

## **Recognizing and Addressing Conflicts of Interest**

On Friday, November 13th, the American College of Healthcare Executives (ACHE) hosted their 2015 Fall Collaborative. Focusing on recognition and management of conflicts of interest, a panel discussion featuring Joyce Lahue, Regional Director of Risk Management Baptist Health System and Gail Madison-Brown, Chief Compliance & Clinical Trials, the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio was moderated Michael Hernandez, Chief Legal Officer, University Health .

Michael introduced the topic by defining how personal relationships can present a conflict of interest. Specifically, this occurs when a relationship appears to interfere or has the potential for interference with one's ability to do what is in the best interest of the patient or company and results in personal gain or benefit to the individual and/or the individual's family member.

Potential conflict of interest scenarios include receiving consulting fees from a company while performing clinical research on the company's technology or owning stock in a company while performing research sponsored by the company. Additional conflicts occur when physicians with hospital privileges are in active executive positions at for-profit biomedical companies, or staff accepts vendor gifts. And while the initial discussion revolved around employees and physicians personal relationships with vendors, it was also pointed out that conflicts of interest can be found in end of life support decisions in which family members make decisions in their own self-interest. Furthermore, it is important to consider conflicts of interest beyond economic gain.

According to the group, organizations should have a process for identifying conflicts of interest, means for disclosing details and procedures for addressing claims. While this generally occurs via a hotline or protected communication with an integrity officer, it is important to make sure that adequate training has been provided to all levels of employees to ensure that they understand the definition of a conflict of interest and when to report it.

With special appreciation for the event co-sponsor, Texas State University HCAD Department, the Central Texas ACHE chapter would also like to thank the presenters for sharing their insights and best practices regarding healthcare innovation. For more information on future events, please visit us at [ww.centraltexas.ache.org](http://ww.centraltexas.ache.org) or send us an email at [info@centraltexas.ache.org](mailto:info@centraltexas.ache.org).