

# THE Importance of Caring

MARCH 2020

my journey into health care



## Bill Elton

LEAN FACILITATOR

Bill Elton, Lean facilitator at Columbus Community Hospital, has several friends and family members who have made a career in health care. However, he didn't initially think the field was for him.

Elton has a bachelor's degree in political science from the University of Nebraska-Kearney and he spent much of his career working for nonprofits, so he didn't think there was a place for him in health care.

**"I did not realize the non-clinical opportunities,"** he said.

For most of his career, Elton had worked and volunteered for smaller non-profits, at various levels and in varying roles. These experiences helped Elton learn how to develop fiscally sound programs and gave him the opportunity to work in a management role.

**"What I enjoyed most was being in a management role because of the challenge and the opportunity to develop people. I have enjoyed empowering staff to be successful and humbled to realize how much I learned from those I was mentoring,"** he said.

In his last position before joining CCH, Elton was working at an organization which found itself more than a million dollars in debt. Elton was tasked with eliminating the debt or the organization would face immediate closure. Through Elton's leadership this debt was eliminated in three months. He was also put in the difficult position of evaluating the number of staff who would remain employed.

**"I dedicated myself to helping others find work prior to their employment ending,"** he said. **"Knowing CCH was the best employer**

**in our community, I encouraged staff to check the hospital listings so they would have a successful transition of employment."**

When the organization did eventually close after it found adequate transitional accommodations for its program participants, Elton needed a new job too.

He found one at CCH. Elton started working at CCH as Lean facilitator in June 2017. In this role, he promotes and implements Lean Healthcare, a process improvement methodology, leadership style and management system that seeks to add value by eliminating waste.

**"Each day I work to help, support, educate and make improvement easier for everyone in our organization,"** Elton said.

One day Elton might help a nursing team improve a process, the next he might work with multiple departments or do research so he can improve his knowledge of improvement to be a better facilitator.

**"I love the variety of work and the staff,"** he said. **"I am very fortunate to be able to work with so many professionals across CCH. Now that I am here at CCH, I realize how important everyone's job role is and how interconnected the roles are in order to provide care and serve others."**

Elton said he is very supported in his role as Lean facilitator. Hospital leadership gives him opportunities to grow personally and professionally. They allow him to attend educational and networking conferences such as national Lean Summits where he is able to visit with Lean Healthcare experts. He also receives

tremendous support from his supervisor, Nicole Blaser, quality improvement director.

**"A requirement in Lean is to have a coach/mentor. I am extremely thankful to have Nicole Blaser as mine. She has helped me grow and provided great insights and encouragement,"** he said. **"I know that when I need additional support or resources to do my job, I can count on Nicole."**

Elton said he has been very fortunate to have had many mentors throughout his life. He was also able to attend trainings in leadership, organization development and communication – all of which ultimately led him to his career at CCH.

**"I have always wanted to be in a professional position with an outstanding organization to help and serve others,"** he said. **"The culmination of my personal and professional experience has led me here, which allows me to fulfill my personal mission. I am very thankful and fortunate to be part of the team."**

Elton is so happy in his position at CCH, he encourages other people, who – like him – maybe haven't considered a career in health care, to explore the field.

**"I would encourage you to find opportunities to go and see the work. Be it clinical or non-clinical, there are so many ways to serve and make a difference in health care,"** he said. **"We need everyone from different backgrounds and experiences to provide the best care for our patients and communities."**

**For more information on Elton and Lean Healthcare at CCH, visit [columbushosp.org](http://columbushosp.org).**