



*The difference between practicing medicine and leading it.*

Senior Director, Stewardship and Recognition  
Houston Methodist Hospital Foundation  
Houston, Texas

## THE SEARCH

Houston Methodist Hospital Foundation (HMHF or the foundation) – the fundraising arm of the number one hospital in Texas and a top national hospital according to *U.S. News & World Report*– seeks a strategic and innovative **senior director, stewardship and recognition** (senior director) at an exciting moment of transformation and modernization for its philanthropic enterprise. Reporting to the chief donor relations and stewardship officer early in her tenure and working alongside a dedicated team of development professionals, the senior director will serve as a central leader in shaping and elevating the organization’s donor relations and stewardship program. As Houston Methodist prepares for a groundbreaking comprehensive campaign, the senior director will provide expert leadership over a critical development function, ensuring excellence in donor recognition and stewardship to realize the foundation’s ambitious vision and deepen institutional impact.

Founded in 1919, Houston Methodist exists today as an independent academic medical center and market leader in Houston, the state of Texas, and beyond. The institution has grown significantly over the last two decades, providing the highest-end care that is unparalleled in terms of safety and quality as well as robust teaching and research initiatives, which are further strengthened by affiliations with Weill Cornell Medical College, New York Presbyterian Hospital, Texas A&M University, Rice University, and MD Anderson Cancer Center, among others. As clinical care, education, and research continue to grow across Houston Methodist, philanthropy will fuel the institution’s remarkable trajectory of success in becoming one of the highest-ranking academic medical centers in the country.

The senior director will implement strategic, innovative, and individualized stewardship and recognition practices, tailoring engagement across the full giving continuum and delivering bespoke experiences for the hospital’s most significant benefactors. In partnership with constituents across the HMHF and Houston Methodist, the senior director will integrate stewardship and recognition tactics more fully across the foundation, ensure regular and effective communications regarding the use and impact of gifts, and advance best practices while developing new methods to strengthen relationships with all donor constituencies. With oversight of a team of nine individuals, the senior director will build and maintain a

cohesive and positive environment, leading with high emotional intelligence. The senior director will leverage data to guide leadership and fundraisers in shaping donor recognition and engagement experiences, partner with fundraising teams to create aligned reporting frameworks, and champion a culture of gratitude that clearly communicates the impact of donor support.

The successful candidate will possess at least ten years of experience in donor relations, stewardship, and recognition within philanthropy for higher education, healthcare, or a similarly complex nonprofit environment. This individual will be a skilled communicator with the ability to craft effective messaging for diverse audiences. Strong problem-solving and analytical skills, along with a proven ability to think strategically, critically, and creatively, are essential. The ideal candidate will possess a demonstrated track record of leading a proactive, integrated, and service-oriented stewardship program in a large, complex, and fast-paced environment. Furthermore, the successful candidate will be an effective and confident leader of team members.

Houston Methodist Hospital Foundation has engaged Rachel Ellenport and Nicole Poe of Isaacson, Miller to assist with this important search. Inquiries, nominations, and applications should be sent in strict confidence to the search firm as indicated at the end of this document.

## ABOUT HOUSTON METHODIST

Houston Methodist comprises a leading academic medical center in the Texas Medical Center and seven community hospitals serving the Greater Houston area. Houston Methodist Hospital, the system's flagship, is recognized as a leader in cutting-edge research, education, disease prevention, and compassionate treatment of all healthcare needs. It was named to *U.S. News & World Report's* Honor Roll (best hospitals in the country) for the ninth time and is the number-one hospital in Texas, marking the 14<sup>th</sup> consecutive year at the top. This is also the 33<sup>rd</sup> year in a row that Houston Methodist Hospital has been ranked in at least one specialty.

Eight specialties made the top 20 list, with four in the top 10. Below is a breakdown of the 2025-26 specialty rankings in alphabetical order:

- Cancer – No. 19
- Cardiology, Heart, and Vascular Surgery – No. 14
- Diabetes and Endocrinology – No. 10
- Gastroenterology/GI Surgery – No. 7
- Geriatrics – No. 19
- Neurology/Neurosurgery – No. 15
- Obstetrics and Gynecology – No. 10
- Orthopedics – No. 24
- Pulmonology and Lung Surgery – No. 8
- Urology – No. 27

Houston Methodist is the official health care provider for the Houston Texas, Houston Astros, Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, Rice University Athletics, Houston Ballet, Houston Symphony, and Houston Grand Opera.

Houston Methodist was ranked third on [Forbes' America's Best Large Employers](#) list for 2025, making it the top-ranked healthcare organization in the nation. This marks the third year Houston Methodist has received this prestigious recognition.

**Centers of Excellence:** Houston Methodist's six multidisciplinary Centers of Excellence unite clinical care, research, and education to create innovative solutions to clinical problems and provide personalized patient care with compassion. Each center has clinical and translational research programs led by expert teams of physicians and scientists dedicated to enhancing disease diagnosis, prevention, and treatment, as well as education and patient support. The six Centers of Excellence include:

- Houston Methodist Dr. Mary and Ron Neal Cancer Center
- Houston Methodist DeBakey Heart & Vascular Center
- Houston Methodist J.C. Walter Jr. Transplant Center
- Houston Methodist Lynda K. and David M. Underwood Center for Digestive Health
- Houston Methodist Neurological Institute
- Houston Methodist Orthopedics & Sports Medicine

## Houston Methodist Hospital Foundation

The Houston Methodist Hospital Foundation helps to accomplish institutional priorities through fundraising, gift management, and stewardship. Governed by a board of directors, the foundation accepts all gifts on the hospital's behalf. Since fundraising began at Houston Methodist in 2003, the foundation has raised more than \$1.3 billion, increased the endowment to more than \$795 million, and supported the creation of more than 160 endowed chairs for faculty physicians, researchers, and key leaders. This has included two campaigns (\$212 million raised between 2003 to 2012 and \$518 million raised from 2013 to 2020). In 2025, Houston Methodist will begin the quiet phase of its third campaign, with a working goal of more than \$1.25 billion over ten years.

In Fiscal Year 2025, the foundation raised a total of \$121.4 million. More than 4,308 gifts were made by nearly 3,498 unique donors; 90 percent were individuals, and the remainder were foundations, corporations, and corporate foundations. For more information on fundraising results, please visit the foundation's [2025 annual report](#).

In 2017, Houston Methodist received the largest contribution in its history – a \$101 million gift to accelerate neuroscience research efforts at the hospital. To learn more about the gift, and other notable contributions, please visit [here](#).

The foundation's new leadership has aspirational goals for the growth of the team. In the next few years, the staff is anticipated to grow from the current size of 85 to 150 full-time employees.

## ROLE OF THE SENIOR DIRECTOR, STEWARDSHIP AND RECOGNITION

Reporting to the chief donor relations and stewardship officer, the senior director is responsible for overseeing the vision, strategy, and implementation of all foundation stewardship and recognition at Houston Methodist and across all network hospitals. The senior director will manage a team of nine high-performing professionals, including three direct reports, with responsibilities spanning stewardship reports, executive correspondence, society fulfillment, Endowed Positions and Awards Committee (EPAC), partnership with our facilitated access care team, installation of a new donor recognition space the Gallery of Philanthropy, Giftmap, donor recognition signage, and parking cards.

## MAJOR FUNCTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Ensure that the hospital's stewardship of its donors makes supporting Houston Methodist a personally fulfilling experience; conveys that the hospital and its leaders care deeply about its supporters; appreciates how they have contributed to the advancement of Houston Methodist; and demonstrates the impact of their support for the organization.
- Oversee timely, appropriate, and proactive stewardship of Houston Methodist's donors while maintaining the consistency and accuracy of donor recognition. Devise strategies for appropriate recognition and stewardship for donors, including but not limited to stewardship letters and reports, gift acknowledgements, donor recognition lists, building signage, donor events, and other forms of donor appreciation.
- Inspire, empower, and motivate staff through active communications and delegation, placing staff members' work within the context of Houston Methodist's and the foundation's strategic priorities and mission.
- Identify creative and customized ways to surprise, delight, and thank donors through innovative acts of stewardship to continuously demonstrate positive returns on their philanthropic investments.
- Develop and execute processes for ensuring the donor-centric stewardship and engagement activities of development colleagues. Collaborate with peers on effective stewardship, engagement, and recognition strategies and systems.
- Remain current on engagement and stewardship trends, strategies, and services offered by peer institutions and inspire a culture of innovation and new ideas.
- Manage relationships with key vendors and other allied professionals involved in donor wall and other physical, as well as virtual, recognition production.

- Convene regular meetings with frontline fundraising colleagues to develop tailored, highly personalized, and long-range stewardship plans, consistently monitoring the progress of those plans and modifying as required.
- Oversee both broad-based and campaign-specific donor recognition programs for principal gift donors.
- Sustain a collaborative, respectful, and high-achieving environment through clear communication and well-articulated goals; support the Houston Methodist culture through consistent behavior that is aligned with [I CARE](#) values.

## QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

The successful candidate will possess at least 10 years of experience in donor relations, stewardship, and recognition, preferably in a complex research university or academic medical environment, and at least five years of managerial experience.

In addition, the successful candidate will demonstrate many, if not all, of the following skills and competencies:

- Expertise and depth of understanding of best practices in stewardship and donor relations, as well as an entrepreneurial approach to building and guiding a comprehensive program.
- Proven track record of personal success engaging and stewarding major- and principal gift-level individual and institutional donors; a high level of comfort and effectiveness working with high-net-worth individuals and corporate business leaders.
- An approach to management that brings out the best in staff and yields pride, trust, ownership, and a sense of team effort.
- Appreciation for a high-performing culture that values teamwork, integrity, excellence, and dedication to the mission.
- Superior written and oral communication skills; the ability to convey the impact donor support has on an institution; clarity, crispness, and elegance in writing and speaking.
- Honesty, integrity, enthusiasm, and perspective; a strong work ethic supported by commitment and follow-through.
- Ability to utilize, maximize, and integrate various means of technology and communications to fully leverage and measure outreach efforts.
- Bachelor's degree required; master's degree preferred.

## LOCATION

Houston, Texas, is a vibrant and diverse city known for its blend of world-class attractions and bustling economy. As the fourth most populous city in the nation and the largest in the southern U.S. and Texas, Houston is a dynamic hub of culture and innovation. The city boasts a thriving arts scene, with outstanding performing and visual arts venues, and a globally recognized dining scene. Its economy thrives on a wide range of industries, including energy, aerospace, manufacturing, life sciences, and technology. With numerous parks, eclectic neighborhoods, and a variety of attractions, Houston offers something for everyone to enjoy.

## APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. Inquiries, nominations, referrals, and CVs with cover letters should be sent via the Isaacson, Miller website below. Electronic submission of materials is strongly encouraged.

<https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/houston-methodist-hospital-foundation/senior-director-stewardship-and-recognition>

Rachel Ellenport, Partner  
Nicole Poe, Managing Associate  
Maureen Perry, Associate  
Caroline Corry, Senior Search Coordinator

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*This document has been prepared based on the information provided by Houston Methodist Hospital Foundation. The material presented in this leadership profile should be relied on for informational purposes only. While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this information, the original source documents and information provided by Houston Methodist Hospital Foundation would supersede any conflicting information in this document.*

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## **ADDENDUM**

### **LEADERSHIP**

#### **Flynn A. Andrizzi, Ph.D.**

##### **President and CEO, Houston Methodist Hospital Foundation**

Flynn A. Andrizzi, Ph.D., has been a leader in philanthropy for nearly three decades. Andrizzi joined the Houston Methodist Hospital Foundation as president and CEO in January 2024.

Before joining Houston Methodist, Andrizzi served as the president of the Hoag Hospital Foundation for nearly 14 years. There, he led the effort to elevate philanthropic support from an average of \$15 to \$20 million annually to consistently over \$100 million per year. He also led the launch of Hoag's first ever comprehensive campaign, successfully raising over \$750 million.

Before joining Hoag in 2010, Andrizzi served as senior vice president and chief development officer at the University of Iowa Foundation. Prior to that, he was the vice president for institutional advancement at Thomas Jefferson University in Philadelphia. Andrizzi also held top fundraising positions at the University of Utah.

Andrizzi has served on several nonprofit boards including the Make-A-Wish Foundation. He actively serves in his church and has been involved with the Boy Scouts of America. Andrizzi has received several fundraising and academic awards including being named as a Truman Scholar. He served on the board of directors of the Association for Healthcare Philanthropy (AHP) and is a regular presenter at national conferences.

Andrizzi holds a Ph.D. in educational leadership and policy from the University of Utah as well as a bachelor's degree and master of public administration from the same university. He and his wife Alison have three adult children.

#### **Michelle Oster**

##### **Vice President and Senior Chief Development Officer**

An accomplished and strategic advancement leader, Michelle Oster joined Houston Methodist Hospital Foundation as vice president and senior chief development officer in January 2025. Oster leads and contributes to the vision, priorities, and strategy of all fundraising programs at the foundation and partners closely with HMHF and hospital leadership as the foundation significantly scales in advance of the public launch of the largest comprehensive campaign in Houston Methodist history.

Prior to joining Houston Methodist, Oster was the associate vice president and managing director for Wisconsin Medicine at the Wisconsin Foundation & Alumni Association (WFAA). As associate vice

president, Oster served on a senior leadership team that oversaw a staff of 56 across medical development and provided leadership and vision for all aspects of Wisconsin Medicine development. During her tenure at Wisconsin, Oster led efforts for a \$613 million comprehensive medical campaign and contributed to elevating and enhancing fundraising programs through the implementation of training and mentorship programs, streamlining processes, and strategic reorganization.

Oster holds a bachelor of science degree from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

### **Avaleen Morris**

#### **Chief Donor Relations and Stewardship Officer**

Avaleen Morris joined Houston Methodist Hospital Foundation as chief donor relations and stewardship officer in April 2025. Morris serves as a member of the foundation's senior leadership and is responsible for the vision, strategy, and execution of the foundation's donor relations program, which includes communications, stewardship, events, donor recognition, and physician and faculty engagement.

Morris brings two decades of wide-ranging development experience across annual giving, donor relations, and stewardship. Prior to joining Houston Methodist, Morris was the senior director of donor relations at Vanderbilt University Medical Center (VUMC). As senior director, Morris created and implemented the first comprehensive stewardship strategy across all giving levels, including bespoke stewardship strategies for VUMC's most generous donors. Before transitioning to the medical center, Morris implemented a cohesive, university-wide annual giving program across Vanderbilt University, which sustainably raised \$25 million annually; established the prestigious Oak Leaf Society to honor consecutive giving; and spearheaded the university's inaugural giving day.

Morris holds an associate of arts degree in mass communications and media studies, as well as a bachelor of science degree in psychology, both from Northern Caribbean University.