

## EXECUTIVE SEARCH



## PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

SEARCH CONDUCTED BY

**STERLING** | **MARTIN**  
a s s o c i a t e s

## THE OPPORTUNITY

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Mental Health America (MHA) is launching a search for its next President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO). Since its founding in 1909, MHA's mission has been to promote mental health for all. Its focus is prevention for all; early identification and intervention for those at risk; integrated health, behavioral health, and other services and supports for those who need them; with recovery as the goal.

Since 2014, its guiding message has been characterized by the B4Stage4 (Before Stage Four) philosophy: that mental health and substance use conditions are the only conditions we wait until stage four to treat, as a matter of public policy, and we **must** act before stage four. At the foundation of MHA's program, policy, and advocacy work is its commitment to antiracism. MHA characterizes racism and antiracism not as terms of judgment about individuals, but as descriptive terms that can be applied to public policies, as well as public and private systems and practices.

MHA is seeking a visionary leader who will work closely with the Board of Directors to set long-term objectives and policy directions for the largest mental health group in the U.S. The President and CEO will guide MHA's response to the current economic and political climate, including how the organization's programs and services will need to adapt to meet current challenges. The role includes extensive outreach, as well as ongoing support for MHA's network of state and local affiliates.

## MHA: AN OVERVIEW

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Collectively, MHA and its 160+ state and local affiliates are characterized as one of the 70 largest nonprofit organizations in the U.S., larger than any other mental health group. The affiliate community is the backbone of that structure, employing thousands of people with collective annual revenues of more than \$300 million. MHA affiliates are independent, 501(c)3 nonprofit organizations. They range in size from small (nearly all volunteer staff) to some with more than \$40 million in revenue each year. MHA's affiliates act as members of the national nonprofit, are subject to periodic reaffiliation by MHA, and formally elect MHA Board members at a delegate assembly once a year.

At the national level, MHA is based in Alexandria, VA. Its 2020 revenues will be near \$6M, and it employs a staff of approximately 30. The most distinct structural differences between MHA and its affiliates are that many affiliates are direct-service organizations that generate roughly 50 percent of their revenues from government sources; MHA's national office receives only a small fraction of its revenues from government agencies.

MHA is a stable organization financially. The organization has had a surplus for six straight years and has grown its budget and operations at least 10% per year since 2014. Major funding sources include corporate donors (both industry and non-industry), individual giving (primarily through online and social media channels), and program service revenue (affiliate dues and conference registrations).

## MHA's Constituency and Associate Member Network

As a national advocacy organization, MHA is nearing 1 million followers across its social media platforms. Ten million people visit its primary website each year, and more than 100,000 people are on its email list. These numbers are growing rapidly. MHA's constituency cuts across all groups but is younger and more female than the population as a whole.

MHA supports an Associate Member Network, which is open to for-profit and nonprofit organizations, community-based behavioral health providers, and other professions and fields whose missions support and/or reflect MHA's mission.

## Structure of MHA

The MHA Board, which ranges from 18 to 24 members, is broadly representative of the population of the nation. Board members are recruited with an eye toward diversity and inclusion of a broad range of experiences and expertise, and representatives from the affiliate community are always included.

MHA values its employees highly, and puts a premium on creating and maintaining a workplace environment that is friendly, supportive, relaxed, and productive; maintaining an organizational chart that is as flat as possible; fostering a work ethic that values collaboration, independence, and empowerment as roads to productivity; and implementing policies and programs that encourage work/life balance. Prior to the pandemic—during which all staff are working remotely—MHA permitted remote work and had full-time employees working in Georgia, Colorado, California, Florida, Pennsylvania, New York, Utah, and Germany.

## MHA's Programs

While MHA has many initiatives, the following are among its best known. They serve as examples of the types of programs it undertakes:

**Mental Health Month:** the nation's oldest and most ubiquitous mental health awareness and education program

**MHA Screening:** the nation's most successful ongoing early identification system, through which more than 6 million people have taken and free, anonymous online screening

**Screening-to-Supports (S2S):** a groundbreaking digital support system that users can navigate after screening, serving millions each year

**The State of Mental Health in America:** an annual report comparing states' status and access to mental health

**Bell Seal for Workplace Mental Health:** recognition to employers that implement practices that improve workplace mental health

**MHA Annual Conference:** typically held in June in D.C. (750+ individuals); 2020 conference was virtual (10,000 participants on the first day, 6,000 on the second)

**Center for Peer Support:** a national uniformed certified peer specialist credential and additional support for peer-based initiatives

**Regional Policy Council (RPC):** a quarterly conference through which MHA and other organizations offer training and education to state and local officials and advocates on issues relevant to federal, state, and local legislative initiatives

**Public Education:** educational and awareness materials that mark all regular mental health-related calendar events during the year

**Beyond Awareness Young Adult Leadership (BAYAL):** programs, practices, products, leadership, and advocacy around mental health for young people

**IDONTMIND:** apparel, messaging, and engagement around promotion of mental health, especially among younger people

## MHA's Policy Initiatives

MHA engages in a wide range of policy advocacy work at the state and federal levels. Each affiliate works within their own networks and develops their own policy initiatives that may or may not mirror these initiatives. The following list highlights several that are favored (both as important to MHA's constituency and as antiracist in nature) and others that are opposed:

**Favor** universal screening for mental health, as is done for early stage cardiovascular disease, cancer, and hearing and seeing limitations

**Favor** fully integrating mental health into schools, including fully funding the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) so that all children with mental health conditions that affect their educational success can be given the individualized tools they need to succeed academically

**Oppose** the segregation of health and behavioral health services into separate and unequal systems, and instead **favor** integration of these services

**Favor** offering the full range of evidence-based services and supports to people with mental health conditions, and offering them the opportunity to choose those that most help them meet their self-defined recovery goals

**Favor** programs that recognize the importance of peers in recovery-oriented models

**Favor** the inclusion of peers in Medicare reimbursement

**Oppose** the incarceration of nonviolent offenders with serious mental illnesses

**Oppose** custodial care treatment programs for people with serious mental illnesses that offer few recovery-oriented practices and **favor** community and recovery-based interventions over criminal justice ones

**Favor** brain, drug, and other related research that is equitably inclusive of all populations who might benefit from it

**Favor** parity laws/programs that encourage people—across all communities and cultures—to become mental health professionals

**Oppose** physical and verbal violence, no matter who perpetrates it, because it contributes to poor mental health

**Favor** attending to and addressing vital conditions for, or social determinants of, health and mental health

# THE PRESIDENT AND CEO ROLE

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The President and CEO is responsible for the executive direction of MHA and its staff and functions as a leader in the MHA movement throughout the country.

## Critical Competencies for Success

### Board Interaction

- Maintain a close working relationship with the Executive Committee and Board of Directors (EC and Board), providing advice and counsel on policy issues and effective two-way communication and coordination on matters important to the overall policy direction and management of MHA
- Develop a strong collaborative working relationship with the Chairperson, Board, and EC; furnish information to include options and potential consequences of Board actions; and enable the Board and its Committees to make informed decisions
- Assist and advise the Board and EC by developing and directing the planning process to generate short and long-term objectives and strategies
- Communicate regularly with the Board about internal operations and external stakeholder communications; invite and encourage Board member participation in various events, as appropriate
- Implement Board policy via actionable management plans; provide strategic direction to senior management that will enable the effective execution of these plans

### General Management, Operations, and Financial Management

- Establish and implement short- and long-range organizational goals, objectives, policies, and operating procedures; write and maintain an ongoing business plan
- Oversee the design and implementation of systems to collect, maintain, and analyze data; monitor and evaluate program effectiveness; and effect changes required for improvement
- Identify and implement MHA's budgetary and fiscal goals to ensure financial viability
- Demonstrate strong financial management and leadership skills; manage large and complex budgets; identify areas for cost reduction and increased efficiencies; and communicate those recommendations to the Board and management
- Plan, develop, and implement strategies for generating resources and/or revenues; maintain an awareness of external funding opportunities and respond to those opportunities
- Develop plans and options for long-term funding sustainability
- Ensure compliance with all legal and statutory requirements

### External Relations

- Serve as the chief spokesperson for MHA; provide a vision and advocate for MHA at all opportunities
- Interact and communicate regularly with the public, elected officials, media, and other stakeholders to provide transparency and insight into MHA's mission and programs

- Represent MHA before Congress and federal administrative agencies on legislative and regulatory matters
- Represent MHA to funder organizations and help steward individuals with a major gift capacity; successfully ask for and solicit funds from these prospects
- Maintain effective working relationships with governmental agencies and elected officials (state, local, and federal) that deal with mental health, addictions, and health in order to encourage maximum cooperation and achieve the best results and allocation of resources for MHA
- Represent MHA before the news media in press conferences, interviews, radio and television appearances, and editorial board meetings
- Communicate with local, national, and international stakeholders through Leadership 18, the National Health Council, and other formal and informal groups; identify their needs, advance MHA's objectives, and advise the Board on new potential programs and advocacy initiatives
- Support ongoing consensus building within the field, relative to legislative and regulatory issues, as well as long-range strategic and operational planning
- Work effectively and persuasively with the business community, organized labor, public constituencies, NGOs, and other stakeholders

### **Affiliate Relations**

- Maintain open, consistent communication with affiliate CEOs; attend and speak at affiliate functions as invited
- Maintain an ongoing commitment to customer service by ensuring that staff meet affiliate needs within the resources available
- Balance the needs of and show sensitivity and appreciation for the diverse requirements of each affiliate; provide equitable time, resources, and recognition to each affiliate regardless of their level of involvement, commitment, or profile; and ensure that affiliates are treated fairly by MHA's policies, programs, and practices
- Ensure that MHA's programs adapt to emerging affiliate needs and continue to expose affiliates to the latest in policy, education, and service developments; remain responsive to the training and professional development needs of the field
- In partnership with affiliates that choose to do so, promote programs that lead to increased collaboration between national and affiliates

### **Program Direction**

- Develop and maintain a thorough knowledge of all MHA program, development, communications, education, innovation, policy, and advocacy efforts
- Oversee and/or develop effective and creative brand and marketing plans, advocacy programs, and affiliate programs that promote, educate, and stimulate new learning
- Oversee and participate in the planning and execution of MHA conferences, seminars, workshops, and committee activities
- Manage the resources of MHA consistent with the Board's policies to achieve efficient and effective programs and services

- Understand and respond to the current economic and political climate, including how this climate shapes the future of mental health
- Direct and challenge MHA to be innovative and person-focused, consistent with its roots

### Internal Relations

- Ensure that MHA's organizational structure, personnel practices, and management systems are efficient and effective
- Continuously examine the organizational structure; ensure that it fosters internal communication, empowers staff to make decisions, and promotes new thought inside the organization
- Create and implement competitive pay scales for staff
- Oversee the implementation of the diversity policy, including its EEO and Affirmative Action programs and antiracism efforts, both internally and externally
- Provide strategic vision and guidance to ensure successful employee development plans across all functions; support succession planning, mentoring, and training across all levels of the organization
- Empower managers to lead their departments and functions effectively; encourage collaboration across all functions; and foster an environment where staff are encouraged to identify new technologies, approaches, and ideas and present them to executive leadership
- Maintain an open-door policy where employees feel comfortable being able to approach the President/CEO; create opportunities for employees to communicate with the President/CEO, express new ideas, and discuss their thoughts and concerns
- Work with staff supervisors, the chief of staff, and the HR director to recruit and hire a well-qualified, diverse staff; oversee promotion and retention efforts

## CANDIDATE PROFILE

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### Experience/Qualifications

This is an exciting time for MHA. The next President and CEO should have significant experience leading an organization through transition and change and a track record of transparency in their leadership approach. Desired skills and abilities include the following:

- 10+ years of executive-level experience
- Experience working with chapters, related affiliates, or within a federated organization a plus
- Understanding of the importance and principles of a public health approach to mental health
- Dedicated to diversity, equity, and inclusion of all
- Knowledge of discrimination practices toward those with mental illness preferred
- Demonstrated ability to raise the visibility of an organization
- Experience in building partnerships or coalitions to advance common goals
- Strong advocacy background; experience positively impacting legislation and regulation
- Excellent writing and public speaking skills

- Demonstrated experience and oversight of both social and traditional media to advance ideas and initiatives; comfortable working with the media
- Successful experience in fundraising and financial development with corporations, government agencies, foundations, and major donors
- Shares MHA's perspective in speaking to and about people with mental health and substance abuse conditions
- Bachelor's degree required; master's degree a plus
- Ability to travel up to 25% each year

## Desired Experience

- Broadly-based mental health and human service administration and policy experience
- Familiar with strategies to reduce discrimination against people with mental health conditions
- Knowledgeable about mental health as well as mental health and substance use conditions
- Knowledgeable of the concepts of individual empowerment and recovery
- Knowledge about the science of prevention in the field of mental health
- Strong strategic thinking ability and experience in both planning strategically and translating those plans into operations

## Personality and Behavior Attributes

The successful candidate will possess a wide range of personality traits and social skills necessary to excel in the role. Candidates will possess personal and professional integrity, strong communication skills, highly-developed people skills, and strong listening ability. In addition, the successful candidate will have a combination of the following:

- Leadership – the ability to build a sense of shared purpose and commitment in others; a dynamic presence that inspires commitment and trust
- Passion – the ability to become excited about the organization's mission and to transfer the same excitement to others
- Integrity – an honest, trustworthy leadership style that mirrors the values of the organization
- Innovation – the ability to move beyond standard methods and solutions, seeing not only what is, but what can be, resulting in bold new programs and a boost in creative thinking
- Communication – the ability to present ideas in an interesting, understandable, and succinct manner; the ability to give impactful speeches to engage others
- Collaboration – a natural tendency to build partnerships and foster alliances to meet shared objectives and accomplish common goals
- Action-orientation – embraces new opportunities and challenges with a sense of urgency, high energy, and enthusiasm and can create the tools necessary for success



## COMPENSATION

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A competitive compensation package will be offered to attract an outstanding candidate.

## TO APPLY

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To apply, please send a cover letter and current résumé (Microsoft Word® format preferred) to [mha@smartinsearch.com](mailto:mha@smartinsearch.com). The cover letter should outline how your experience fits the requirements of the position as this will be an important factor in considering your candidacy.

*MHA is an equal opportunity / affirmative action employer committed to inclusion and cultural diversity in the workplace. Employment selection and related decisions are made without regard to sex, race, color, age, disability, religion, national origin, sexual preference, genetic information, or any other protected class.*

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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For more information, contact:

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