Five Questions With: Jennifer Aizenman

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Brown University recently launched a new master’s program in health care, targeting accomplished leaders within the health care industry. Much of the work will be done online, with four brief stints on the Brown campus. Each of the executives who participate in the program will engage in peer-to-peer learning as well as faculty-led sessions.

*Providence Business News asked Jennifer Aizenman, the director of Brown’s Executive Master of Healthcare Leadership program, to talk about the goals and outcomes sought for the new program.*

**PBN: What is the goal of the new health care master’s program at Brown?**

**AIZENMAN:** The Executive Master of Healthcare Leadership is designed to prepare leaders in the health care industry to meet the challenges of the rapid and disruptive change we are now facing in American health care. The program is designed for highly accomplished executives who have significant responsibility in their organizations, are positioned to transform these organizations, and will protect the financial health of their organizations while improving system-wide outcomes.

Our main goal is to create an intense, interdisciplinary, and action-oriented learning environment where executives can move out of their silos and identify opportunities to lead organizational growth and development.

**PBN: How will the existing academic resources at Brown – the medical school, the brain research expertise, the public health initiatives – be involved?**

**AIZENMAN:** Brown University, with its strength in public health, public policy and health economics, is an outstanding platform for the new master’s program. The new center for evidence-based medicine at Brown is a valuable resource, as health care leaders are being challenged as never before to use information and data effectively.

The program faculty is drawn from the university as well as from government and the private sector so future opportunities may arise through local developments in health care, such as the Rhode Island Foundation primary care initiative.

**PBN: Who is the target audience to enroll in the master’s program? Do you expect it to draw candidates from outside the region?**

**AIZENMAN:** The program is attracting senior executives, administrators and clinicians from across the health care industry, including those involved in health care delivery, public health, drug and product manufacturing, health care consulting, health management systems, insurance, patient advocacy, and from legal, policy and regulatory settings.
For each cohort, 20-25 students will be selected to form a dynamic, highly engaged peer group who will develop their capacity and drive to contribute to essential change in our health care system. In this program, peer-to-peer learning will be as important as guidance from the faculty.

The program is recruiting locally, regionally and nationally, and also attracting international interest. This is possible because the 16-month program of online learning is interspersed with four brief on-campus sessions so students can work full time, and maintain their travel and family commitments while completing this degree.

PBN: What kinds of interaction will the program have with other medical and educational institutions in the region?

AIZENMAN: Faculty members for the program are from local, regional and national institutions, and we are engaged with regional colleagues who are choosing to be affiliated with the program in a variety of ways.

We will soon be announcing the Advisory Committee from the who’s who list of health care industry leaders. These highly accomplished and nationally recognized executives will keep the program vital and relevant to those facing the challenges of a rapidly evolving health care system that they know well.

PBN: Given the growing involvement of businesses with workplace wellness programs, how will the program delve into such wellness initiatives.

AIZENMAN: There are many positive initiatives coming from businesses, including wellness and other health-creating and health-sustaining programs.

Students in the Healthcare Leadership program will examine what’s happening now and what’s possible in health care.

More importantly, they will broaden their vision and identify areas of opportunity by working with experienced peers from across the industry.

This diverse peer group will create other benefits as each student will enter the program with a Critical Challenge relevant to their organization.

The Critical Challenge will be addressed in consultation with peers and faculty in the program, as each student takes an action-learning approach to creating, testing and assessing real solutions to difficult problems.

We are looking for results for each participant, for their organizations, and for the health care system as a whole by offering this Executive Master of Healthcare Leadership program.