

AHLA Leadership & Career Development Program

Session Descriptions • June 27–28, 2026 • New York Hilton Midtown

■ Joint Sessions ■ Emerging Professionals Track ■ Experienced Health Law Professional Track

View Full Session Description,

<https://www.americanhealthlaw.org/ahla-leadership-career-development-program/schedule>

View/Print Presentations (PPTs and additional resource documents),

<https://www.americanhealthlaw.org/ahla-membership/lcdp-program-materials>

JOINT SESSIONS

Generational Dynamics & Expectations

Saturday, June 27 | 10:00–10:50 am | Gramercy West Room, Second Floor

Speakers: Mara Smith, Moderator (Bristol Myers Squibb); Jim Flynn (Bricker Graydon); Halle Diaz (Husch Blackwell LLP)

This opening session brings all participants together to explore how generational differences shape collaboration, leadership, and organizational culture — and how to turn those differences into strengths.

Session goals:

- Build practical strategies for effective cross-generational teams.
- Examine how technology and varied workplace locations are shifting expectations across generations.
- Challenge assumptions, highlight diverse perspectives, and explore reverse mentoring.

Conflict Resolution: An Essential Skill

Saturday, June 27 | 2:15–3:05 pm | Gramercy West Room, Second Floor

Speakers: Kim Harvey Looney (Epstein Becker & Green PC); Kathy Roe (Health Law Consultancy)

Practical frameworks for identifying, addressing, and resolving conflict constructively — with attention to how effective leaders use disagreement as a catalyst for better decisions and stronger relationships.

Presenters will address—

- What conflict is — and how it can be both a challenge and an opportunity
- Healthy vs. unhealthy responses to conflict
- Steps for effective resolution and the benefits of developing this skill

Leadership, Ethics, and Governance Foresight: Real-Life Scenarios

Sunday, June 28 | 10:00–10:50 am | Gramercy West Room, Second Floor

Speakers: Jim Flynn (Bricker Graydon); Chris Carnahan (VMG Health); Kim Harvey Looney (Epstein Becker & Green PC)

Participants work through realistic scenarios drawn from governance, ethics, and strategic decision-making — applying frameworks developed throughout the program to real-world leadership dilemmas.

Career Pathways: Jungle Gym v. Ladder + Office Hours

Sunday, June 28 | 11:00 am–12:30 pm | Gramercy West Room, Second Floor

Speakers: Andrea Ferrari (Hancock Daniel & Johnson PC); Jody Joiner (Sound Physicians); Melissa Myers (Cleveland Clinic)

A fireside chat with interactive polling and visual aids exploring non-linear career paths — real stories, key pivot points, and practical tools for navigating what comes next.

Office Hours (Noon–12:30 pm): Fellows and senior leaders available for informal one-on-one conversation following the panel.

Program Wrap-Up: Commitments, Connections, and Next Steps

Sunday, June 28 | 2:00–2:50 pm | Gramercy West Room, Second Floor

Speakers: Mark Kopson (Plunkett Cooney); Avery Schumacher (Epstein Becker & Green PC)

Two days of conversation, connection, and challenge culminate here — not with a conclusion, but with a charge. Mark and Avery will offer brief remarks on staying connected through AHLA's Mentoring Program, volunteer opportunities at every level, and the broader health law community built this weekend. Participants will also complete a short program evaluation.

EMERGING PROFESSIONALS TRACK

Strategic (and Organic) Networking

Saturday, June 27 | 11:00–11:50 am | *Gramercy East Room, Second Floor*

Speakers: Avery Schumacher (Epstein Becker & Green PC); Mara Smith (Bristol Myers Squibb)

Networking reframed as a career-long practice rather than a transactional skill — with practical, authentic strategies for building professional community within AHLA and across the health law field.

Proposals, Presentations, and Speaking Skills

Saturday, June 27 | Noon–12:50 pm | *Gramercy East Room, Second Floor*

Speakers: Marc Goldstone (Wellpath); Julia Michael (K Health)

A hands-on workshop covering proposal writing, slide design, and speaking techniques — practical tools for first-time speakers and seasoned presenters alike.

Leading Volunteers Effectively

Saturday, June 27 | 3:15–4:05 pm | *Gramercy East Room, Second Floor*

Speakers: Karen Palmersheim (Cigna); Adam Greene (Davis Wright and Tremaine)

Volunteer leadership requires influence and shared purpose rather than formal authority. Designed for emerging professionals stepping into volunteer roles within AHLA and beyond.

Fundamentals of Governance

Saturday, June 27 | 4:15–5:05 pm | *Gramercy East Room, Second Floor*

Speakers: Rob Gerberry (University of Notre Dame); Brian White (Wake Forest University)

A practical session demystifying the structures, responsibilities, and decision-making processes of organizational governance — giving emerging professionals the context to participate meaningfully and lead with confidence.

EXPERIENCED HEALTH LAW PROFESSIONAL TRACK

Mentoring, Sponsorship, Championing and Coaching Emerging Professionals

Saturday, June 27 | 11:00–11:50 am | Gramercy West Room, Second Floor

Speakers: Michael Schaff (Wilentz Goldman & Spitzer); Lisa Vandecavaye; Elisabeth Belmont (Maine Health)

Sponsorship, championing, and coaching remain underutilized levers for building the leadership pipeline. This session shifts from advice to action — examining how experienced leaders use influence and institutional access to create real opportunities for those earlier in their careers.

Styles and Traits of Successful Leaders

Saturday, June 27 | Noon–12:50 pm | Gramercy West Room, Second Floor

Speakers: Terri Meldrum (VNS Health); Michelle Tidjani-Johnson (CommonSpirit Health); Earl Barnes (Sentara Health)

Successful leaders understand their own style while staying adaptable to context. This panel examines the habits, mindsets, and inflection points that distinguish strong leaders in the health law community.

Session goals:

- Identify qualities that sustain credibility, influence, and resilience across career stages.
- Explore how leaders navigate friction with colleagues, superiors, or counterproductive environments.
- Examine when growth requires change — within a role, reshaping an organization, or moving on.

Governance & Organizational Stewardship

Saturday, June 27 | 3:15–4:05 pm | Gramercy West Room, Second Floor

Speakers: Mark Kopson (Plunkett Cooney); Craig Holden (S.C. Holden Dispute Resolution); Cynthia Wisner (Trinity Health)

A fireside chat grounded in real-life scenarios examining what it means to steward an organization with integrity and a long view.

Presenters will discuss:

- Expectations of Board Members — before, during, and after meetings
- How boards reach decisions and address competing priorities
- Evaluating Board and Director performance

Strategic Planning: Inception to Implementation

Saturday, June 27 | 4:15–5:05 pm | Gramercy West Room, Second Floor

Speakers: Tom Shorter (Husch Blackwell LLP); Jamie McIntyre (Stout)

Strategic plans only deliver value when they translate into real decisions. This session explores how plans are built, how they evolve, and how individual leaders connect day-to-day work to broader mission.