

Liz Dudek Brings Wealth of Healthcare Knowledge to New Role at Greenberg Traurig

BY VANESSA ORR

As a Florida state employee for more than 42 years, Liz Dudek has had many career successes, most notably in her role as the secretary of the Agency for Health Care Administration and as deputy secretary of Health Quality Assurance. Despite being able to handle almost any task that came her way, however, she did not excel at her next venture - retirement.

"I was sitting at home, thinking about how the windows needed to be washed," she laughed. "That's when I understood that I had too much time on my hands."

Realizing that she wasn't ready to retire, Dudek looked for her next opportunity, which she found at law firm Greenberg Traurig P.A., where she now serves as director of healthcare affairs. "I was blessed with many offers, but this position gave me the opportunity to move from the public side of things where I'd always worked to the private side," said Dudek, adding that her decision was made easier because she's known some of the partners in the firm's Tallahassee office since the 1980s.

In her new role, Dudek helps the firm's clients navigate the healthcare system, interact with agencies, and better understand legislative affairs and their accompanying issues.

"It's very exciting to be a part of this team; they know every nook and cranny of transactional law," she said. "My strength lies in knowing the processes in the state, the people, and the approaches to take; I can provide an education on what is required and set up the linkages to pull things together and move forward."

"I especially like strategizing with clients about how to achieve their goals," she added. "Are their goals realistic? And if not, what can we do to bring them closer to what they want to accomplish?"

Dudek has a history of making things happen; as secretary of the Agency for Health Care Administration from 2010-16, she oversaw one of the largest Medicaid programs in the nation.

She and her staff successfully implemented the Statewide Medicaid Managed Care Program, moving the vast majority of Medicaid patients from a fee-for-service program to a managed care program, and also established the Care Provider Background Screening Clearinghouse.



Liz Dudek

"The screening clearinghouse envelops all managed healthcare plans, providers, and health and social service agencies in the state so that someone like a physician, who once needed four separate background screenings to work in different places, can now come to a one-stop shop. It's a much more simplified process," she explained.

As a result of her experience in healthcare, Dudek hopes to make things easier for clients in the industry, even as it continues to evolve. "In addition to watching what's happening on a federal level, there's a lot going on in the state," she explained, noting that the legislative process is beginning earlier each year.

"Baby Boomers are coming into their own, and we need to be on top of the types of healthcare services they need," she added. "We need to look at what living in the electronic age means to healthcare delivery, and to prepare for the fact that healthcare is moving to an outpatient or at-home basis."

As the trend toward "bedless" hospitals grows, the industry also needs to look at how to fund programs such as telemedicine, as well as where to find and train the future workforce, according to Dudek. "How do we get individuals interested in hands-on nursing, especially when there are fewer of the next generation to staff the needs of aging Baby Boomers?" she asked.

"And of course, finding ways to fund mental health services is a huge issue," she continued. "On top of the opioid crisis, substance abuse permeates everything. Providing better mental health services means fewer ER visits, less homelessness, less child abuse, fewer kids born into the Medicaid program, and a better economy."

Having experienced the headaches of navigating the healthcare industry as a consumer in retirement, Dudek is happy that she's now in a position to help steer clients at Greenberg Traurig through their own legislative and agency hurdles. "There are so many bits and pieces," she said. "It's a very complicated process."

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