



Podcast Transcript

Risk Never Sleeps

Episode 105

Andrea Steele

Ed Gaudet: Welcome to the Risk Never Sleeps Podcast, in which we learn about the people that are on the front lines, delivering and protecting patient care. I'm Ed Gaudet, the host of our program, and today, I am pleased to be joined by Andrea Steele, the AVP of Information Technology and Business Intelligence. Did I get that right?

Andrea Steele: You did.

Ed Gaudet: Excellent.

Andrea Steele: Yes, it's a very long title. It's actually too long for Oracle, and we had to pare it down.

Ed Gaudet: It's impressive. And you're at the Health Care District of Palm Beach County.

Andrea Steele: Correct, yeah.

Ed Gaudet: Awesome. So let's just start off help listeners understand a little bit more about your background, your role, and your organization.



Andrea Steele: Sure! Thank you for having me on the podcast. And so, a little bit about the Health Care District of Palm Beach County. We have been around for 30-plus years, we're the public safety net healthcare system, and our motto is, We care for all. I started working here nine years ago in corporate or in quality, and then moved over to corporate quality, managing quality for our health centers, and then also grew into that larger role where I was also working for the rural hospital, our skilled nursing center. We have air and ground transportation, and then we have 170 public schools across the county where we staff the school nurses as well. So a lot of opportunities for both quality and IT, and it's only been about a year that I transitioned into my role in IT. I think I'm one of those folks that you call purple people who, you know, was identified by my business units as the person you go to to ask questions when it's not getting back to you fast enough and just have grown into this role over time, starting with getting my first certification as an Epic clinical informaticist. That was in 2021, when we.

Ed Gaudet: Congratulations, yeah.

Andrea Steele: Thanks.

Ed Gaudet: That's no small feat.

Andrea Steele: No, it was, I actually had to take the class twice. It was a new language, right? Just like Epic is learning a whole new language. And now, I'm learning the language of cybersecurity. So, I'd like to think of myself as a linguist these days, but who knows?

Ed Gaudet: That translating between business as well, I'm sure.

Andrea Steele: Most definitely, yeah. Yes, definitely translating, communicating between information technology and operations, and making sure we're all speaking the same language. And if we're not on the same page, at least we're in the same book.

Ed Gaudet: Yeah, a tough job, obviously. And I'm sure you're busy these days especially.



Andrea Steele: Definitely.

Ed Gaudet: How did you get into healthcare?

Andrea Steele: You know, I would describe that to my family. My mom worked for a physical therapist for the last. Or she's retired now, but she worked there for ten-plus years. My first job at 12 years old was doing laundry for the physical therapy office. I washed and folded towel sheets, pillowcases overnight, and then my mom would take them back to work with her the next morning as the office manager. And I think I just started my love there. My sister is also a APRN for Federally Qualified Health Center, so it's just part of our family, I think.

Ed Gaudet: It's in the family. Yeah, yeah. And people don't realize how critical laundry is. If you don't have it, you can't run a hospital, you can't run a clinic. People always think about risk on the technology side, but there's all these other services that are quote-unquote critical functions to definitely. Yeah. When you think about the next 12, 24 months, what are your top strategic initiatives?

Andrea Steele: So for us here at the district, I would say it's really translating actually quality to IT. I've started in the last year by having our team conduct root cause analysis, but the next phase would be implementing, plan, do, check, act. So really like doing that whole process improvement cycle in each of our service lines. And then in addition to that, which is also no small feat, we also are trying to implement the Scrum methodology. So our business intelligence department has been doing it now for a couple of months, maybe the last six months, and it has really improved our delivery time to our operational stakeholders, but also helped kind of answer real questions in real-time for the developers. So they're able to, you know, address roadblocks quickly and move forward with their jobs as well.

Ed Gaudet: And are you following the pure agile process, or have you modified?



Andrea Steele: Trying to, but we're also open to being flexible. We can actually seed the tickets from the Manage Engine system into Azure DevOps to sort of start the process and, you know, set up our actual two week sprints with the business, the operational owners, right? So they tell us what the priority is and then we run.

Ed Gaudet: And do other organizations, use Scrum and Agile, or are you the first?

Andrea Steele: Oh, I'm sure there are other organizations who are using it. I don't know that they have historically linked it to their IT ticketing system the way that we are. So I'm pretty excited about that.

Ed Gaudet: I met within the organization. Are there other groups that use it?

Andrea Steele: Oh, sorry. There are, our performance excellence team, and our project management office are also using.

Ed Gaudet: Oh, cool.

Andrea Steele: Scrum, yeah.

Ed Gaudet: So it sounds like that'll be sort of a best practice for the organization.

Andrea Steele: Definitely.

Ed Gaudet: Yeah, that's great. Yeah. You, I don't think many healthcare organizations are using. I know a few, but yeah, it's a really good question to ask. Actually, I'm gonna have to think about how I include that in the. We have this benchmark study. I want to think about how I include that in the benchmark study. You know, as you think about those things that you use to help guide your overall programs. Are you a NIST shop? Are you a CSF shop? Are you a, you are?

Andrea Steele: We are, we're in the CSF shop. Yep.

Ed Gaudet: And are you looking at the CPGs, cybersecurity performance goals?

Andrea Steele: We are. Yep.

Ed Gaudet: Good, good, good. Excellent. And so assuming, like everybody else, you're probably also either thinking about or beginning to execute on some type of AI plan policies, protocols governance committee.

Andrea Steele: Yes. So we had our one and only AI governance committee earlier this year. And it then got integrated into our data governance committee. So we had just one AI governance committee where we sort of talked about the lay of the land and also where we wanted to go, including implementation of Dax, copilot with Epic and Copilot through Microsoft 365. And then now we talk about the AI components as a regular standing agenda item, part of our data governance ongoing monthly meetings.

Ed Gaudet: I love that idea. And so why did you decide, you know, what was sort of the impetus for putting it into data governance?

Andrea Steele: I would say that it's usually at least from a legal and compliance concern. The concerns always come back to the data and the data integrity and where is it getting stored. So it just made sense. It's, we didn't need to keep a separate committee, a governance committee going when we could just sort of integrate it with what we had already started.

Ed Gaudet: Got it. And how about other practices, other functions like risk analysis. And as you're bringing in AI-type technologies or tools, do you have a formal risk analysis process as well for that, or?

Andrea Steele: We are working on our formalized risk, but we actually have an Excel spreadsheet that helps us analyze the risks that come along with AI, but then separately. So the next thing right that we actually brought through data governance was Tableau in the cloud, which offers AI. So it's pulse component. So we'll be able to down the line casting even for our risk as well.



Andrea Steele (cont'd): So that's the piece that I'm really excited about. We'll be able to take enterprise risk data, feed it into Tableau, as we already do today, but then also do forecasting of our risk. And maybe even if we get super savvy down the line, maybe we can actually combine the enterprise risk data with our now data that we get from Censinet on each of our vendors. So that's another just sort of aspect of some of the work that we've been doing. And we try to be a very data-driven organization, but sometimes being able to combine those different data sources can be a challenge. But right now, we're working on it.

Ed Gaudet: Excellent.

Andrea Steele: ... Dreams.

Ed Gaudet: Excellent. Yeah. No, it's exciting times. What keeps you up at night?

Andrea Steele: What keeps me up at night? Honestly, it's asset management and medical device management as well. Keeping track of our inventory.

Ed Gaudet: Is med device managed by the biomed or the bioengineering group, or?

Andrea Steele: We do have a biomedical group that they do not currently have. That cybersecurity component. So we're actually bringing on a third-party vendor to do the cybersecurity upkeep, and we'll have it integrated between IT security and biomed and have probably monthly meetings just to make sure that we're on the same page and tracking everything appropriately.

Ed Gaudet: Excellent. All right. That's a really good overview. So now, as we kind of turn to you, the person outside of your day job, what are you most passionate about? What would you be doing if you weren't doing this job?

Andrea Steele: Oh, I would probably be hanging out with my kids camping. I went on a really long road trip over the summer, where we camped all over Northern California. We did some panning for gold. That's a fun thing for small boys aged almost seven and nine.



Ed Gaudet: Oh, nice. Nice!

Andrea Steele: Right on the river. So we did, you know, some just sort of rafting down the river as well.

Ed Gaudet: Yeah.

Andrea Steele: And, yeah, we love to go, of course, to all the amusement parks. Legoland, Disneyland, all those things, but we like to spend time outside.

Ed Gaudet: Yeah. Now, were you up in Big Sur or?

Andrea Steele: No. We went through Yosemite.

Ed Gaudet: Oh, Yosemite, okay.

Andrea Steele: Up over to Tahoe and then back down through mammoth.

Ed Gaudet: Nice. Oh, so great. And you. You live in California?

Andrea Steele: I do, I live in Orange County, California, but in Silverado at the base of the Cleveland National Forest, so we have a creek out back.

Ed Gaudet: Oh, beautiful. Oh, that's great.

Andrea Steele: I also have two chickens, two cats, and a dog. It's pretty exciting in our house.

Ed Gaudet: Yeah, no. That's great. My first trip out of school was to LA, to Irvine, actually, for a trade show. Yeah, this is back in the 80s, and I was a big doors fan. And I remember just thinking, I need to get to Venice Beach.



Andrea Steele: Oh, yeah, Venice Beach is amazing.

Ed Gaudet: It's so cool. Yeah, I still go. I still anytime I'm in town, I try to go because, you know, it's like a pilgrimage. It's like. And I try to bring whoever who's with me. And typically, people have never been. So it's a, it's kind of fun to watch their their reaction to Venice because they've heard about it, but they've never been.

Andrea Steele: And there's always something exciting to see there, for sure.

Ed Gaudet: Such a great place. And the whole area of Santa Monica, Venice, is so wonderful. Okay, so if you could go back in time, what would you tell your 20-year-old self?

Andrea Steele: Truthfully, I think I would tell my 20-ish or so-year-old self just to believe in myself more, right? I don't need the external validation. It's really about like trusting your gut and being willing to make mistakes. Learn from those mistakes. Yeah, and I think I've had plenty of opportunities to make mistakes and then learn from them and believe in myself more. So, yeah, if I could have just had the confidence that I have now at age 20, I think I'd be in a different.

Ed Gaudet: Yeah, that's a common answer. I always when I first thought of the question, I thought, people are going to say, you know, invest in Microsoft or, which is also a good, good advice. But no, we often get that answer, which is a really good answer. It sounds like you do like the outdoors, so I'm sure you like a little risk. What's the riskiest thing you've ever done?

Andrea Steele: You know, I would say skydiving.

Ed Gaudet: Oh!

Andrea Steele: Right, right?

Ed Gaudet: Yes.

Andrea Steele: Honestly, it was probably riskier driving around in little micro buses in Guatemala and Mexico with my cousin. That seems like much more dangerous, actually, than skydiving. We were packed into buses.

Ed Gaudet: ... pieces of road, and.

Andrea Steele: Yeah.

Ed Gaudet: Up hills and mountains.

Andrea Steele: You know, food and chickens on, like these very small winding roads that are made out of dirt. And you don't know if you're going to go off of a cliff. I think that was more dangerous, more risky.

Ed Gaudet: I would agree that's much more risky. Yeah, yeah, yeah. It's controlled risk to jump out of a plane, believe it or not.

Andrea Steele: I know.

Ed Gaudet: But the bus driver, you never know what you get.

Andrea Steele: Yeah, exactly.

Ed Gaudet: Hardest lesson in your career?

Andrea Steele: Hardest lesson? You know, I think this is just something that I'm still learning. And it's probably also from going from leading a small team of eight to a now team of 50 people, right? And it's sort of that discrepancy between the desire to accomplish something versus the capacity to actually accomplish it. And so you have desire, you have capacity, and then you maybe have capability mixed in with capacity.

Andrea Steele (cont'd): And really being able to understand what is somebody's desire to get something done versus their actual knowledge, skills and abilities to do it. And what are you doing right as a leader to remove roadblocks for them to be able to do what they need to do at the end of the day, and it plays out not only in work, it also plays out in personal life, too. And so this is the thing that I've been just sort of thinking about over probably the last couple of months, that disparity and kind of also just talking with people about like, how interested are you in doing this thing and what do you know about it? Are you willing to learn about it, or do we need to actually bring in somebody from the outside who's already an expert? And then also, I would say adding to that, it's also helping people be honest about where they're at and what their knowledge, skills and capabilities are as well.

Ed Gaudet: I love that answer. I always, you know, early on, I realized I had this epiphany that it's skill and desire. Those are the two levers that you have. I mean, there's a lot of other things around it, but you articulated that so well, and it's also the things we don't do as leaders, like jump in and try to do it ourselves because. Sure.

Andrea Steele: Right, right?

Ed Gaudet: Yeah. That delegation is so hard sometimes because, you know, that's really good, really good insight. I love music, I typically ask folks, you're on a desert island, and you can take five records or five movies with you. What would you bring?

Andrea Steele: I would probably bring Odesza. They're in return album so that I could dance on that desert island. That would be nice.

Ed Gaudet: It's like Burning Man on your island.

Andrea Steele: Yeah, exactly. Similarly, probably Faithless. I like their Outrospective album as well. And then for movies, I was just remembering this yesterday, that movie Feds from the 80s with the two women who wanted to become FBI agents. It's hilarious. You've got to Rebecca De Mornay.



Andrea Steele (cont'd): She is, you know, ex-marine. And then you have this other actress who is the smart one, right? So you have sort of the complementary, the brains and the brawn, right? And they had to work together to get through FBI Academy and work as a team, basically to both accomplish their goals. I just remembered it yesterday, and that's a good one to rewatch it this weekend.

Ed Gaudet: F E Z?

Andrea Steele: F E D S.

Ed Gaudet: OH, okay. Feds. Oh, got it. Not fez.

Andrea Steele: What's your favorite movie?

Ed Gaudet: Oh, I love Jaws. I love Apocalypse Now, Star Wars. I'm a child of the 70s, so I tend to gravitate to those. Grease, I love Grease.

Andrea Steele: Oh, me too.

Ed Gaudet: Good. That's a great movie. It's such a great movie. Anytime it's on, I'll stop, and I turn it, and I'll watch it. It's the same with Jaws, too. Like, my wife's like. Are you watching Jaws again? What's wrong with you? I'm like, I just can't not look. It's.

Andrea Steele: That's awesome.

Ed Gaudet: And Rebecca De Mornay. Wasn't she in Risky Business? Ah, could keep it in the family here, the risky, risky thing. Cool. Any last advice you have to professionals that are, you know, just starting up or maybe just coming out of school and want to break into healthcare and or cyber or IT?



Andrea Steele: Let's see. Well, so breaking into healthcare, I would say, you know, be willing to start small and learn. And for cybersecurity, I feel like there's so much free education out there these days. You can start to, you know, just go learn on even the size of websites and then bring that knowledge with you to your interview process. And then you can also sort of think about the way that you are addressing IT security, even in your home, and bring that to an interview as well. So what we've also done here at the Health Care District is promote internally. So finding those folks on either the service desk or desktop engineer team who already have just sort of a mind for it or a knack for it or an interest in it, giving them the opportunity, right, showing that desire. Let them go take some courses through Pluralsight, and then going ahead and interviewing them and seeing if there'll be a good fit and then moving them up in their career. It's been really successful for us.

Ed Gaudet: Yeah, there's so many areas to start in and advance into over time, which I don't think people think about. They think about cybersecurity as like this very technical complex it is. But you can also start small. You can start off as a risk assessor.

Andrea Steele: Definitely.

Ed Gaudet: Yeah, that's really great advice. Any last thoughts or comments or insight to add before we end? This has been terrific.

Andrea Steele: No, no, I'm just curious what records you would bring to a desert island as well.

Ed Gaudet: Oh, records. Oh, music. Oh well, I mentioned The Doors earlier, so probably a Doors record. Probably, Soft Parade or Morrison Hotel or LA Woman, I don't know. I love them all. Grateful Dead, I'm a huge Deadhead, so I still follow them around. So I was just at the Sphere for three shows in Vegas in June. Yeah. So they're and they're still rocking. It's amazing. I love the Stones. So maybe Sticky Fingers album or Exile on Main Street. So I'm an old-time rocker, but I love jazz, and I love, I love all sorts of music, so.

Andrea Steele: Very cool.



Ed Gaudet: Yeah. No, thanks for asking me, though. Nobody's asked me that.

Andrea Steele: Sure.

Ed Gaudet: That's great. Excellent. All right. So again, thank you, Andrea, for joining us. This is Ed Gaudet from the Risk Never Sleeps Podcast. And if you're on the front lines protecting patient safety and delivering patient care, remember to stay vigilant because Risk Never Sleeps.



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