

EXECUTIVE PROFILE

Richard Clarke

CEO | Magellan Health Services of Arizona

Recruited by a Maricopa County plaintiff lawyer to transform the local mental health system, Richard Clarke said it took six months for officials at Magellan Health Services of Arizona to convince him to become CEO. He took the reins in September 2008.

He knew what he was getting into. Since 1981, the Arizona Department of Health Services has been embroiled in the Arnold v. Sarn lawsuit, which alleges the state is not providing adequate care to the Valley's seriously mentally ill population. As holder of the regional behavioral health service contract since 2007, Magellan is working to ensure services are properly provided to this fragile population.

"I love a large challenge; I'm a systems reform agent," he said. "I think I can make it happen."

Details

MOST RECENT JOB: Chief human resources officer for Portland Public Schools in Oregon

EDUCATION: Bachelor's degree in psychology (magna cum laude), University of Oregon; Ph.D. in child development and clinical child psychology, University of Vermont

FAMILY: Daughters, ages 19 and 31; grandchildren, ages 9, 11 and 13



PROVIDED BY
RICHARD CLARKE

True confessions

WISH YOU HAD KNOWN 20 YEARS AGO: I wish I could have forecast exactly when the economy would take a downturn.

WISH YOU COULD HAVEDONE DIFFERENTLY: Years ago, I focused on treating the individual. Today, I understand it is critical to help our communities understand mental illness and substance abuse to erase the stigma associated with these issues.

MOTIVATORS: I enjoy figuring out how to connect all of the employees in an organization to the ultimate outcome we have defined.

GAMBLER OR MEASURED RISK-TAKER: Responsible risk-taker

MENTOR: My mom, who was a registered nurse, taught me that you gain more by giving things away than by touting yourself and your own accomplishments.

BEST ADVICE RECEIVED: Take a risk. You cannot change the incidence of disorder by changing the individual; you have to treat the overall behavioral health system. I learned this from Dr. George Albee at the University of Vermont. He is a pioneer in clinical psychology who focuses on prevention.

Business philosophy

MANTRA: Gentle pressure, relentlessly applied.

DEFINITION OF SUCCESS: I measure success by the positive impact we are having on the more than 80,000 individuals we serve in Maricopa County facing life challenges as a result of mental illness and substance abuse.

IMPORTANT IN JOB: I take great responsibility for what I do and how I lead. It is important to me to improve the lives of people every day. I also ask myself: Am I having fun? Am I still arriving at the office thirsting for more?

WHAT MAKES AN EFFECTIVE BUSINESS LEADER? Effective leaders do not lose sight of their ultimate goals, and they know how to balance industry politics with their overall strategies and day-to-day tactics. They involve employees and partners to ensure they understand their connection to the outcomes and share the same vision for transformation.

Passions

IF YOU COULD LIVE A DOUBLE LIFE, THE OTHER WOULD BE: A spy or CIA agent. In this role, you can celebrate every day success along with the excitement associated with taking risks or facing dangerous consequences.

WHAT YOU WANTED TO BE WHEN YOU GREW UP: A police officer
IF YOU COULD DO ANOTHER JOB: A lawyer specializing in international, individual human rights

MOST TREASURED MEMORY: I remember spending an entire afternoon photographing my younger sister when she was 5. I ended up winning second prize in a photo contest for one of the pictures I submitted.

BEST GIFT EVER RECEIVED: Recently, I had the opportunity to reconnect with my first love, who I thought I was going to marry at age 19. Having her back in my life is wonderful.

WHAT'S STRESSFUL: While I am excited to lead a positive transformation in Maricopa County, it is particularly challenging to make time for family life.

— Angela Gonzales