



LLOYD DEAN'S BET ON KINDNESS

The Dignity Health CEO aims to make another splash with his second annual fundraiser and raise \$1.5 million to prevent human trafficking, postpartum depression and concussions in student athletes.

BY LINDA LENHOFF

Dignity Health attempts to put its motto, “Hello, humankindness,” into daily action—in every hospital and every building. This requires maintaining a sunny public outlook, even in the face of troubling news. The morning of his interview with the *Gazette*, **Lloyd Dean**—President and CEO of the largest not-for-profit hospital provider in California—had likely seen the Congressional Budget Office’s announcement that millions of Americans would lose their healthcare this year should the recently proposed replacement of the Affordable Care Act pass—and tens of millions more in future years. But Dean, unruffled and on-message, came fully prepared to talk about Dignity Health’s higher charitable mission—a sincerely emotional, shrewdly effective appeal to our common humanity.

“Our focus is to make sure communities and those in need have access to affordable, quality healthcare,” he said. “We believe very strongly that healthcare in a nation of our means is a right.

It should not be a luxury, and it should not be something that is divided between the haves and the have-nots.”

Dean joined Dignity Health in 2000. At the time, it was called Catholic Healthcare West and losing a million dollars a day for three years. The savvy communicator, who sits on the boards of Wells Fargo and McDonald’s, turned the company around, overseeing a successful rebrand to Dignity Health five years ago. Headquartered in San Francisco, it’s the fifth-largest health system in the nation, employing more than 60,000 caregivers.

Recently, the company has impressed the Bay Area elite with its new Humankindness Gala, to be held this year on May 18, which raises funds

for Dignity Health’s three-pronged, community-based programs that address human trafficking, postpartum depression and concussions, especially in children.

“The Bay Area is one of what people call ‘hot spots’ for human trafficking,” Dean explained. “Often patients will show up at our hospitals, which sit at the center of many communities. Without the right education and awareness [among the staff], it could be missed that these individuals are victims of human trafficking.”

Joining the discussion, **Ellie Levine**, Dignity Health’s manager of philanthropic events, chimed in to add, “Nearly 88 percent of human trafficking survivors report contact with a healthcare system provider while being exploited.”

And so educating hospital workers can help victims break out of what Dean calls “the vicious circle that’s associated with human trafficking.”

In addition, the Postpartum Depression Initiative promotes awareness about a common disorder that’s not often addressed in the public arena. “With 60,000 babies born at our facilities, we think we have access to families, and that education and awareness by our caregivers can help begin to address the issue,” Dean stressed.

Another initiative, Dignity Health’s Concussion Network, works with families and coaches to establish protocols for dealing with concussions in students.

Such valuable programs require funding—lots of it.

Which brings us to the second annual Human-

kindness Gala. Last year’s affair raised in excess of \$1 million and was the talk of the town. “The buzz throughout the Bay Area about the first one was that it is a must-attend gala,” Dean said. “Not only because of its mission, but as a result of how innovative, stimulating and rewarding in totality the experience is.”

Guests walking into the normally staid City Hall will find themselves in an enchanted wonderland filled with magical creatures and whimsical depictions of nature. The theme: “From Roots to Wings,” inspired by a quote by **Amelia Earhart**:

A single act of kindness throws out roots in all directions, and the roots spring up and make new trees.

“When you think of addressing some global or community-based problems, everything starts from the seed and grows up—and you think about the abstract roots and taking wing,” Dean said. “That’s what we want patients to do when we treat them: We want them to work through their issues and get their wings and fly again.”

The team hopes to raise \$1.5 million this year to invest in these programs—and identify additional ones. “And to continue to build coalitions of people who are interested in these initiatives,” says Dean.

“We see ‘Hello, humankindness’ as a call to action globally because people are consciously and subconsciously looking to exhale or breathe, and have a little peace—because the world is such a complex place right now,” Dean adds. “Research says that this call to kindness is something that resonates with everyone.

No matter what walk of life you’re in or who you are, a little kindness goes a long way.”

To learn more about Dignity Health and Stanford University’s study on kindness, see: www.dignityhealth.org/articles/Healing-Power-of-Kindness.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Starting at 6 p.m. on May 18, join hosts Dean, **Willie Brown** and **Jed York** at San Francisco City Hall for the Humankindness Gala benefiting three of the most challenging public health issues today. For more information, contact Philanthropic Events Manager Ellie Levine at 415-438-5737 or ellie.levine@dignityhealth.org.