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MEDIA CONTACT
media@uhnj.org, (973) 634-8298

UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL WELCOMES NEW EXECUTIVE LEADERS

Newark, NJ – Following the appointment by the University Hospital (UH) Board of Directors of Ed Jimenez, MBA as the new President and Chief Executive Officer, the Hospital announced the arrival of two additional new leaders to the executive team. In early January, UH will welcome **Maria Brennan, DNP, RN, CPHQ** as the new Chief Nursing Officer and **McKenzie Wilson, Esq.** as the new Chief Legal Officer and Corporate Secretary. These new leaders join the hospital ready to collaborate with the rest of the leadership team to continue to transform UH into a regional and national model for acute health care and further deliver on its commitment to the community.

“We are pleased to welcome these seasoned professionals to the executive leadership team at University Hospital. We have been on an incredible journey over the last several years to transform how we engage with our patients, team members, and community, both in and outside of the clinical setting. We look forward to Maria and McKenzie sharing their fresh ideas and enthusiasm as we continue to pursue our mission to deliver exceptional care to every patient, every time,” said **Mary K. E. Maples, Interim President and CEO of University Hospital**. “We are also exceptionally grateful to Nicole Sardinias, DNP, RN and Tracy Forsyth, Esq., who served as our Interim Chief Nursing Officer and Interim Chief Legal Officer, respectively. Their expertise and clear-eyed guidance during this transition period have ensured the Hospital’s steady progress throughout this time.”



Dr. Maria Brennan comes to University Hospital after spending several years providing healthcare consulting services to various New Jersey and New York hospital systems and nursing agencies. She is also the former Vice President of Patient Care Services and Chief Nursing Officer for Lourdes Health System in Camden, NJ, where she led the transformation of the health system into a high reliability organization. Dr. Brennan was also a presenter at the 2019 World Nursing Conference in London on the topic of “Creating High Reliability Health Systems.”

Before Lourdes Health System, Dr. Brennan served as the Chief Nursing Officer of St. Joseph’s Regional Medical Center (Paterson, NJ), where she led the regional medical center in attaining their third and fourth Magnet re-designations. She is also a past president of the Organization of Nurse Leaders of New Jersey (ONLNJ), and was the recipient of the 2008 Governor’s Award in Nursing Administration and the 2007 Nurse Executive Award from the ONLNJ.

“I am looking forward to bringing my extensive experience in health care administration to University Hospital and to becoming part of an active and engaged leadership group dedicated to

helping the institution realize its full potential,” said **Brennan**. “Ultimately, we owe it to the people of Newark and the region to foster a quality, patient-focused care environment. Great work has been done in recent years, and I am enthusiastic about the opportunity to be part of the Hospital’s bright future.”

Dr. Brennan holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Nursing from Pace University, a Master of Science in Nursing from Hunter College, and a Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) from William Paterson University.



McKenzie Wilson, Esq. joins UH from her position as Counsel at Lowenstein Sandler LLP in Roseland, NJ. There, she handled litigation, counseling and administrative matters as part of the firm’s White Collar Criminal Defense group. Wilson represented health care providers and other highly regulated clients in state investigations and federal and state regulatory actions, including close interaction with the New Jersey Departments of Health, Human Services and Banking and Insurance, as well as the Office of the Attorney General.

Before her time with Lowenstein Sandler, Wilson served as Deputy Chief Counsel in the Office of New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy. There, she led a team of attorneys in the Governor’s Counsel Office and focused on a variety of issue areas from Medicaid reforms to consumer protections and rental assistance programs. She also participated as a key member of the administration’s COVID-19 legal team, reviewing virus-related documents including directives, rule waivers, guidance and press releases across an array of state departments. Wilson was also integral in the implementation of the Governor’s COVID-19 relief and recovery plan, including creating Executive Orders relating to reopenings, health and safety requirements, worker protections, school operations, hospital and health resource management, and fund transparency. During her tenure with the administration, Wilson also played a key role in managing relations with public unions, including settling dozens of collective negotiations agreements.

“I am honored to extend my public service in support of University Hospital. As we have navigated the COVID-19 pandemic, I have gained a unique perspective and a sincere appreciation for the role healthcare plays in our state,” said **Wilson**. “It is a privilege for me to become a part of the University Hospital family and join these health care heroes in serving Newark, the region, and our state as a whole.”

Wilson holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science from The George Washington University and a Juris Doctor degree *magna cum laude* from Seton Hall University School of Law.

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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.