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# Healthcare

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# Women Leaders in Supply Chain

A portrait of Simrit Sandhu, a woman with long dark hair, wearing a brown patterned scarf and a brown jacket. She is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile.

Simrit Sandhu  
Executive Director  
of Supply Chain  
Cleveland Clinic



**Pam Daigle**  
Vice President,  
Strategic Sourcing and  
Performance Groups  
Premier Inc.  
Charlotte, North Carolina

Nomination submitted by David Hargraves, senior vice president of supply chain, Premier Inc.

Pam should be recognized for her extensive leadership and management of people, positions and programs, with a focus on employee development and program growth within the strategic sourcing space. As part of her role at Premier, she grew the highly committed ASCEND program from \$100M in total purchasing volume to \$13.5B in five years. She also created Premier's PACER collaborative, a series of high-touch, outcomes-based and physician-led comparative effectiveness initiatives for select members. Pam has been responsible for the ongoing growth of all medical/surgical areas of the GPO portfolio – Surgical Services, Nursing, Pediatrics, Continuum of Care and Cardiovascular Services, and has developed highly competitive contracts for committed subsets of members in traditionally non-GPO contracted areas, e.g., cochlear implants.

**Regarding mentors and/or key events in her life, Pam Daigle says:**

*"[Premier President and CEO] Susan DeVore could not be a better role model for women. She has set an example, assuring women that we can be and do whatever we want; we must find our passion then pursue it. On a personal note, I lost my very best friend, Karen Smith, to pancreatic cancer some time ago. As I walked through that journey with her, I saw things that could have been done better, and it fueled my passion to do more. It reaffirmed my belief that supply chain, at its core, is a clinical-outcomes-based service and I'll continue to promote that message."*

Nomination submitted by Dennis Mullins, MBA, CMRP, senior vice president, supply chain operations, Indiana University, Plainfield, Ind.

I have had the opportunity and pleasure to work with Pam on two different occasions in the past, and I must say that she is one of the strongest women leaders I know in healthcare today. Pam has been a pillar in the healthcare supply chain arena for a number of years now. Pam led Baylor Scott & White's supply chain from 2007 to 2016. During her tenure at Baylor Healthcare, she led the supply chain merger of Baylor Healthcare and Scott & White Health.

She also won awards such as MedAssets' 2010 top honor, the Enterprise President's Award, which recognizes the customer with the highest documented financial improvement. This award noted \$18 million in documented supply chain savings alone within the first year of Baylor Scott & White's spend management agreement with MedAssets. Pam is also the 2009 Recipient of The Corris Boyd Leadership and Diversity Award, which honors an individual or company that has made an outstanding contribution in fostering leadership and workplace diversity in the healthcare industry.

**Regarding mentors and/or key events in her life, Pamela Bryant says:** *"I had a great mentor when I first got into healthcare – Nita Stith at Bon Secours – who encouraged me to explore supply chain management. Another significant mentor was Corris Boyd at Triad Hospitals, who taught me how to manage my professional relationships and how to think about supply chain issues in a different way."*



**Pamela Bryant**  
Chief Supply Chain Officer  
Hanger Orthopedics  
Austin, Texas



## Cathy Denning, RN, MSN

Senior Vice President,  
Sourcing Operations  
Vizient  
Irving, Texas

Nomination submitted by David Gillan, senior vice president, Member Business Ventures, Vizient.

With 39 years of progressive healthcare experience under her belt, Cathy is an ideal choice for this award. She is a true inspiration as one of the senior supply chain executives who leads teams at Vizient.

In her current role, Cathy provides strategic and operational leadership for Vizient's capital, medical/surgical sourcing, distribution, contract process and technology. She also leads Vizient's strategic programs, including NOVAPLUS® private label, IMPACT™ standardization, supplier diversity and environmental programs. She is a key liaison to our members and serves as lead for our member strategic sourcing council.

Previously, Denning served as vice president with responsibility for medical/surgical portfolios and medical/surgical distribution. Before joining Vizient, she spent six years in clinical practice as a staff nurse, unit manager and oncology clinical specialist. Her other experience includes clinical practice, market/program management and development, in-

ventory management and supply chain expertise from her time in the home health industry.

### **Regarding mentors and/or key events in her life, Cathy Denning**

**says:** *"I think the event that really changed the course of my career was when I was open to learning – and somebody was willing to teach me – about the business of healthcare. I am a nurse by background, and I grew up in an environment that wasn't concerned about the cost of providing healthcare. I went to work for a major company where one man – a pharmacist by training who moved to the business side of healthcare – taught me about inventory turns, profit-and-loss statements, etc. I credit where I am today with being open to learning about the business side of the clinical arena."*

Nomination submitted by the following from Vanderbilt University Medical Center: Dena McCormick, RN, BSN, administrative director, supply chain; Yolanda Redmond, administrative director, supply chain, systems & disbursements; Karen Morlan, CMRP, administrative director, supply chain, logistics & operations; and Liz Guastella, director, sourcing.

Teresa Dail oversees VUMC's \$1B+ supply chain, including sourcing, logistics, purchasing, systems and disbursements, whereby her daily challenge consists of optimizing best practices across the continuum. She is a mentor/national speaker on numerous healthcare topics and most recently was named as the AHRMM Board Chair-Elect for 2018. She is passionate about improving supply chain operations and optimizing the use of data/clinical outcomes to help drive product standardization/utilization to reduce the total cost of care. She oversaw the creation of VUMC's value analysis process, which is a model for the industry today. Her goal is for supply chain to become fully aligned clinically to ensure optimum quality of care at the most effective cost. In 2014, Teresa established the Vanderbilt Supply Chain Collaborative and Supply Chain Consulting, which aligns synergies including volume aggregation, new service model creation and sharing of ideas/education with 40+ hospitals and multiple non-acute care facilities nationwide.

**Regarding mentors and/or key events in her life, Teresa Dail says:** *"It's not a single person, but rather, people, who have been the key influencers in my life, both in my nursing career and my supply chain career. I have been fortunate to have leaders who saw something in me and gave me a chance to explore new territory and develop into a new role. That experience has allowed me to be a risk-taker and to encourage our team to collaborate and think outside the box."*



### **Teresa Dail, RN BSN, CMRP**

Chief Supply Chain Officer  
Vanderbilt University  
Medical Center  
Nashville, Tennessee



## Kathryn Carpenter, RN

Vice President,  
Clinical Strategy  
Catholic Health Initiatives  
Supply Chain  
Englewood, Colorado

Nomination submitted by Daniel F. DeLay, senior vice president, enterprise operations, CHI Supply Chain.

Kathy Carpenter is a Duke University-trained nurse who served 35 years in the operating room at some of America's premier medical institutions. Prior to joining CHI, she worked for Ascension's Resource Group, where she was the first critical products manager hired by that organization. Upon joining CHI, she built a team of regionally based clinical resource managers to work directly with physicians and other clinicians to control cost and improve clinical quality. She was recently promoted into the newly created position of vice president of clinical strategy to lead our efforts to develop a clinically driven supply chain, meaning that physicians who compose clinical decision teams will – with the support of our sourcing and contracting team – determine which vendors we will contract with for the provision of clinical supplies and services. Her position, and the program she leads, is unique in American healthcare, and led to a savings of more than \$100 million in the

latest fiscal year, thereby making a significant contribution to CHI's turnaround efforts.

**Regarding mentors and/or key events in her life, Kathryn Carpenter says:** *"A key event for me was leaving the operating room and taking a job in supply chain management. I went from using products and being hands-on with patients, to taking a risk and welcoming a steep learning curve on processes such as inventory control, cutting purchasing orders, the business of supply chain. A key mentor was – and remains – Dan DeLay. A great mentor to both men and women, he has given me the opportunity to grow, develop executive conversation skills, make presentations, etc."*

Nominations were submitted by multiple members of the SEPAC chapter of AHRMM, (the Association for Healthcare Resource & Materials Management), of which Kelli McRory is president. SEPAC serves southern Pennsylvania, southern New Jersey and northern Delaware. The nomination below was submitted by Michele J. Walker, director of purchasing and resource management, Virtua Health Inc., Marlton, New Jersey.

Within supply chain in our tri-state area, there is no woman who deserves to be recognized more than Kelli McRory. Kelli has been working in supply chain for 26 years [beginning at age 17, when she did patient transport for radiology]. She stands out because she is truly passionate about her work. She is currently the president of SEPAC of AHRMM. She uses this forum to inform her colleagues of what is going on in healthcare, both nationally and regionally. She encourages supply chain across the area to not only get educated, but also to get involved. She is often encouraging members to give presentations on different topics to share their knowledge. She thrives on learning herself and enjoys sharing her knowledge with colleagues. As healthcare is evolving around us, she is constantly making sure not only that she evolves, but that all the members of SEPAC have the information they need to evolve as well.

**Regarding mentors and/or key events in her life, Kelli McRory says:** *“I’ve always been self-driven, and I think that has made me a better leader. I enjoy giving people encouragement and asking them how I can help them achieve what they want to do. One person I would like to single out is [Jefferson Health Senior Director of Strategic Sourcing] Chris Fontana, who continues to help me maximize my potential.”*



### **Kelli McRory, CMRP**

Associate Director, Strategic  
Sourcing – Clinical  
Jefferson Health  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania



**Lori Pilla, RN**  
Vice President  
Custom Contracting  
and Supply Chain  
Consulting Solutions  
Intalere

Nomination submitted by Julius Heil, president and CEO, Intalere.

As vice president of Custom Contracting and Supply Chain Consulting Solutions, Lori Pilla drives the development and implementation of solutions that offer proven strategies for reducing high-dollar supply chain inefficiencies, based on an approach that brings physicians, healthcare executives and materials managers together to reduce supply chain costs while improving patient care.

Pilla has achieved success directing contract design, materials management and business operations for several high-profile healthcare organizations, and is also an accomplished medical professional with over 25 years of clinical experience as a perioperative and neurology nurse.

Her depth and breadth of experience are truly unique, including executive clinical and administrative healthcare experience, and she brings an impressive balance of medical expertise and business savvy to the administration of Intalere's supply chain solutions.

**Regarding mentors and/or key events in her life, Lori Pilla says:** *"As an RN, I spent many years in direct patient care, including 20 in the operating room. About 14 years ago, a group of surgeons with whom I worked asked me to build out an ambulatory surgery center – one of the first in St. Louis. Though I hadn't had any prior experience doing so, they were confident I could do it, because I understood not just the clinical side of healthcare, but the operational and business sides too. I was charged with taking the blueprints and working with the vendors and suppliers to complete the building – and that involved, construction, capital purchases, IT integration, procurement, sourcing, staffing, Medicare credentialing, AAAHC certification. I became truly exposed to what supply chain really is, and it led me to a new phase in my career."*

Nomination submitted by Dan Salmonsens, director, strategic sourcing and value analysis, Seattle Children's, Seattle, Washington.

As a fellow supply chain leader for children's hospitals, I have worked with Joni for seven years. I am continually impressed with her knowledge of the industry, her collaboration within and outside her organization, and the mentoring she provides to others in the world of healthcare. Joni not only looks for strategic improvements, she is willing to challenge the norm and won't settle for just an acceptable outcome. She has built a great team and has helped to advance supply chain as a discipline. [www.scw-mag.com/sections/healthcare/826-children-s-hospital-of-philadelphia](http://www.scw-mag.com/sections/healthcare/826-children-s-hospital-of-philadelphia)

**Regarding mentors and/or key events in her life, Joni Rittler says:**

*"Ironically, one of the biggest transformational moments in my career occurred when I was told I was being laid off. I was a single mother; my son was starting college; and I was told my position would be eliminated by the end of the year. My undergrad degree is in information technology management. My boss recommended me for a position in IT and it was a great fit. For the next few years, I implemented a materials management information system in eight hospitals in the Philadelphia market. It was a tremendous learning experience. Prior to that time, I had focused on just one hospital and the day-to-day work there. Now I had the chance to visit several hospitals and to implement best practices across a health system. It also afforded me the opportunity to meet a tremendous number of people. I was eventually promoted to Regional Director for Supply Chain and advanced to a corporate level position within the company. What started as a difficult situation turned into a career-changing moment, as it opened many doors for me and enabled me to advance my skills – skills that I believe are crucial to today's supply chain, like project management, facilitation, strategic planning and communication."*



**Joni Rittler**

Vice President Supply Chain  
Children's Hospital  
of Philadelphia  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania



## Donna Van Vlerah

Senior Vice President,  
Support Division  
Parkview Health  
Fort Wayne, Indiana

ity across the hospitals' network, including "virtual inventory" for supplies used at clinics and nursing stations.

### Regarding mentors and/or key events in her life, Donna Van Vlerah says:

*"I was aide to General Charles Krulak during Operations Desert Storm and Desert Shield in 1990-1991. He taught me three lessons: 1) the importance of having the right people around you, 2) the importance of technology platforms, as they become an enabler to what you're trying to accomplish, and 3) the importance of effective processes. General Krulak [who became 31st Commandant of the U.S. Marine Corps in 1995] was a visionary navigator, that is, someone who not only has a great idea, but someone who can get you to that dream. That's the true mark of the leader. He was also someone who appreciated and empowered women, and said that without the women reporting to him, he would not be combat-effective. He advocated for us at every level."*

Nomination submitted by Bobbie Smith, account manager, Intalere, St. Louis, Missouri.

Donna Van Vlerah joined Parkview Health in 2010 from ITT, for whom she served as chief compliance and ethics officer in the Space Systems Division. Prior to this, Donna served a 20-year career in the U.S. Marine Corps, retiring in 2005. She served in various positions within the logistics and acquisition community, specializing in supply chain, facility maintenance and change management. She served as the deputy director for the Maritime Supply Chain for the Defense Logistics Agency, serving worldwide customers.

Her supply chain strategies at Parkview have included: Collaboration with suppliers to manage flow of goods and achieve cost reduction; deployment of Parkview Health's Distribution Center (PDC), enabling centralized purchasing activities, consolidated receiving functions, and enhanced distribution management practices across all of its hospitals and clinics with "point-of-use" technology; automation and management of inventory at each point-of-use to support clinical staff's ongoing needs and facilitate just-in-time delivery; and real-time visibility

Nominations submitted by Tom Nikiel, vice president/general manager, Member Business Ventures, Vizient; and Jenifer Axline, senior director operations, Excelebrate.

Simrit Sandhu embodies Cleveland Clinic's philosophy of putting patients first. She understands that supply chain exists to support the clinical enterprise. She empowers a physician-driven sourcing approach, both internally at the Clinic and externally through Excelebrate Strategic Health Sourcing. Her organization works tirelessly to understand clinical needs and develop solutions that reduce clinical variation, not only for the cost benefits, but more important, for quality and safety purposes. Her team doesn't stop at contracting; rather, they work with clinicians to develop supply utilization guidelines, again focusing on quality and cost.

Simrit's group helps manage the Clinic's approximately \$2B non-salary spend and their operations both nationally and internationally. As such, she is personally engaged in advancing many of the Clinic's key business strategies. Lastly, Simrit is always willing to engage with other supply chain leaders, both to share what she's learned and to learn from others.



### **Regarding mentors and/or key events in her life, Simrit Sandhu**

**says:** *"I left India to pursue an educational journey here in the U.S., starting out with my undergraduate work at Michigan State through my graduate degrees at Boston University. This journey of self-discovery is undertaken by almost every young adult, but very few do it in a world away from everything and everyone they grew up around. As I look back at my first day on campus, I remember being terrified, uncomfortable and yet determined and convinced of endless possibilities. When people ask me today about why I thrive on program development and change management, I reflect on the fact that I am a product of this life-changing event. I fundamentally believe that based on merit, determination and perseverance, and if surrounded by the right resources, experts and leadership, we can achieve anything we dare to imagine."*

### **Simrit Sandhu**

Executive Director  
of Supply Chain  
Cleveland Clinic  
Lyndhurst, Ohio



**Kitty Williams,  
RN, CMRP**

Director, Value Analysis  
Riverside Health System  
Newport News, Virginia

*were extremely knowledgeable and quite helpful. They helped me understand that all contracts should be from the health system's perspective; and how they could support me in the negotiation process. When I arrived in supply chain management, my director asked me to implement a value analysis process for the health system. Since implementation in 2010, the team has saved our health system just under \$60M. I have come to appreciate the value of having a clinical person in supply chain management. I feel I am an interpreter; I help make the connection between 'clinicalspeak' and 'financialspeak.'*

Nomination submitted by Kristin Markham Scott, director, member services and corporate culture, Capstone Health Alliance, Asheville, North Carolina

Kitty Williams is the project manager/facilitator of 10 value analysis teams at Riverside (steering, clinical, non-clinical and pharmacy teams). Each of these teams meet monthly. In addition, Kitty has served on the Premier Value Analysis Advisory and Technology committees, ASCEND clinical sub-group, and Materials Management committee, and contributed to the Premier Value Analysis Guidebook in 2014 and the recently revised 2016 edition. She has worked in critical care and peri-op services, and has been in supply chain management for 12 years.

**Regarding mentors and/or key events in her life, Kitty Williams says:**

*"A key event was making the transition from peri-op services, where I served as a staff nurse, working my way up to nurse manager and to supply chain management. I had developed an interest in supply chain when we were researching an electronic medical record for our anesthesiologists. I realized the team in supply chain management*

Nomination submitted by Tom Derrick, senior vice president, OpenMarkets, Chicago.

When I think of leaders, I think of those who motivate others to do better. Regine fits this mold. She inspires not only her team, but all the partners who work with her. Her authority comes not from her title, but from her actions, her strategic insights, her gratitude and gravitas. Those fortunate enough to know Regine not only want to work with her, but to emulate her.

**Regarding mentors and/or key events in her life, Régine Honoré Villain says:**

*“As a little girl, growing up in Haiti, the idea of taking care of people always fascinated me and I wanted to be a pediatrician. Unfortunately because of the instability of the political climate at the time, I left Haiti and ultimately pursued a degree in engineering from the University of Florida. I was working as a project engineer for a large manufacturing firm when a colleague from the University of Florida called to inform me that a prestigious academic medical center in New York was looking to hire someone with a background in engineering to lead what they were calling ‘Project Purchasing.’ On that call, I had a sudden moment of clarity where I realized that I could still make an impact in patients’ lives by combining my dedication for taking care of people with my engineering skills, of which I was very proud. It became clear that, every day, I would still be able to channel my passion to connect to the purpose of our patient experience even if not as a physician, but as an equally valuable care team member. The humbling ability to directly make a difference in the care continuum fuels my leadership and message to my team.”*



**Régine Honoré Villain**

Vice President,  
Supply Chain Operations  
NYU Langone Health

## Gender Equity: A partnership

A lot of people talk about partnerships between providers and suppliers. But a group of people got together this fall in Columbus, Ohio, to listen to speakers and talk among themselves about another, even more immediate, kind of partnership – that between men and women.

The setting was the Gender Equity Summit, an inaugural event

Proceeds from the one-day event went to the American Heart Association's "Go Red for Women" campaign, which supports research on heart disease among women, which, according to the AHA, is the No. 1 killer of women. Cardinal Health CFO Mike Kaufmann is this year's co-chair of the Go Red for Women campaign as well as executive sponsor of Cardinal

Health's Women's Initiative Network, or WIN.

be a great way to raise money and – just as important – awareness of the challenge of gender equity. "I believe the Gender Equity Summit activated a group of leaders who left with a business case for why gender equity makes business sense, some tips on how to accelerate their programs, and a network of people tackling the same challenge. I am convinced that we can shorten the 100 years if we all take a more active role in gender partnership." (Kaufmann was referring to some estimates that, given the nation's current trajectory, gender parity may not be achieved for at least 100 years.)

Says Grossi, "The research is clear – companies succeed at an accelerated rate when there is more gender balance at leadership levels. Gender equity is not a 'women's issue.' It's a business growth opportunity.

Gender equity is also a men's issue, she says. "Involving men in this work is crucial and essential. Men are the disproportionate decision-makers today. We must have leadership's active engagement and partnership on the topic to get the traction we need for improvement not to take 100 years.

"Following the summit, I have heard from many of our attendees how excited they were about the day and how they planned to take the information gathered and learned back to their own organizations. I'm confident that the summit will have impact beyond what we will ever know."



organized by the Columbus Partnership and the Columbus Women's Commission. "The Summit was designed to be a workshop for leaders who wanted to better understand gender partnerships and how to accelerate them in the workplace," says Therese Grossi, senior vice president of enterprise contracting, Cardinal Health, and executive sponsor of the company's Women's Initiative Network/Midwest chapter.

Health's Women's Initiative Network, or WIN.

"Gender equity has been a passion of mine for years," says Kaufmann. "Great leaders know you need great talent, so being able to better attract 50 percent of the population is a competitive advantage. So when I was asked to chair the American Heart Association's Go Red for Women campaign in Columbus, my first reaction was that a gender equity summit would