

Dr. Richard Priore at forefront of transformation as health industry continues to change

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Dr. Richard Priore was recently awarded the American College of Healthcare Executives (ACHE) Exemplary Service Award (photo by Derek Bridges).

In more than 30 years of working in health care during a prodigious career, [Dr. Richard Priore](#) has been at the forefront of change and transformation, positively impacting the communities he's served and the countless students he's taught and mentored to take on the challenges the U.S. industry faces.

As an associate professor in the [Department of Health Policy and Management](#) at the [Tulane University Celia Scott Weatherhead School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine](#), Priore focuses on supporting his students' success -- during his courses, throughout their program, and beyond graduation into the workforce to achieve their full potential.

And at this stage of his career, that focus is at the core of everything he does. "The competing trends of workforce shortages, unmet demand for services, and rising costs put healthcare leaders under increasing social, economic, and regulatory pressure to improve clinical outcomes and the patient experience -- while also eliminating waste and unnecessary costs, plus preventing burnout," Priore said.

"These tough times demand qualified, competent, and principled leaders," he says, but he notes that the students he sees have a calling to serve and strong desire to make a difference.

A deep interest in helping others inspired Priore's own interest in health care when he volunteered on his local rescue squad as a teenager. Today, he's a nationally registered emergency medical technician (EMT) and continues to volunteer as a first responder in the community. That desire to serve led him into the military, where he dedicated nearly a decade on active duty in the Army Medical Department as a combat service support leader. Much of that time was spent overseas in Europe and South Korea before his final tour of duty at Walter Reed in Washington, DC, as an administrator, creating the Army's first integrated clinical service line for orthopedics and rehabilitation. While on active duty, Priore was selected for an intensive graduate program at the top nationally-ranked U.S. Army-Baylor MHA program.

After leaving the military to pursue a career in the private healthcare sector, starting in Chicago, Priore held several progressive senior leadership roles in integrated and academic health systems, physician-owned specialty hospitals, and large multispecialty group practices, culminating as the chief executive officer for several hospitals.

That path brought him southward to New Orleans, where he served as the CEO of the Louisiana Medical Center and Heart Hospital on the North Shore and where he used the GI Bill to complete a doctorate in health systems management at Tulane University.

Priore's extensive leadership experience fueled his interest in teaching and consulting. He founded an international consulting firm integrating learning and organizational performance improvement through practical competency-based education, training, and coaching.

His past clients have included leading health systems such as CHRISTUS Health, Providence Health, and the Veterans Health Administration, and Fortune 500 companies, like Boston Scientific, Roche, and Ecolab.

That work, in addition to his teaching and research on physician-hospital alignment, continues today. "I only accept two to three projects a year, but it's enough to keep my finger on the pulse of what's going on in healthcare to inform a current and relevant perspective in the classroom," Priore said.

That dedication to learning and sharing acquired knowledge was recently recognized when Priore was awarded the American College of Healthcare Executives (ACHE) Exemplary Service Award, the organization's highest level of recognition.

Priore was also invited to serve on the Louisiana Regent Advisory Council, comprised of current and former health system CEOs. One of the initiatives Priore is leading in this new role is an advancement program to support leaders in furthering their professional development by becoming board-certified in healthcare management to earn the distinctive ACHE Fellow credential.

Another value Priore imparts to his students is servant leadership, consistent with Tulane's motto, 'Not for oneself, but for one's own,' and underscores the mission-driven nature of health care. Priore notes that leaders are often conflicted in balancing their mission and margin, although he contends they are not mutually exclusive.

"Graduate-level finance courses are more than just crunching numbers – rather, effective financial management is a critical skill that enables and empowers healthcare leaders to support and sustain their mission in the communities they serve."

Priore's recent book, *Improving Financial and Operations Performance: A Healthcare Leaders' Guide*, discusses this push and pull and offers leaders a practical "how to" approach for driving both mission and margin in a dynamic environment.

"Given the myriad challenges in healthcare, it's tempting to believe there's a technology solution, like AI, for everything," Priore says. "Unfortunately, there's no panacea. At the heart of every solution are leaders finding creative and cost-effective ways to improve the performance of their organizations and the health of their communities."

Toward that end, Priore was [recently awarded a Faculty Innovation Curriculum Grant](#) from the Tulane University Innovation Institute. The grant was awarded based on his proposal to explore creative, actionable solutions to address health disparities in his DrPH course this summer, *Managerial Economics for Public Health Leaders*.

"The challenges of improving health outcomes, access, equity, and efficiency are not new; however, overcoming them requires applying a deliberate framework to innovate 'outside-the-box,' market-based solutions," Priore said. "Health care is a business; however, it's a business of caring for sick and injured people who come to us when they are most vulnerable."

Priore admits that the way forward in health care is daunting, with multiple competing priorities and increasingly scarce resources to address them. "If it were easy, everyone would do it!" Priore challenges his students. Yet his confidence in the future leaders in his classes inspires him to try different pedagogical methods and techniques to engage and develop his students. And Priore's students appreciate his efforts, evidenced by his course evaluations consistently scoring in the top decile.

"I am supremely confident that our students will be well-prepared among their peers to face the challenges in health care with courage, conviction, and competence."