improved access under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Raney comments, “Doing so led to Sutter Health’s identification as a leader in disability access.” With significant advancements made to facilities to ensure that processes and tools were in place to guarantee equal access for all patients and employees, she mentions that these, in part, include: accessing ways to improve physical access to buildings; further developing and implementing policies and procedures to address the needs of persons with disabilities; developing system-wide standards to provide medical equipment to accommodate patients with disabilities and developing and implementing accessible Websites.

Although proud of these achievements, she believes there’s more to be done. “To further improve ADA compliance efforts, the organization’s senior leaders have established a strong multidisciplinary committee to identify and set system standards for disability access, including accountability for system-level decisions,” says Raney. Aware that few organizations across the country have made this type of commitment, she points to a newly instituted disability management program designed to help employees with disabilities identify reasonable accommodations that will allow them to better perform their jobs.

COMMUNITY HEALTH SYSTEMS—  
A CADRE OF OUTSTANDING EMPLOYEES

AS A LEADER IN THE OPERATION OF GENERAL ACUTE CARE HOSPITALS, COMMUNITY HEALTH SYSTEMS (CHS) INCLUDES 133 AFFILIATED HOSPITALS IN 29 STATES, WITH MANY SERVING AS SOLE PROVIDER OF HOSPITAL SERVICES IN THEIR COMMUNITIES. ACCORDING TO TOMI GALIN, VICE PRESIDENT OF CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS, “CHS WORKS CLOSELY WITH THE COMMUNITIES IT SERVES TO BUILD MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL RELATIONSHIPS WHILE PROVIDING THE RESOURCES NECESSARY FOR DELIVERING HIGH-QUALITY HEALTH SERVICES, PROFESSIONAL CARE AND MEDICAL TECHNOLOGIES.”

And it isn’t just within the community that CHS (www.chs.net) works hard to create the best in working relationships. This 64,000-employee organization, headquartered just south of Nashville, TN, is recognized for its commitment to provide the best in workplace environments. Well respected in the healthcare industry, CHS is dedicated to maintain an exemplary culture as well as a high-caliber, diverse workforce. “The organization expects and rewards excellence and fosters opportunities for teamwork, education, professional

development, and career advance,” says Galin. As an equal opportunity employer committed to diversity, CHS-affiliated hospitals provide a welcoming environment for all employees, including those with disabilities. Its facilities comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws governing nondiscrimination in employment including, but not limited to, hiring, placement, promotions, leaves of absence, com-

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pensation, and training. And it makes available reasonable accommodations requested by employees with disabilities.

With its commitment to developing quality patient care made possible by a cadre of outstanding employees, CHS-affiliated hospitals work toward being the employer of choice. Through the exemplary work of a highly satisfied staff, the company has built a network of thriving hospitals critical to residents and the economic development of the communities it serves. **CHS**