



**Workforce Planning Summit: The Rhode Ahead**  
**June 6, 2023**  
**CEO & Panelist Biographies**

**John Fernandez**

**President and CEO, Lifespan**

As president and CEO, John Fernandez leads Lifespan, a not-for-profit comprehensive, integrated, academic health system that cares for more than 550,000 people each year. Lifespan is affiliated with The Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University, and includes Rhode Island Hospital and its pediatric division, Hasbro Children's Hospital; The Miriam Hospital; Bradley Hospital; Newport Hospital; Gateway Healthcare; Lifespan Physician Group, the largest multi-specialty practice in Rhode Island; and Coastal Medical, a primary care driven medical practice.

Prior to joining Lifespan, Fernandez served as president of two organizations that are part of the Mass General Brigham healthcare system. From 2007 to 2022, Fernandez was president of Mass Eye and Ear, one of the nation's largest specialty hospitals exclusively dedicated to academic research, training and treatment for conditions that impair vision, hearing and other disorders of the eyes, ears, nose, throat, head, and neck. Fernandez also served as President of Mass General Brigham Integrated Care; a Mass General Brigham entity formed in 2019 with a mission to bring lower cost health care closer to where patients live.

Throughout his career, Fernandez has a demonstrated track record of increasing and improving healthcare services, investing in research and innovation, and training the next generation of health professionals. Recently, he led key strategic initiatives for Mass General Brigham to provide greater access to ambulatory services in Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and other states, including the design, planning, and opening of a multi-specialty ambulatory care and surgical center in Salem, NH.

Prior to his Mass Eye and Ear appointment, Fernandez served as vice president at Brigham and Women's Hospital for several areas including surgical services, imaging, cancer, pathology, laboratory, and network development.

Fernandez received a bachelor's degree in political science from The College of Wooster in Ohio and a master's degree in government administration from the University of Pennsylvania.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Rilwan K. Feyisitan, Jr**

**President and CEO of East Bay Community Action Program (EBCAP)**

Rilwan K. Feyisitan, Jr of Johnston, RI, is the current President and CEO of East Bay Community Action Program (EBCAP). Feyisitan has more than 20 years of experience in advancing the causes of community engagement, health equity, and socioeconomic enhancements both locally and regionally. He also has wide-ranging experience working with communities of color, low-income families, senior populations, individuals with disabilities, the refugee community, and the LGBTQI community.

Over the past 9 years, Feyisitan worked in various leadership positions for Community Action Partnership of Providence County including Director of Operations, Deputy Director, and his most recent position as CAPP's President and CEO. His vision and resolve were instrumental in enhancing the development of CAPP's short- and long-term organizational objectives as well as cultivating partnerships with community- based and government leaders to affect change and opportunities for individuals and families in Providence and surrounding communities.

Prior to working for CAPP, Feyisitan was the Chief Administrator for the Rhode Island Department of Health's Office of Minority Health. In this position, he provided guidance and support to RIDOH's goal of eliminating racial and ethnic health disparities and advancing economic, education, social and political equity. Feyisitan also supervised and coordinated RIDOH's Minority Health Promotion Programs, Refugee Health Program, Federal CLAS Mandate Coordination & Language Access, and Emergency Preparedness for Vulnerable Populations.

As a proven leader, Rilwan brings a wealth of knowledge and an undeniable commitment to improving the lives and livelihoods of underserved populations in communities throughout Rhode Island.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Michael Wagner, MD, FACP**

**Care New England's President and CEO, effective December 1, 2022**

Dr. Michael Wagner has built his career and reputation on being a leader who combines his unique experience as a physician, entrepreneur, and healthcare executive to transform health care. Throughout his career, he has worked with caregivers in academic and community health care settings across the country.

Dr. Wagner most recently served as Chief Physician Executive (CPE) for Tufts Medicine, a \$2.2B leading integrated health system. Tufts Medicine is world-renowned for bringing together the best of academic and community healthcare to deliver exceptional, connected, and accessible care experiences to Massachusetts. As CPE, he led the company's physician enterprise, which includes the Tufts Medicine Integrated Network, Tufts Medicine Professional Group, and Quality and Patient Safety and Service Lines. He is also currently President and CEO of the Tufts Medicine Professional Group and Tufts Medical Center Physicians Organization.

During 2019, Dr. Wagner was Interim CEO for Wellforce (now Tufts Medicine), a system recognized for its high quality, lower cost value position and its commitment to keeping care in the community. As Interim CEO, he led the formation of a single obligated group, the selection of a singular EMR platform and drove numerous strategic growth initiatives.

Before that, Dr. Wagner served as President and CEO of Tufts Medical Center, the academic medical center of Tufts Medicine and the principal teaching hospital for Tufts University School of Medicine. During his tenure, Tufts MC achieved a strong financial performance and was twice recognized with a Five Star rating on the Vizient (University Health System Consortium) annual quality and effectiveness evaluation – the only AMC in New England to achieve this recognition.

In addition to his experience leading a complex health system, Dr. Wagner’s deep and varied experiences include managing a national physician practice management company, leading an academic division of general medicine and graduate medical education, and has held governance roles on non-profit and for-profit boards.

A magna cum laude graduate of Connecticut College and a graduate of Georgetown University School of Medicine, Dr. Wagner completed his residency and chief residency in Internal Medicine at Dartmouth in Hanover, NH.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Beth Bixby, MSW, LICSW**

**Chief Executive Officer, Tides Family Services**

Beth Bixby is a highly regarded children's behavioral health professional with over 25 years of invaluable experience. Beth was first referred to Tides Family Services as a youth and her career journey eventually led her back to where she was introduced to the field of children’s behavioral health. In over 20 years working at Tides, Beth has held critical roles from Clinician to Chief Executive Officer, a position she has held since 2018.

Beth’s unwavering dedication to the wellbeing of children has touched the lives of countless young hearts. She displays a remarkable empathy towards others, especially children facing emotional challenges. This led her to pursue a career in human studies and child development, receiving a Bachelor’s Degree in Human Development and Family Studies from the University of Rhode Island and a Master’s Degree in Social Work from Syracuse University.

Through her gentle and compassionate approach, Beth has grown Tides as a safe space where thousands of Rhode Island children are free to express themselves and overcome immense trauma and obstacles each year. Her expertise extends beyond her role at Tides Family Services

as she actively advocates for children's mental health and promoting awareness and understanding in schools and communities across Rhode Island. With her remarkable legacy of empowerment, Beth continues to inspire hope and guide children on the path to brighter futures.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Rik Ganguly**

**Data Scientist & Analytics Manager, Ecosystem, Rhode Island Executive Office of Health and Human Services**

Rik Ganguly is a data scientist and analyst who has over a decade of experience in making sense of complex health data. He is a leader and advisor in the areas of healthcare analytics and statistics, business intelligence, and multi-payer health data. For the past three years he has worked with the EOHHS Ecosystem on numerous projects that dealt with opioid and substance

use crises, behavioral health trends, impacts of COVID to the healthcare system, childhood development, homelessness, and more. When he is not wrangling data, he enjoys hiking, reading, and breaking into woodworking.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Angela Bannerman Ankoma, MS**

**Vice President, Executive Director of Equity Leadership at the Rhode Island Foundation**

Angela Bannerman Ankoma is the Vice President, Executive Director of Equity Leadership at the Rhode Island Foundation. She leads the Equity Leadership Initiative, which is one aspect of the Foundation's broad, 3-year, \$8.5 million plan to eliminate inequality and racial disparities and promote inclusion and diversity. Ankoma has nearly 25 years of public policy and health policy experience. Most recently, she was Executive Vice President, Director of Community Investment, at the United Way of R.I., where she served as a member of the executive team and led the organization's grant-making, public policy, government relations, research and evaluation activities. Angela has a Master of Science in social work and a Master of Science in public health from Columbia University and a BA in Africana Studies and Psychology from Connecticut College. She's currently a Doctoral student at University of North Carolina, Gillings School of Public Health.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Joana Yeboah, MPH**

**Community Care Coordinator, Neighborhood Health Plan of Rhode Island**

Joana Yeboah is a Community Care Coordinator at Neighborhood Health Plan of RI. Due to her passion and drive for Health advocacy she currently serves as a Steering Community Member of the Pawtucket/Central Falls Health Equity Zones where she collaborated with diverse Steering Committee representatives from Pawtucket and Central Falls to create a framework for a process in which residents would provide ideas, create proposals, and vote on how to spend \$385,000 to improve community health. Joana's leadership role in Participatory Budgeting was one of many, in community mobilization.

Her Internship with the Rhode Island department of Health as an Interim Refugee Health Coordinator and as Ghanaian native stirred up a passion to give back to her community. Currently, she serves as a Board member of Higher Ground International, a nonprofit organization committed to advocating, empowering, and providing life-transforming services to African immigrants, refugees and other marginalized communities.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Carrie Bridges Feliz, MPH**

**Vice President of Community Health and Equity, Lifespan**

Carrie Bridges Feliz is the Vice President of Community Health and Equity at Lifespan, Rhode Island's largest healthcare system. Carrie oversees Lifespan's Community Health Institute which works to ensure that all people have the opportunity to achieve their optimal state of health through healthy behaviors, healthy relationships, and healthy environments. A demonstration of the Lifespan mission, *Delivering health with care*, the Community Health Institute serves more than 30,000 people annually through skill-building courses, health-

related social needs navigation assistance, mentoring & youth development initiatives, disparities reduction programs, and community-based services.

Carrie has an extensive background in public health, beginning her career as a public health prevention specialist for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention where she concentrated on refugee health, tuberculosis program evaluation, and the prevention of healthcare acquired infections. She also served as the team lead for Health Disparities and Access to Care in the R.I. Department of Health. In that role, she supervised the offices of Minority Health, Women’s Health, Special Health Care Needs, and Primary Care & Rural Health. In addition to her public health experience, Carrie has also worked in public education as a classroom teacher in Phoenix, Arizona and school district administrator in Boston and Providence.

A Rhode Island resident since 2004, Carrie is proud to serve on multiple non-profit boards that are responsive to her passions- public health and education. These service opportunities, in addition to her career, reflect Carrie’s determination to help create the conditions that allow all people to thrive. Carrie earned a Bachelor of Science degree in biology from Duke University and a Master of Public Health degree from the Boston University School of Public Health.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Beatriz Ortega**

**Senior, Paul Cuffee Upper School**

Beatriz Ortega is a senior at Paul Cuffee Upper School, which is located in Providence, Rhode Island. She is an active member in her community and partakes in activities like Principal's Cabinet, All School Meeting, soccer, softball, and the Live Your Truth Club. During the week, she works at the Lifespan Community Health Institute on a colorectal cancer screening outreach initiative and on the weekends works at the mall. In addition to all of this, Beatriz enjoys watching movies, reading, and trying new foods. In the fall, she plans to attend College of the Holy Cross to study Political Science and Philosophy, where she will continue to use her voice to advocate for others, never shying away from a challenge.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Paula C. Coutinho, MSW, LICSW**

**Director of Field Education & Director of MSW Admissions, Rhode Island College, School of Social Work**

Paula C. Coutinho, a native of Portugal, of Cabo Verdean descent, immigrated to the US in 1991 and is a first-generation college graduate.

Paula is currently employed as the Director of Field Education and the Director of MSW Admissions with the Rhode Island College, School of Social Work, since 2015. Paula is also the co-Director of a HRSA grant designed to train MSW clinical students to assess and intervene at-risk and underserved school students in a school-based setting, specifically the Providence Public School District (PPSD). She also co-leads and helped develop an accelerated BSW to MSW program. These efforts are part of Paula’s leadership in recruiting, admitting, and retaining students within the MSW program. Previously, she was employed as a Clinical Social Worker at the Cambridge Health Alliance (CHA) in Cambridge, MA. Prior to this position, she provided consulting services to the MA Department of Children and Families and worked as the Program Coordinator for the MA Department of Public Health’s Batterer Intervention Program from 2004-2006.

Paula holds a BA in History and a Masters in Social Work (MSW) from Boston College; and holds licensure in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts as a Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker (LICSW). Paula has been a member of the MAPS (Massachusetts Alliance of Portuguese Speakers) Board of Directors since 2011 and was previously employed at the agency from 1999-2004.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Silvia Adames**

**Community Health Worker, Blackstone Valley Community Health Center & MSW student at Rhode Island College**

My name is Silvia Adames; I was born in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. I graduated from the Faculty of Economics and Social Science with a bachelor's degree in accounting. I immigrated to the United States 18 years ago with my three daughters and husband. I started my career in the US by working in a factory. After a year, I began training as a Homemaker for seniors while seeking to further my professional career. I later began training as a CNA, where I found my passion for working with the geriatric population. Five years later, I took training as a Medication technician, still serving the elderly population. Unfortunately, a shoulder injury made it difficult to perform my job duties as a CNA. After my injury, I began looking for new career opportunities. That is when I heard about a program that trained people to become community health workers. I was blessed to have the opportunity to enhance my career at Blackstone Valley Community Health Care, where I continued working with vulnerable populations. Thanks to the Rhode Island Health Professional Equity Initiative, part of RI Reconnect, I'm currently enrolled in the MSW program at Rhode Island College. This program will allow me to obtain my master's in social work and help more vulnerable communities.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Evelyn Pinto de Duran, RN, BSN**

**President, CEO & Founder, Your Choice of Home Care**

My name is Evelyn Pinto de Duran, I have had the privilege of working as nurse and an CNA educator for the past 15 years, My journey started back in my country; Guatemala, my father was assassinated during a Civil War when I was seven years old, prompting a 10 year separation from my mother as she immigrated to the United States in search of the American Dream; I arrived to this country at age 17 eager to reach the American Dream.

Since I remember my dream was to be a nurse, I remember as a child helping the poor and underserved members of my community, becoming a nurse seemed impossible, as I was a non-English speaking, undocumented young girl. As most immigrants, I began working in a factory. After six months of this grueling work, I made the decision to take the CNA class. I successfully completed this class and spent the next 5 years working in this profession, my first step to my dream. Nothing gives me more satisfaction than taking care of my patients, but when I dig into my childhood memories, I have no doubt I was born to become a nurse.

In Guatemala, I was a 15-year-old girl with a child that had no chance to an education. I was not allowed to go to school with the rest of the kids around my age because I was a bad example to them. That quickly changed when I arrived to this country. I had an opportunity but I had to overcome all the obstacles. Everyone around me made me feel unsuccessful and discouraged,

all I heard was “you can’t do it, you don’t speak English”. The language barrier was a limitation that interfered with my academic performance and self-esteem.

I was surrounded by caring adults that believed in me; they helped me to see past the moment and focus on the future; they knew that Language acquisition was only a temporary obstacle. Learning about others’ experiences and success stories was empowering, it brought so much hope into my life, making the impossible seem possible.

I learned some English and continue to learn daily, did my GED and I started my journey at CCRI for the nursing program in 1999; in 2006 I graduated as an RN and completed my BSN in 2018. I feel inspired by my mother, coming from a 3<sup>rd</sup> world country where it is often common that females have limited access to education; my grandmother never went to school and my mother only completed second grade. I am grateful to have learned English, completed my GED and college. I am filled with joy for the privilege of caring and educating others.

My Nursing Career has been in Psych Nursing and Home Care. Many of these years have proudly taken the role of nursing director as well as an educator of paraprofessionals, such as CNAs and Phlebotomists at Your Choice of CNA Training Program. Now I am the founder of Your Choice of Home Care, which opened in January 2020.