



PRESS RELEASE

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FOUNDATION FOR UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL WELCOMES NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

NEWARK, NJ – The Foundation for University Hospital, the hospital’s not-for-profit organization that serves as its primary charitable fundraising arm, today announced the appointment of **Jess Backofen** as its new Executive Director, effective immediately.

Backofen, an accomplished leader in the healthcare non-profit industry, will work alongside hospital administration and the Foundation’s board of directors to raise the quality of care for clinical programs and services at University Hospital.

“We are pleased to welcome such an accomplished fundraising leader to the Foundation for University Hospital,” said **Board of Trustees member Shanè Harris**, who also serves as President of the Prudential Foundation. “Jess’ depth of experience will translate perfectly into our short and long-range plans to grow our fundraising. We look forward to her leadership as the Foundation makes an even larger contribution to the success of University Hospital and the communities we serve.”

“I am honored to join the team at the Foundation for University Hospital, and I look forward to working closely to build on the success and quality of care for our patients and the community,” said Backofen. “I am excited about working closely with the Foundation’s board and hospital administration, especially as the institution enters an enthusiastic new era with a clear vision for the future.”

Backofen joins the Foundation for University Hospital from the JDRF (formerly the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation), the leading global organization funding type 1 diabetes research, where she served as the associate vice president of corporate development. While there, she worked on six and seven figure partnership agreements aimed at accelerating the organization’s mission. Before that, Backofen worked with JDRF’s New Jersey chapter, where, under her guidance, the New Jersey chapter realized unprecedented financial growth – more than 600% over



five years. This significant level of success involved optimizing patient support, enhancing healthcare provider collaboration, and creating mutually beneficial corporate partnerships.

Before JDRF, Backofen served Friends of the Children as their national vice president of development. In this role, she scaled the organization's social impact – aimed at breaking the generational cycle of poverty – through the development and implementation of a more effective fundraising strategy.

Backofen spent the early portion of her career growing her scope of responsibility at the American Cancer Society. During her tenure, she created meaningful corporate partnerships through the engagement of influential executives. As part of those efforts, Backofen launched an innovative advisory board known as *CEOs Against Cancer of New Jersey*, a group of chief executives from Fortune 1000 companies who would directly support the Society's mission to eradicate cancer.

“As University Hospital emerges from the pandemic and moves fully into realizing its long-term vision, the role of the Foundation for University Hospital will be very important to helping the hospital realize its potential,” said **Shereef Elnahal, MD, MBA, President and CEO of University Hospital**. “With the appointment of Jess as its new Executive Director, the Foundation is in the hands of a healthcare non-profit visionary who will help increase the impact of the organization on the hospital, and our community, as a whole.”

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About The Foundation for University Hospital

The Foundation for University Hospital raises funds to advance University Hospital's mission of improving healthcare, education, and wellness in greater Newark. Contributions to The Foundation for University Hospital sustain and enhance the critical clinical and community outreach programs of University Hospital. For more information about how you can contribute and make a difference, please contact the Foundation office at (973) 972-1873.

About University Hospital

University Hospital is part of one of the nation's leading academic medical centers and is the Level 1 Trauma Center for Northern New Jersey. Located at University Heights in Newark, University Hospital is a principal teaching hospital of Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences and a regional resource for advanced services across many medical specialties. For more information about University Hospital, please visit www.uhnj.org.