

## Atlanta Hospital News

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### **Northlake Medical Center CEO and NAHSE Board Member Daniel Jackson: Shaping Healthcare in Atlanta While Helping Shape Future Healthcare Leaders**

By John Fries

Daniel Jackson has always had a passion for health care and medicine and at one point, planned to become a physician. However, along the way, he discovered another career path—the one that leads to a career in hospital administration. He took that path, never looked back, and the rest, as they say, is history. Today, Jackson is CEO of Northlake Medical Center, a 120-bed, med/surg hospital in Tucker, Georgia, part of the Atlanta Metro area.

“I stumbled on my career path in 1996,” says Jackson of his then-sudden realization that he could pursue a career path that not only included medicine, but business and government relations as well. “Health care administration provides me with a perfect match for my interests. It’s a very rewarding career.”

Jackson is relatively new at Northlake, an HCA-owned facility, having only been there nine months. Before that, he served as CEO of Allegheny Regional Hospital in Virginia, a 190-bed hospital. Prior to that, as supply chain officer for HCA’s Central Atlantic Division, he led and supervised material management and supply chain activities for over 4,500 licensed beds in 18 hospitals located in Virginia, West Virginia and New Hampshire. Additionally, he worked at CJW Medical Centers in Richmond, Virginia and at HCA’s corporate headquarters in Nashville, Tennessee.

For the Warner Robins, Georgia native and graduate of Morehouse College and Meharry Medical College, Northlake provided an opportunity to return home.

“Atlanta is a competitive market,” he says. “And Northlake is a great facility. We’re a relatively small community hospital, but because we’re located in the Metro area, we have tremendous potential for growth.”

The growth is already happening, according to Jackson, “but it’s a growth in depth, not size. Often, at a large hospital, people can get lost in the shuffle. At Northlake, we’re small enough to be personal, but have a depth of capabilities that allow us to provide an extensive range of care.”

He described his vision for Northlake’s future. “We want to provide a full range of related services within key product lines,” he said. In 2003, Northlake introduced a women’s cancer program which will soon grow to encompass surgical and medical oncology for men and women. In April, the hospital will introduce a diagnostic imaging center for women, and after that, plans call for expansion of Northlake’s plastic surgery capabilities, with an emphasis on breast reconstruction following cancer surgery.

Another area for expansion is within the hospital's already strong podiatry program, anchored by Northlake's nationally known, three-year podiatry residency program. The program is staffed by highly credentialed foot and ankle experts and includes a monthly amputee clinic. Soon, patients will have convenient access to foot and ankle care, an amputee clinic and vascular surgery services, all in one place.

According to Jackson, the goal is to be a destination point for oncology, podiatry, orthopedics, imaging and surgical services. "We focus our initiatives on offering healthcare services that address the needs of the community we serve," he said. "But, our highest priority is providing quality care that is no less than what we would want for our own family members."

Over the years, Jackson has more than proven himself as an excellent leader and administrator. Although his skills, experience and results speak for themselves, he is also quick to credit his active involvement in the National Association of Health Services Executives (NAHSE), a non-profit association of African American healthcare executives, as playing a key role in his success. Founded in 1968, NAHSE has two key goals—to promote the development and advancement of black healthcare leaders and to elevate the quality of care provided to minorities and underserved communities.

Jackson has been a NAHSE member since 1996 and calls it "a huge resource for African Americans," adding that the organization helps its members by providing such services as problem solving, mentoring and advice. Earlier in his career, Jackson experienced the mentoring offered by the organization, and today, he's glad to share his knowledge and guidance with NAHSE members who are on their way to becoming the next generation of healthcare executives--in fact, he recently joined NAHSE's board of directors. He adds that only about two percent of healthcare executives are members of minority groups. "Many people in minority groups aren't even aware of healthcare administration as a career path," he says.

He speaks as enthusiastically about his NAHSE role as he does about his position at Northlake Medical Center. "I'm passionate about health care," he says. "And I'm just as passionate about NAHSE's role as a beacon for others."

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