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BUSINESS & MONEY



Local business leaders gathered Wednesday to discuss what success looks like in a hybrid workplace. (From left) Kristin Lytle, president of the Leader's Edge, which hosted the panel; Michelle Hong, Philadelphia office coleader at Northern Trust Wealth Management; Renita Miller, chief diversity, equity and inclusion officer at Wharton; Angela Wurster, vice president of primary-care network at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia; Tracey Santilli, president of Tierney; Aileen K. Alexander, CEO of Diversified Search Group. Courtesy of the Leader's Edge

Temple Health posts \$54M loss

It sees growth at recently acquired Chestnut Hill Hospital, but the health system faces stiff industry headwinds.

By Harold Brubaker
Staff Writer

Outpatient surgeries at Chestnut Hill Hospital jumped in the first three months of this year compared to last year, according to the financial results posted this week by Temple University Health System, which acquired Chestnut Hill on Jan. 1.

The upswing in surgeries at Chestnut Hill comes as Temple's overall health system faces a general decline in patient visits at a time of rising expenses and staffing shortages. Temple, which is anchored by Temple University Health System in North Philadelphia, reported an operating loss of \$54 million in the nine months that ended March 31, compared to a profit of \$92 million in the same period a year ago, as it fights industry headwinds.

Temple officials said it's too soon to say much about the financial performance of Chestnut Hill. It's in line with expectations, they said.

"We have been focusing on growth," Nick Barcellona, Temple University Health System's chief financial officer, told municipal bond analysts on a conference call Wednesday discussing Temple's latest financial results.

Planned areas of expansion at Chestnut Hill include urology, behavioral health, cancer services, and gastrointestinal services.

Temple led a group that acquired the 148-bed Chestnut Hill from Tower Health for \$28 million — plus up to an additional \$4 million for services during a yearlong transition. Temple's partners are Redeemer Health and the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine.

Industry headwinds

Overall, like many health systems, Temple is having trouble making ends meet financially.

Temple officials cited a 2.5% decline in emergency department visits, an 8% decline in inpatient discharges, the persistent need for high-cost contract staff to fill vacancies, higher wages overall, and jumps in drug prices as big factors in the \$54 million operating loss for the nine-month period.

The staffing trend is going in the right direction, Temple Health's chief executive Michael Young said. The number of agency staff peaked at 300 and is now down to 70, mostly in narrow specialties, Young said. The quarterly cost of agency staff peaked at nearly \$17 million last spring. Temple spent \$7.3 million on agency staff in the

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Companies advised to 'celebrate' hybrid work

Partially remote offices are here to stay. Philly business leaders offered strategies to thrive when face-to-face is limited.

By Lizzy McLellan Ravitch
Staff Writer

Angela Wurster, vice president of the primary-care network at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP), noted that many of the people within her organization — and at any health-care provider — must be present in-person every day. With that constant reminder, she has an appreciation for the flexibility she enjoys by having to be in-office only three days a week.

"Hybrid is the best thing ever, and we talk about it like it's a problem," Wurster said. "We should stop complaining about it and celebrate it and acknowledge it and build it up."

While some have argued that in-office work will continue to increase post-pandemic, the majority of companies in Philadelphia are allowing employees to work remotely at least part-time. The number of businesses that require fully in-person work has actually been declining in recent months, the Wall Street Journal reported this week.

Wurster and four other Philadelphia-area executives gathered Wednesday to discuss career success in a hybrid or remote work environment at a panel hosted by executive coaching firm the

Leader's Edge. If their conversation is any indication, learning how to thrive in a flexible, partially virtual work environment will be useful for the foreseeable future.

Here are some of the tips they offered.

Stay visible

Wurster, of CHOP, works on the seventh floor, and most of the senior executives work 13 floors above. She regularly does what she calls a "drive by" on the 20th floor, popping into offices to say hello.

"Make sure you're visible to people, and do it at all levels," Wurster said. While this practice wasn't feasible during the worst of the pandemic, it's something she has resumed both in the office and at the CHOP primary-care locations she oversees.

Informally checking in with bosses is made easier with some amount of in-office work, and it helps fortify those relationships, panelists said. They also emphasized the importance of staying top-of-mind in one's broader network, a task made easier by increased comfort with online professional networking.

"Follow up pragmatically on LinkedIn. Be willing to connect where there's an opportunity," said Aileen K. Alexander, CEO of Diversified Search Group.

Michelle Hong, coleader of Northern Trust Wealth Management's Philadelphia office, encouraged sharing progress on the professional social-networking site and reflecting on lessons learned.

"If you are authentic and open

about what your goal is and what you want to do better ... bring your network along in that journey," said Hong.

Use meetings wisely

Tracey Santilli, president of communications firm Tierney, said her agency's workforce is hybrid, generally spending three days a week in the office. On in-office days, leadership has been emphasizing educational experiences and interaction between staff, even if they're not directly focused on client work, she said.

"We create these moments ... where people can build camaraderie in a much more organic way," Santilli said. "We're kind of using the office as the new off-site," meaning that in-office days are more like company retreats.

While Zoom fatigue is real, virtual meetings can be meaningful, suggested Renita Miller, chief diversity, equity and inclusion officer at University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School. She recalled being invited to a 15-minute, Friday morning virtual meeting when she started at Wharton, "and I thought to myself, this meeting is not going to be 15 minutes."

But what impressed Miller, she said, is that the meeting was 15 minutes. It had a set agenda, focused on highlights of the week without delving into details, and acknowledged what the team had accomplished.

The short, virtual meeting she had originally met with skepticism ended up being "the most high-energy 15 minutes that I've ever experienced," Miller said.

Chat more; let lines blur

Miller said she's noticed across industries and organizations that people are placing more emphasis on finding meaning in their work, but that doesn't require being serious all the time.

"Embrace small talk," Miller said. "It just brings out the authenticity in a person to just have those small chitchat conversations. And they tend to blossom into so much more."

Hong noted that in a traditional work environment, nonverbal body language and tone of voice carry much of a speaker's meaning, while the actual words being said may make up 10% or less of the message. She said remote work has made her "more curious" as a leader.

"When we're in a remote world or in a hybrid world, there's more reliance on that 10% and you lose, a lot of times, the rest of it," Hong said. "You don't have as much opportunity to understand what your team needs or what your clients need."

What people used to understand or learn implicitly must now be spelled out explicitly, Hong said, and leaders should be sure to ask people clearly what they need to reach their goals.

That's not to say overcommunication is reserved for cyberspace. All five panelists emphasized the importance of connecting with coworkers, clients, and networking contacts on a human level online and in-person.

"Work is not separate from life," Santilli said. "We blurred the lines."

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SMALL BUSINESS

New law can help you save more for retirement

By Gene Marks
For The Inquirer

The Secure 2.0 Act, which became law late last year, contains many provisions to make it easier for both workers and their employers to save money for their retirement. A big part of that legislation made changes to Roth 401(k) and Roth Individual Retirement Accounts (IRAs) accounts.

If you're a small-business owner, you should be taking advantage because Roth accounts offer a tax-free way to build retirement savings. Roth accounts can also be a powerful benefit to offer your current (and prospective) employees. Almost half of U.S. workers are not saving enough for retirement,

according to the U.S. Census Bureau. The Secure Act 2.0 gives workers more options to save for retirement than what they've ever had in the past.

Here's what small-business owners need to know.

Traditional or Roth retirement accounts

A 401(k) is a type of corporate retirement plan where business owners and their employees can get a tax deduction when they save for retirement.

An IRA is an individual retirement plan where you can get a tax deduction when you save for retirement.

The major difference between Roth retirement accounts and

traditional retirement accounts is when your money gets taxed — either before you save it for retirement, or after you withdraw it from the fund.

With a traditional 401(k) or Individual Retirement Account (IRA), contributions, and any income or gains earned over time, are taxed when funds are withdrawn in the future.

However, both a Roth 401(k) for your company and a Roth IRA allow individuals and business owners to save for retirement using income that's already been taxed. The big benefit for putting money into a Roth account is that, because it's taxed later, it will grow tax-free forever and with no penalties on withdrawal.

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The federal Secure Act 2.0 gives workers more options to save for retirement. Jacoblund / Getty Images/iStockphoto