

# Leader Profile



## Leader Profile:

### Andy Carter CEO

Visiting Nurse Associations  
of America (VNAA)

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**— Andy Carter**

## Collaboration and action equal results

In their search for a new CEO, the Visiting Nurse Associations of America (VNAA) Board of Directors knew they needed a leader who could not only articulate a vision, but also drive the development and execution of plans to realize that vision. They needed a leader with experience and a thorough understanding of healthcare policymaking, delivery and innovation. Their new CEO must have the strength and presence required to effectively advocate for home health care on the national stage. They wanted a strategist, negotiator and collaborator, who would consistently produce outstanding results.

Andy Carter is that CEO. When he agreed to lead VNAA, he thoroughly understood the challenges his member Visiting Nurse Associations (VNAs) were facing. And he came to the job with the experience, energy and drive to get things done fast.

“Our members have a century-old tradition of providing access to quality health care to everyone at every economic level in the community,” he said. “The challenge to VNAs now is that payors place less value than they used to on the traditional VNA patterns of care. We need to help our members adapt to this changing landscape and seize the opportunities that reside in innovative technologies and innovative thinking.”

Outcomes is a word Andy knows is critical to his members, their employees and their patients and families. “VNAs are under unbelievable pressure to continue to provide high-quality care and good outcomes while squeezing every bit of cost out of their operations that they can,” he said. “At the same time, we need to convince public and private payors that community-based non-profit home care is a resource worth their investment.”

Andy relies on a wealth of experience in health care gained from a variety of perspectives. He began his career in Baltimore as a community organizer and lobbyist working on basic healthcare policy issues, especially on behalf of people with lower incomes. A seven-year tenure in Massachusetts state government, mostly as a budget officer, enriched his understanding of the needs and accountabilities of public payors.

Andy’s time with a company that enrolled Medicaid beneficiaries in healthcare plans gave him insight into the factors that influence decision-making in managed care companies. And in seven years of association leadership at the state and now the national level, he has turned his experience to action and produced exceptional, measurable results.

Collaboration is fundamental to Andy’s approach to leadership, and he hit the ground running with VNAA. “After I started in this job in April 2007, one of my first priorities was to visit or call each of our member CEOs to talk about how their national advocacy organization could help them continue to succeed in a landscape that is changing on all fronts: reimbursement, competition and patient population,” he said.

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The result of the talks sparked by Andy’s fact-finding tour was a clear consensus mandate for VNAA:

- Help members recruit and retain nurses.
- Work to enable access to the technologies, like home-based telemonitoring, that will help VNAs manage costs without sacrificing quality.
- Convince payors that home health care — especially mission-driven, not-for-profit home care — continues to be a good healthcare value.

The member mandate to the national association provides a clear roadmap for strategic and action planning — and for the action-oriented CEO. He began by relocating VNAA’s headquarters to Washington, D.C., from Boston, a bold move for a new executive, and one that is paying dividends in higher visibility and greater access to legislators and regulators. Today, says Andy, “We’re ahead of the game.”

Andy theorizes that growing up as the youngest of seven children may be the source of his bias toward action as well as his ability to build consensus. “I learned very early how to work with others and help them work with each other,” he said. “I figured out what everyone wanted, what they really needed and how those things interacted. And I learned that once we agreed, we had to act quickly or risk losing our momentum.”

The lessons of childhood served as a strong foundation as Andy turned the same skills — commitment, collaboration, understanding the issues and their impact on all parties — to navigating the politics of community organizing and public policy debate.

Collaboration plus action equals results in every arena. Most notably, in his role as president of the Ohio Children’s Hospital Association, Andy led initiatives that grew members’ revenue by \$60 million in just four years. He points out that to achieve the same kinds of results for America’s VNAs, he must not only build consensus but also serve as the catalyst that drives his members to action.

“Our members are impatient for results,” he said. “They hold me accountable, and that’s fine with me. I believe in VNAs. I’m excited about seeing our members partner with business in areas like immunization. I want all Americans, urban and rural, to be clear about the value VNAs deliver.”

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*Witt/Kieffer is proud to have consulted with the VNAA on this important executive search assignment.*

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