

# Leader Profile



## Leader Profile: Roy Vinyard

President / CEO

*Asante Health System*

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***— Roy Vinyard***

## Health system CEO leads team with focus on quality

When a new employee arrives at Asante Health System, the person sitting on the opposite side of the table during orientation is often Roy Vinyard, the system’s president and chief executive officer.

Vinyard says it’s important that either he or one of the system’s two hospital CEOs personally explain the Asante vision, values and leadership model to new employees. We need to make sure they understand how their jobs contribute to the organization’s overall mission, he says. Having a senior executive at orientation also shows new employees that regardless of their role, they are all playing for the same team, Vinyard explains.

Vinyard leads the Asante team with an emphasis on clinical quality, passion about the system’s mission and regard for the importance of uniting physicians and employees around common goals. Although the system has many different operations, Asante’s vision is straightforward and unifying, Vinyard says. Simply put, it is to be recognized for medical excellence, outstanding customer service and a welcoming work environment.

Asante serves a 10-county region in southern Oregon and northern California through its flagship hospital, 375-bed Rogue Valley Medical Center, in Medford, and 123-bed Three Rivers Community Hospital in nearby Grants Pass, Oregon. The system also operates Hearthstone, a 151-bed skilled nursing and Alzheimer’s treatment facility; Genesis Recovery Center, an alcohol and drug addiction treatment center; and Asante Work Health, an occupational medicine facility that serves employers in Oregon, California and Idaho.

To create a leadership team that embodies the system’s five pillars of excellence — care of the community, care of the patient, physician relations, employee engagement and financial accountability — Vinyard chose individuals who have a passion for clinical quality, an ability to work well with others and build bridges between physicians and other staff. “Each leader should be willing to develop others within the organization and prioritize the organization’s goals over their personal ones,” says Vinyard.

Kent Brown, the chief executive officer of Rogue Valley Medical Center, exemplifies this type of leadership, Vinyard says. Brown was hired as CEO of the flagship hospital in April 2007, after serving as senior vice president and chief operating officer at Holmes Regional Medical Center in Melbourne, Florida. With a background that includes a bachelor’s degree in pharmacy and time spent as the director of pharmacy at a hospital in the 1980s, Brown brought a breadth of career experience to the job that many other hospital managers might not have. “That clinical background helps him connect with clinical people in our organization,” Vinyard says.

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In less than two years, Brown has helped create a new strategic plan for Asante. Brown, an avid storyteller, communicates complex topics with passion to his colleagues within the hospital and system. “Kent has shown an ability to work in a team environment, and to me that was just as important, if not more so, than his leadership abilities,” says Vinyard.

Before Brown came to Asante, the leaders of the system’s two hospitals held senior-vice-president titles. Vinyard recalls that when he changed those titles to CEO, employees within the organization began approaching him saying how sorry they were to hear he was leaving.

“That helped me understand how much confusion there can be about the role of a CEO of an individual entity as opposed to the CEO of an organization,” he says. The title change, however, was a deliberate decision to make it clear who was in charge of each individual hospital, Vinyard says. “Kent has the decision-making authority for Rogue Valley Medical Center.”

This clarity was especially important in forging relationships with physicians and helping them understand that in dealing with Brown, they would have direct access to the person who had the power to make decisions and commitments for the hospital, Vinyard says.

Vinyard’s self-described management style is “humble but fairly driven by high expectations,” and he’s not shy about giving credit for the success of others. The rewards of seeing Asante’s positive impact on the community are enhanced by the satisfaction of seeing leaders develop and grow within the organization, he says.

In addition to his dedication to the Asante team, Vinyard is an avid supporter of the other team close to his heart: his family. He carves out time for his three sons’ baseball games even if it means putting them on his calendar two months in advance. “I jealously guard that time,” he says. “If it’s a 5:30 baseball game and there’s a request for a physician meeting at the same time, unless it is absolutely going to harm our organization, I’m not going to schedule it.”

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