



PRESS RELEASE
(for immediate release)

Healthcare Summit shifts to fully virtual, like other HERO events

Healthcare Summit will move to November 2, 2021 in fully virtual platform

RALEIGH, NC (September 24, 2021) – The Health Enhancement Research Organization (HERO) has shifted the annual Forum conference to a fully virtual event. With this decision, the HERO Healthcare Summit will pivot to a fully virtual event and take place on Tuesday, November 2, 2021, from 10:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. CDT.

The 2021 Healthcare Summit topic is “*Caring for the Caregiver: Addressing the Emotional and Mental Well-being of Healthcare Workers.*” The emotional tolls of the COVID-19 pandemic, stay-at-home orders, and social unrest brought new visibility to underlying societal issues of racism, inequity, and mental distress inadequately addressed in prior years. In 2020, the census estimated that 48% of American adults had faced feelings of hopelessness or depression in the last year, an increase of more than double the measured result in 2019. In late 2020, a survey of over 1,100 healthcare workers by Mental Health America found that 93% of healthcare workers were experiencing stress, 86% reported experiencing anxiety, 77% reported frustration, 76% reported exhaustion and burnout, and 75% said they were overwhelmed.

The confirmed speakers for the 2021 Healthcare Summit are **Victor J. Stretcher**, PhD, MPH, a Professor at the University of Michigan School of Public Health and the Founder and Chief Purpose Officer with Kumanu; **Greg Braylock, Jr.**, the Vice President and Chief Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Officer for ProMedica; **Kristi McClure**, MSN, RN, an Advisor, Provider and Associate Well-Being Co-Chair for OhioHealth Well-Being Collaborative; **Jen Wright**, MPH, Director of Working Well, SC Hospital Association; **Susan L. Johnson**, PhD, Director of Health Promotion at the Medical University of South Carolina; **Toweya A. Brown-Ochs**, Director of Diversity & Inclusion at HealthPartners, **Meghan Krause**, MPH, MA, NBC-HWC, LMC, Senior Well-Being Program Manager at HealthPartners, and **Abigail Wright**, Manager of Well-Being Management at HealthPartners.

Healthcare workers have been increasingly burdened by the incredible demands on the front lines and at home. The impact of ongoing mental and emotional distress is projected to continue into the foreseeable future. These issues will continue to influence the well-being needs of our employees, their families, and our communities for months and years to come. As a result, healthcare organizations will need to find new models for effectively addressing employees’ mental and emotional resilience and well-being.

*“I’m excited to co-chair an event with well-being at the forefront of each conversation,” says **Ryan Sledge, co-chair of the HERO Healthcare Summit.** “We have an incredible opportunity through the summit’s sessions to look closely at the way the events of 2020 changed the landscape for our healthcare workers. As the pandemic continues, emotional and mental well-being is vital to the continued support of our healthcare workers. Our caregivers continue to show up for their patients. It’s our turn to support and focus on wellness now more than ever.”*

HEROForum21 and the Health Care Summit were originally scheduled to take place in Austin, Texas during the week of October 11th through the 15th, 2021 at the Renaissance Austin Hotel. As the Delta variant continues to take a strong hold in the U.S. and cases rise, HERO believes in the duty and responsibility of promoting safe practices and supporting public health in this dire time. HERO is committed to preventing the spread of COVID-19 and encourages that all those able should receive the COVID-19 vaccination as well as follow CDC guidelines. HERO will continue to monitor the state of the pandemic for future meetings and events in 2022.

###

Crystle Helderman, HERO, Director of Communications (408) 516-4472

crystle.helderman@hero-health.org

About HERO – HERO (Health Enhancement Research Organization) is a not-for-profit, 501(c)(3) corporation that was established in 1996. HERO is dedicated to identifying and sharing best practices that improve the health and well-being of employees, their families, and communities. To learn more, visit www.hero-health.org. Follow us on Twitter [@heroehm](https://twitter.com/heroehm) or [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/company/heroehm).