



Walter J. Ramos, Rogerson's New President & CEO, Speaks to the Important Work at Hand



Walter J. Ramos, J.D., President and CEO, met with residents and the board of directors for Beacon House. John Stanton (right), 91 years old, is a renowned Boston artist and longtime Rogerson resident.

Rogerson is grateful for the solid foundation built by James F. Seagle, Jr., Rogerson's President Emeritus, as we welcome the leadership of Walter J. Ramos, J.D., Rogerson's new President & CEO. In the past quarter Walter has been deeply immersed in details about facilities, programs, staff, residents, budgets, historic record, and strategic planning. With no stone left unturned, Walter, in partnership with senior management, has begun the important work of furthering Rogerson's legacy of providing critical housing and health services for greater Boston's elders. Ramos' background – a balance of healthcare administration, housing policy and government planning – are providing the fuel for moving Rogerson forward.

Walter's whole life has been dedicated to public service. He attended college in Rhode Island and started an early political career during school working as a Special Assistant for then Senator Edward Kennedy. He joined the Governor's Office as a

full-time policy analyst, while he obtained his law degree from Suffolk Law School. After becoming a lawyer, Walter spent a year as an Assistant District Attorney for Bristol County and was subsequently appointed as Commissioner of the New Bedford Housing Authority. Walter received national recognition for dramatically improving the operations of the 200-person Office of Community Development.

Between 1998 and 2015 Walter served in various critical roles, including Director of Administration for the Boston Public Health Commission, Chief Administrator for the Boston Medical Center Health Plan, Vice President of Operations for the Massachusetts Hospital Association, President & CEO of DotHouse Health, and President & CEO of Carney Hospital. Then Rogerson got him!

Walter assumed leadership of Rogerson earlier this year, and Jeff Walker, Rogerson's Director of Communications, had a chance to get Walter's thoughts and answers to some questions on his experience at Rogerson to date.

Questions and Answers...

What drew you to Rogerson?

I feel strongly about helping people of low-income with health challenges. My life's work has been committed to helping people have the quality of life and care they deserve. When I worked alongside Senator Kennedy he used to say, "A person's health should never depend on the person's wealth." The work that Rogerson does, and has done for generations, is both honorable and invaluable in meeting the critical needs of elders aging in community. Because my background is a combination of healthcare, housing, and urban quality of life, Rogerson is a meaningful place for me to bring my experience with the hope of building on its solid legacy. I believe, as is Rogerson's mission, providing invaluable care with dignity and respect for elders should never be adjusted for income.

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The Important Work at Hand (Continued)

What have your first three months been like?

I'm extremely impressed with Rogerson's properties and programs. Every site I have visited is impeccably maintained and clean. The residents are genuinely happy people, living richly in spirit regardless of meager financial means. I've had the chance to talk with so many of them and they are incredibly candid with me. I know from experience they would not be shy to tell me what's broken or needs attention – but all I hear is praise. I see and hear how Rogerson's management and staff provide comfort and joy in a safe and resource-rich facility. I witness how much the residents enjoy the libraries, the computer rooms, the fitness centers, and the resident services coordinators who help them get the resources they need to remain independent. Every person I meet has a story and they love to tell me. There are no two stories the same, though they all come to a point in the narrative where Rogerson changed their lives. Sometimes Rogerson helped them, sometimes Rogerson saved them – but always they say "Rogerson changed their lives." I am incredibly proud to be part of the Rogerson team that changes lives and I'm excited to continue the work at hand.

One resident gave me a greeting card. She had been holding it for weeks hoping to meet me. The cover of the card was illustrated with a beautiful sail boat (I don't know if she knew I'm a sailor or if it was just a coincidence). Inside she had written her wish that I will *stay the course and navigate the waters with courage and strength*. It's as though she knew that is also my wish, as well as my promise.

How would you describe your leadership style?

"Maintaining and building a strong senior leadership team, as well as mentoring future leaders of a community institution, must be part of any strategic plan for growth and sustainability. My management style is one of collaboration and vetting of initiatives, proposals and priority items. These management items include, but are not limited to governing boards, oversight agencies, safety and quality of care initiatives, capital requests and needs, budget and finance, operational efficiency and external market factors.

I believe strongly in working in partnership with Rogerson's excellent and seasoned Senior Leadership Team (SLT), composed of both newer and long-term staff. I brought a longtime struggling hospital to financial stability utilizing this partnership process. I carry a strong understanding of nonprofit governance having served on many boards. While metrics are important, there is always a need for flexibility. Every organization is different, each has its own culture, however, I have found communication and collaboration are essential to building and growing every institution. For more than 20 years I have worked in areas of finance, operations, human resources, labor relations, property management, major construction and renovation, and contract, vendor and grants management. I have helped organizations provide excellent clinical care, led advocacy initiatives, worked alongside policy makers on housing issues, and driven numerous successful public health initiatives for the betterment of Boston's low and moderate-income community, especially for immigrant and non-English speaking people.

I know first-hand Rogerson's tremendous importance as a resource for families and individuals. My mother is 86 -years old and my siblings and I have been on the challenging journey of navigating essential resources to find her the critical support she needs as she ages. It is rare to find what Rogerson does so well and so generously.

What areas of growth or change do you see ahead for Rogerson?

I have had extensive meetings at each of our sites and involved senior management in extensive strategic planning. Rogerson is currently focusing on two areas of change and growth. We are working to extend our reach, or actually pull healthcare providers in closer, by strengthening elders' connection to healthcare access in the housing communities where they live by partnering neighborhood health centers and healthcare providers with residence in their building. We are also working hard to continually identify growth and development opportunities to create more affordable housing.

Is there anything else you'd like to add?

I look forward to meeting all of Rogerson's staff as we continue to work together. Thank you for what you do everyday with unrivaled professionalism and generosity of spirit.



Walter Ramos met with staff, residents, and participants while touring Egleston ADHP (Top), and attending Roslindale ADHP family day and barbecue (Bottom).