



POSITIVE **IMPACT**
HEALTH CENTERS



LEADERSHIP PROFILE

Chief Operating Officer (COO)
Positive Impact Health Centers
Metro Atlanta, Georgia

Client-centered care for the HIV community to have a life worth loving.

A Unique Opportunity

Positive Impact Health Centers (PIHC) is the largest provider of care for people affected by HIV in Georgia. For more than three decades, PIHC has been a leader in providing comprehensive, patient-centered care and advocating for programs and funding that transform lives. PIHC serves over 11,000 individuals across 21 Georgia counties with a budget of over \$200 million, providing nationally recognized gold standard care and results.

PIHC's remarkable growth trajectory—more than 20% year over year for the past decade—reflects both the organization's excellence and the urgent, expanding need to provide care. New medications enable people with HIV to become "undetectable" and live longer, healthier lives. So PIHC's mission is far from completed: some 20,000 HIV-positive individuals who reside in Georgia are not yet in care. This animates the organization's passion to bring more individuals into treatment with a current target of growing to 15,000.

PIHC operates with an extraordinary culture that prioritizes people above all else. Staff, patients, volunteers, and partners are seen, heard, and valued. This is an organization where the CEO and COO give their cell phone numbers to clients, where staff strive for team achievements more than individual credit, and where "if you value it, I value it" is more than a saying—it's a way of operating.

This is a time of promise and challenge for PIHC.

Founder and CEO [Larry Lehman](#) will transition from CEO to an advisory role on November 30, 2026, after 24 years of visionary leadership. Current COO [Joey Helton](#) becomes CEO-elect this year, on December 1, 2025; and will step into the CEO role on December 1, 2026. Joey joined PIHC a decade ago and has played an instrumental role in the organization's growth from \$5 million to over \$200 million.

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PIHC seeks a new Chief Operating Officer (COO) to start early in 2026. The COO will partner with CEO-elect Joey Helton to sustain and enhance the organization's exceptional culture, operational excellence, and patient-centered mission while navigating growth, potential mergers, and an uncertain political landscape. The organization has recently hired a new CFO and HR Director and is in year two of a three-year strategic plan. The new COO will help PIHC expand its reach while maintaining the gold-standard quality and outcomes that have made it a national model.

The COO Mandate

The new Chief Operating Officer will lead the operations of a complex, multi-site healthcare provider with a \$200 million+ budget and 350 employees, four clinic locations and an administrative center. Its programs span clinical care, pharmacy, prevention, emotional wellness, research, and advocacy. In addition to overseeing programs, the COO will lead evidence-based quality management, IT, HR, and facilities.

The COO will play an external role, but will primarily focus internally, managing people, operations, systems, and infrastructure as Joey takes on the more external, visionary role of CEO. The COO will lead, mentor, and hold accountable a diverse leadership team while inspiring and sustaining PIHC's compassionate people-centered culture. Currently, the COO has 17 direct reports.

PIHC seeks an experienced COO who can balance growth with quality, efficiency with compassion, and accountability with empathy. The organization's "management by numbers" approach requires a COO who is data-driven and metrics-focused yet never loses sight of the human beings behind every metric—both staff and clients.

The new COO will partner closely with Joey, manage members of the senior leadership team, and collaborate with individuals at all PIHC locations as well as partners and others outside the organization. The COO will:

1. Lead day-to-day operations and implementation

- Plug into the strategic plan and move it forward
- Oversee clinical and administrative operations across multiple locations
- Manage systems, infrastructure, workflow, and technology platforms, overseeing operational execution and details
- Drive productivity, efficiency, and key performance indicators aligned with the budget
- Enhance the reporting structure and build trusted, effective relationships
- Ensure facilities are clean, welcoming, and respectful of patients

2. Inspire and mentor talent—PIHC's #1 asset

- Directly manage department directors, providing supportive yet accountable leadership
- Foster integration, collaboration, and clarity across departments
- Coach staff through the emotional demands of working with vulnerable populations
- Identify and develop talent for retention and succession planning
- Hold people accountable with compassion, clear objectives, and honest feedback

3. Sustain and enhance PIHC's exceptional culture

- Be a culture-builder who exudes and promotes teamwork, respect, and a "people first" work environment

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The COO will lead PIHC's "management by numbers" commitment that delivers and demonstrates results to funders and the community.



- Cultivate a culture where people feel heard, valued, and empowered
- Lead with empathy, transparency, and frank communication
- Model calm, grounded leadership even under stress
- Balance accountability with compassion
- Foster collaboration, participatory decision-making, and shared credit

4. Champion data, metrics, and accountability

- Lead PIHC's "management by numbers" commitment that delivers and demonstrates results to funders and the community
- Drive quality improvement through data-driven decision-making
- Maintain PIHC's 90%+ viral suppression rates and gold-standard outcomes
- Build dashboards and expectations tied to deliverables and budget
- Understand and continuously enhance the operational "funnel" from patient intake to outcomes

5. Represent and advocate for the mission

- Cultivate and leverage networks within Georgia's HIV care and legislative communities
- Advocate effectively for patients, programs, and funding
- Deeply understand HIV care, the Ryan White Program, insurance navigation, and pharmacy operations
- Help PIHC navigate the political environment and policy changes affecting HIV care

- Work comfortably with diverse populations including people experiencing homelessness, substance use, and mental health challenges

6. Foster innovation, growth, and a sustainable future

- Manage expansion while maintaining highest quality work and a radically positive culture
- Address technology challenges and system integration needs
- Think strategically about growth, and play an instrumental role in moving strategies for reaching more individuals who are currently or potentially affected by HIV
- Bring innovative approaches to workflow, processes, and results

Year one aspirations for the COO

The first year will be critical for the new COO to establish trusting relationships, understand the organization deeply, and begin shaping the role. During year one, they will:

- Build trust and relationships with department directors, staff, and community partners—understand needs, challenges, and hopes
- Build credibility through listening, learning, and early wins
- Get to know programs and people across all locations
- Lay out a strategy for the role and align with the strategic plan
- Establish open communication rhythms including regular meetings and touchpoints
- Take operational items off the CEO-elect's plate

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PIHC serves over 11,000 individuals in 21 Georgia counties.



- Understand and lead the operational "funnel," from patient access through outcomes
- Make the position your own, while honoring PIHC's culture and values
- Assess and address needs around structure, systems, and processes

The Organization

Positive Impact Health Centers has transformed the landscape of HIV care in Georgia. Founded in 1991 to provide mental health services to those with HIV, PIHC has evolved into a comprehensive, integrated care system that is pioneering new models of treatment and prevention. PIHC is nationally recognized as a top five HIV program with gold-standard quality. It is a national pioneer in pharmacy services and client-centered care.

PIHC is certified as a Patient-Centered Medical Home and has achieved certifications from the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA). Quality management and continuous improvement are embedded in operations.

The organization serves over 11,000 individuals in 21 Georgia counties. It currently operates with a \$200 million+ annual budget. Funding comes primarily from the Ryan White Program, insurance reimbursements, and grants. Care for the average HIV-affected individual can cost over \$500,000. The PIHC team goes to great lengths to match individuals with insurance, and to cover treatment costs such that no one is out of care due to economic circumstances.

PIHC maintains the highest clinical outcomes in Georgia, with over 90% viral suppression rates—the benchmark that determines continued federal funding. The organization's model links patients to providers quickly, often getting people on life-saving medications the same day they are diagnosed.

PIHC operates the largest PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis) program in the region, helping people avoid HIV infection in the first place. With proper medication, people in this program have less than a 1% chance of contracting HIV. The organization also provides post-exposure prophylaxis within 48 hours for sexual assault survivors.

The pharmacy operation is a point of particular pride. PIHC has pioneered models that other programs study and replicate. The organization navigates complex insurance systems to get patients covered and pays premiums when necessary to ensure that no one goes without needed medications—which can cost \$3,000-4,000 per month or \$30,000 for semi-annual injections.

PIHC's patient-centered model molds services to patient needs, not the other way around. Services include:

- Primary medical care and HIV treatment
- Dental care
- Mental health and emotional wellness services
- Case management and navigation
- Prevention services and education
- Research initiatives
- Advocacy and policy work
- Links to housing, economic support, and social services

Over the past decade, PIHC has grown strategically, both organically and through acquisition. The most recent acquisition was Clayton County Health Center in 2015. Organic growth and additional mergers are possibilities as the organization seeks to serve more of those affected in Georgia and beyond.

The organization works collaboratively with other agencies in Georgia and around the country, offering consultation and support at no charge.

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The most pressing challenge is the 20,000 people in Georgia who are diagnosed with HIV but not in care.



The current political environment presents significant challenges. Funding threats, policy changes, and disruptions to public health institutions including the CDC have created uncertainty. Despite these headwinds, PIHC has continued to receive all its funding. The organization's accountability and proven outcomes make it a reliable steward of public resources.

The most pressing challenge is the 20,000 people in Georgia who are diagnosed with HIV but not in care. Stigma, shame, lack of awareness, and systemic barriers keep people from accessing life-saving treatment. If these individuals could be brought into care, HIV could effectively be eliminated as a public health threat in Georgia within a generation.

The Candidate

Although the COO role requires healthcare operational leadership rather than clinical practice, PIHC seeks a leader who deeply understands HIV care, healthcare systems, and the unique challenges of serving vulnerable populations. The ideal candidate has proven experience managing complex, multi-site operations with budgets of \$100 million+ and 100+ employees.

The Board and leadership team are committed to ensuring the COO reflects PIHC's culture and the community PIHC serves. In addition to passion for PIHC's mission and values, the ideal candidate will bring:

Professional Experience

Healthcare operations leadership

- Multi-site healthcare operations management
- Budget management at \$100M+ scale
- Experience with 100+ employee organizations
- Understanding of HIV care, Ryan White Program, insurance navigation, and pharmacy operations

- Knowledge of healthcare quality metrics, patient-centered medical home models, and compliance requirements
- Familiarity with healthcare technology systems (PIHC uses Cerner, Paylocity, and multiple other platforms)

Data-driven management

- Strong analytics and metrics orientation
- Experience building dashboards, KPIs, and accountability systems
- Ability to use data to drive quality improvement
- Track record of meeting deliverables and demonstrating outcomes
- Understanding of productivity and efficiency measures

Organizational development and management

- Proven ability to lead diverse, multi-site teams
- Experience managing department directors and senior leaders
- Track record of restructuring organizations for effectiveness
- Change management and culture-building skills
- Experience with mergers, acquisitions, or integrations
- Talent development, succession planning, and retention strategies

Strategic thinking

- Forward-thinking and forecasting skills
- Ability to "connect the dots" across complex systems
- Strategic planning and implementation experience
- Innovation and problem-solving orientation
- Experience balancing growth with quality

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The COO will have an inspiring, supportive, and empathetic leadership style and be emotionally grounded—no yelling, no bullying, no freakouts.



External engagement experience

- Networks and relationships within HIV care community in Georgia
- Connections to HIV organizations, partners, and peers nationally
- Understanding of Georgia and Atlanta political landscape
- Advocacy experience or comfort with advocacy role
- Awareness of policy environment affecting HIV care

Technology, systems, and process skills

- Tech-savvy with experience implementing or upgrading healthcare IT systems
- Understanding of workflow optimization
- Experience with integration challenges across multiple platforms
- Data systems and reporting tools knowledge

Personal Characteristics

Leadership presence

- Inspiring, supportive, and empathetic leadership style
- High emotional intelligence and strong listening skills
- Calm by nature and calm under fire
- Emotionally grounded—no yelling, no bullying, no freakouts
- Confidence balanced with humility and low ego
- Collaborative and inclusive approach

Outstanding communication skills

- Strong communicator across all levels and audiences

- Transparent, honest, and frank in communication style
- Comfortable with difficult conversations and holding people accountable
- Able to disagree respectfully
- Skilled at giving honest, compassionate feedback

Values alignment

- Patient-centered and staff-centered orientation
- Deep commitment to people as the #1 asset
- Comfortable with and committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Respectful of everyone regardless of background or circumstance
- Comfortable working with populations experiencing homelessness, substance use, mental health challenges, and HIV
- Understanding of LGBTQIA communities and issues
- Passionate about health equity and social justice

Cultural fit

- Team-oriented—focuses on "we" not "I"
- Participatory management style
- Ability to roll up sleeves and work alongside staff
- Open-door approach
- Values-driven decision-making
- Belief that culture is critical to success
- "If you value it, I value it" mindset

Relationship-building skills

- Trust-builder internally and externally
- Mentor and coach to others

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The COO will be flexible and comfortable with ambiguity and change.



- Supportive supervisor who helps staff process stress
- Ability to foster collaboration across departments
- Networking skills and relationship development
- Coalition-building orientation

Resilience and adaptability

- Able to pivot and be flexible
- Comfortable with ambiguity and change
- Resilient in face of political and policy challenges
- High positive energy
- Growth mindset
- Innovative and contemplative in approach

The Relationships

The COO reports to, and works closely with Joey Helton, CEO-elect as of December 1, 2025, and CEO as of December 1, 2026.

The COO manages: Department Directors across clinical operations, quality and compliance, prevention services, clinical care, pharmacy, informatics, facilities, client services, emotional wellness and recovery, and potentially research and other initiatives.

The reporting structure will be developed in collaboration with Joey.

PIHC's senior team includes:	• Chief of Staff • Associate Director of Quality and Compliance • Director of Prevention Services • Medical Directors • Director of Human Resources (recently hired) • Director of Emotional Wellness and Recovery • Director of Client Services • Director of Research and Development Institute	• Director of Clinical Care • VP of Pharmacy • Director of Informatics • General Counsel • Director of Campaign to End AIDS • Facilities Manager • CFO (recently hired) • Controller (recently hired)
The COO collaborates with:	• Board of Directors • Client Advisory Board (CAB) • Community partners and HIV care organizations	• Funders and regulatory agencies • National HIV care network

The Compensation

A competitive compensation package will be offered to attract an outstanding candidate. Total compensation range is \$294,000-361,000. PIHC offers 100% medical coverage, above-market pay, and a supportive environment where people advance and stay for years.

The Location

The COO will be based at PIHC's Administrative Offices in Metro Atlanta, and will frequently visit the four patient-facing health centers across 21 counties. The COO role requires regular presence at clinic locations as well as national travel for conferences, visits to the Hill, and partner site visits.

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Positive Impact Health Centers is an equal opportunity employer committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

For potential consideration or to suggest a prospect, please email:

PIHC@BoardWalkConsulting.com

or call Kathy Bremer, Patti Kish, or Lysondra Somerville at 404-BoardWalk (404-262-7392)
