

Gaylord Specialty Healthcare Announces Sonja LaBarbera as President and CEO

Former Chief Operating Officer Appointed to Head Leading Provider of Medically Complex Care and Rehabilitative Services

WALLINGFORD, CONNECTICUT, January 18, 2019 – Sonja LaBarbera has been appointed the first female Chief Executive Officer and President of Gaylord Specialty Healthcare in the health care system's 117-year history. LaBarbera assumed the position following the retirement of prior CEO, George Kyriacou.

LaBarbera arrived at Gaylord Specialty Healthcare 14 years ago in the position of Director of Inpatient Therapy and ascended the ranks to become Chief Operating Officer. It was in this position that she played a vital role in increasing system-wide volumes and patient satisfaction scores and more than tripled the size and scope of Gaylord's outpatient Physical Therapy, Orthopedics and Sports Medicine program.

George Kyriacou, who retired as CEO at the end of 2018, attributes much of Gaylord's success over the last decade to Sonja's dynamic personality. "Not only is she full of energy, but she's bursting with ideas and has the rare ability to make things happen quickly and effectively."

He explained that Sonja is a leader for the future, a trait he called "increasingly important and rare in a healthcare system that's in constant flux."

Robert Lyons, Chairman of Gaylord's Board of Directors explained, "It's imperative to identify leaders who can position our organization for the future and do it in a positive, cost-effective way that meets patients' needs and delivers integrated care. Sonja epitomizes someone who can take Gaylord from where it is today to where it needs to be tomorrow."

LaBarbera's peers say that she is committed to patient-centric care and is often overheard saying, "It is always about the patient." More than her trademark motto, her staff explain that it is a litmus test for every decision she makes.

"I am very excited to start this new chapter of my career at Gaylord," LaBarbera recently wrote in a letter addressing employees. "What Gaylord offers is truly unique. Our outcomes are among the best in the country, which is a reflection of our commitment. As a team, we are making tremendous progress toward growing our reputation as a provider of choice for rehabilitation and complex medical management. The forward momentum is exciting!"

Sonja LaBarbera resides in Wallingford.

About Gaylord Specialty Healthcare

Gaylord Specialty Healthcare is a not-for-profit healthcare system that provides medically complex care and rehabilitation services to more than 10,000 patients a year. Headquartered in Wallingford, Connecticut, the system is comprised of three outpatient centers including a Center for Concussion Care and a 137-bed long-term acute care hospital widely recognized for its expertise in brain injury, spinal cord injury, stroke, and cardiopulmonary care.

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