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# Healthcare

C O N T R A C T I N G

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## Ten People to Watch



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## Paul Norris

executive director of  
pharmacy services,  
materials management,  
nutritional support team,  
GI lab

**Loma Linda University  
Medical Center  
Loma Linda, Calif.**

Five hospitals, five retail stores, one homecare pharmacy, two infusion centers, four hospital pharmacies, 900 beds, approximately \$300 million purchasing volume, \$1 billion in annual spend.

**Paul Norris joined Loma Linda University Medical Center** 30 years ago, after graduating from Pacific Pharmacy School with a Pharm. D. He became the executive director of pharmacy services 20 years ago, and 10 years ago, expanded that role to include responsibilities as executive director of materials management as well. Norris' pharmacy responsibilities entail oversight of all pharmacy operations for the entire health system, including the GI lab and nutritional support team. As executive director of materials management, he is charged with ensuring the organization uses products that are clinically accepted by its clinicians and obtainable at the best possible price. In addition, Norris is associate dean of clinical affairs and a professor of pharmaceutical outcome

from that, and Intermountain Healthcare does its job well.

**JHC:** Describe a project you are excited to implement in the near future.

**Norris:** I am excited about developing partnerships with local, regional and national organizations to develop a strong association and drive cost out of our system in conjunction with our buying group, Amerinet. I am also excited about developing partnerships with companies that can help us streamline our processes, using software applications that will give us the tools to do our job extremely well. For instance, we are scheduled to meet with one company that I believe can help us with the tools to obtain data in a timely manner.

**I think we are going to become much more automated, with direct links to suppliers and manufacturers.**

science at the Loma Linda University School of Pharmacy.

**The Journal of Healthcare Contracting:** What has been the most challenging and rewarding project you have been involved in recently?

**Paul Norris:** Together with my team, I am in the process of revamping our materials management department into a total supply chain management organization. This will include decentralizing some of our processes to get closer to our customers and patients, as well as staffing the right people in the right positions with the tools they will need to do their jobs. We have been working with Intermountain Healthcare (Salt Lake City, Utah) in order to learn from individuals who do something well, not just those who are charting new territory. I like to look at others' best practices and learn

**JHC:** What is the most important quality you look for in a supply partner?

**Norris:** I look for integrity in my suppliers. I want to work with a supplier that is looking out for the medical center's best interest, as well as their own. I can think of several organizations that fall into this category, including McKesson, Amerinet, Professional Hospital Supply and B. Braun.

**JHC:** What is the biggest change we can expect to see in healthcare contracting in the next five years?

**Norris:** I think we are going to become much more automated, with direct links to suppliers and manufacturers. The system will be real-time and electronic, and we will be able to make daily decisions instantly, based on what is best for our organization.

# Ten People to Watch



## Martha G. Smith

statewide director  
of nursing and  
standardization

Louisiana State  
University Health  
Sciences Center  
New Orleans, La.

Nine statewide facilities,  
1,064 licensed beds

**Martha Smith joined the Health Sciences Center- Louisiana State University Health Care Services Division (LSUHSCSD) in 2002.** Since then, she has been responsible for writing and implementing procedures and policies for the healthcare system. Today, her responsibilities have broadened with the addition of her role as associate hospital administrator for patient care services at the Interim LSU Hospital in New Orleans (formerly Charity Hospital).

### *The Journal of Healthcare Contracting:*

What has been the most challenging and rewarding project you have been involved in recently?

**Martha Smith:** Working to standardize to one product in such categories as automatic implantable cardioverter defibrillators, pacemakers, implants, maxillofacial products, trauma products,

the next 12 months, we will look at all items on the shelves in our central supply areas to determine where we can find the next round of savings. It has been exciting working with our vendors and forming working partnerships that go far beyond the usual vendor-facility relationship. Working together to provide our patients with necessary supplies and equipment, providing clinically acceptable products, and giving quality care in a safe setting is the reason I go to work every day.

**JHC:** What is the most important quality you look for in a supply partner?

**Smith:** Many of our vendors rose to the challenge in the aftermath of hurricanes Katrina and Gustave. A number of them have developed or expanded their indigent programs

## These vendors have always been ethical and honest, and they have worked with us on pricing when we have had limited budgets.

radiology and cardiology for all nine LSU facilities has been challenging. Last year, I led a particularly rewarding standardization project. All of our physicians attended the meeting prior to Amerinet sending out the bids. Bids were sent only to those vendors agreed upon by the physicians. After receiving the bids, the physicians were not always happy, but they agreed on the lowest-priced vendors and understood that the savings from these categories were going to help fund other medical supplies. The process worked because it was truly a team effort. Everyone involved realized the importance of obtaining clinically acceptable products while saving money at the same time. That feeling of accomplishment was wonderful.

**JHC:** Describe a project you are excited to implement in the near future.

**Smith:** To date, we have successfully standardized all high volume/high dollar supplies. Over

to assist in getting our indigent patients the supplies and equipment they need while in the facilities or after they go home. It is important that the suppliers and facilities work together as a team. Several of our longtime vendors whom I feel work well on our team are Spacelabs, KCI, Covidien and Molnlycke. These vendors have always been ethical and honest, and they have worked with us on pricing when we have had limited budgets.

**JHC:** What is the biggest change we can expect to see in healthcare contracting in the next five years?

**Smith:** The future of healthcare is very scary, and no one can predict the direction it will take in the next couple of months. I think that being a part of a GPO will be a must. Leveraging volume from the GPO facilities will be necessary to drive prices down.