

Compliance Today – October 2018 Meet Sharon Parsley

an interview by Gabriel L. Imperato

This interview with Sharon Parsley (sharonparsley@outlook.com) was conducted by Gabriel L. Imperato, Esq. (gimperato@broadandcassel.com), Managing Partner, Fort Lauderdale office of Nelson Mullins Broad and Cassel in May 2018.

Sharon Parsley, President and Managing Director, Quest Advisory Group, LLC, Ocala, FL

GI: Sharon, I know you have had significant experience with compliance in the hospital sector. Please tell us about your background and experience as a compliance professional.

SP: Interestingly, my pre-law school career was outside of healthcare. I went to law school later in life, planning to represent clients with general business law and real estate matters. However, at my first summer internship with a medium-sized firm in Cincinnati, Ohio, I was mentored by a partner who exclusively represented healthcare providers on transactional matters. From my first research assignment, I knew that healthcare was going to be the space in which I wanted to build my practice.

Several years into my private practice, I had occasion to work closely with a nonprofit provider of inpatient and outpatient mental and behavioral health services. Through my service as their outside general counsel, I helped that client create and implement its initial compliance program, which was centered, of course, on risks specific to mental health. That one engagement truly served as a gateway to enable me to focus more on regulatory and compliance matters for my clients and, ultimately, lead me to secure my first in-house position as Chief Compliance Officer (CCO) for a Florida-based hospital system that is now part of Trinity Health.

I left that organization because I had an opportunity to take a multi-facility role overseeing the compliance function within all operations across a six-state division for a for-profit hospital operator. When a recruiter called with an opportunity to join a prominent academic medical center (AMC) as its healthcare Compliance Officer, I jumped at the chance. Shortly after my onboarding there, the CCO left that organization, affording me an opportunity to step into what I perceived as a “scary big” job as CCO on an interim basis. I guess I learned the organization and its challenges quickly enough, because I was eventually awarded the CCO position on a permanent basis.

GI: What attracted you to healthcare compliance?

SP: Two things primarily. First, the need for partnership. I observed early on that effective compliance leaders were good business partners to individuals at all levels and from all disciplines within their respective organizations. I wanted to learn more about healthcare operations than I felt I would be able to if I remained in private practice. I was very drawn to the compliance profession, because I felt that the need to create strong partnerships would facilitate that continued learning. Second, problem solving. I enjoy finding creative solutions to complex business problems and issues, and I thought then, and continue to think now, that creative problem-solving skills are imperative for individuals in the compliance field.

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