

BIOGRAPHY

Gary “Chris” Christopherson

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Throughout his career, Gary has worked on strategic and operational planning, policy, systems, models, management, reform and performance toward reducing vulnerability, improving health and building a thriving future.

He founded and leads **Thrive!**[®] which helps create, manage and sustain large positive change and build a thriving future for all (persons, local, State, regional, national, global). ThrivingFuture.org Similarly, he founded and leads **HealthPeople**[®] which helps build a healthy and thriving future for individual persons and communities (local, State, regional, national, global). HealthPeople.com He authored seven public policy books under **Thrive!** These endeavors draw on 30+ years of experience in creating, managing, evaluating and sustaining large positive change at national/local levels in public and private sectors.

He was elected to and serves as a Senior Fellow with the National Academy of Public Administration.

Through early 2006, he served as 1) Senior Advisor to the Chief Operating Officer of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services and 2) Senior Advisor to the VA Under Secretary for Health. As Senior Advisor with CMS (on detail from VA), he led the strategic/operational planning effort and helped lead pay for performance, quality improvement and person-centered health. He also served (2005) as Deputy Director of the Quality Improvement Group with CMS (on detail from VA). He took an early retirement from Federal service in March 2006.

As Senior Advisor to the Under Secretary for Health, he led several initiatives, incl. person-centered health, care in the community, personal health systems (incl. My HealthVet), virtual health systems (incl. HealthPeople) and health info standardization. HealthPeople is an initiative to move to person-centered health, improve health delivery systems, adopt health info standards, and improve availability, affordability and performance of health info systems nationally.

For 2004-05, he was a Senior Fellow / Scholar-in-Residence with the Institute of Medicine, National Academy of Sciences focusing on vulnerable populations, person-centered health, virtual health systems and care in the community.

Previously, beginning in 2000, he served as Chief Information Officer (CIO) for Veterans Health Administration. As CIO, he managed info systems for the \$20+ billion veterans health system, the nation’s largest integrated health system, and info-related, system-wide expenditures of over \$1 billion annually. In addition, he developed and obtained approval and expanded funding (additional \$125M/year) for HealthVet, the next generation health information system.

From 1994-2000, he served with the Department of Defense (DoD), including as Acting Assistant Secretary and Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (PDASD) for Health Affairs. He managed policy, the Defense Health Program budget, and performance for the \$16 billion Military Health System, including force health protection and TRICARE. He was also Senior Advisor for Force Health Protection with the Assistant Secretary for Reserve Affairs focusing on DoD’s largest force health protection effort, protection against anthrax. Earlier, he was Health Affairs’ Acting PDAS and Senior Advisor and managed relationships with the White House and Federal agencies.

In 1993-94, he was Associate Director, Office of Presidential Personnel, The White House and managed Presidential appointments (PAS/PA/SES) to the Department of Health and Human Services as well as eleven other Departments.

Earlier, he served as Executive Director of the National Capital March of Dimes (1991-92). In 1991, he was Executive Director of National Gray Panthers Project Fund.

From 1983 to 1991, he was Director of Health Legislation for House Select Committee on Aging. He worked with House leadership and authorization/appropriations committees, drafted health legislation, and managed hearings on Alzheimer’s, quality assurance, health costs, underserved populations, health reform, Medicaid and Medicare.

Earlier, he was Deputy Director of the Municipal Health Services Program (1981-83), based at Johns Hopkins and funded by The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. During 1977-80, he served as Director of Special Projects for Milwaukee and developed a nationally recognized inner city health/human service system with funding from The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Medicare, and Medicaid. Previously, he was senior consultant and States Coordinator with Kappa Systems (1975-77), contractor to NIH’s National High Blood Pressure Education Program.

He is a sculptor of abstract art, focusing on mobile and stabile sculptures and creating over 150 sculptures, primarily working in copper, wood and stone media. (GChris.com) He has his GChris Sculpture Studio/Gallery in Nelson, WI. Previously, he had his GChris Sculpture Studio/Gallery in Georgetown, DC and University Park, MD. He authored two science fiction novels and two children's books (@ Amazon.com).

In the early ‘70s, he received his Bachelor’s Degree in Political Science (1970) and his Master’s Degree in Urban and Regional Planning (1974) from the University of Wisconsin - Madison. During 1981-83, he did doctoral work in health policy and management at the John Hopkins University School of Public Health.

Leadership/Management & Accomplishments - Gary “Chris” Christopherson

Leadership/Management Positions

- Founded and leads **Thrive!**® to help create, manage and sustain large positive change and build a thriving future for all (persons, local, State, regional, national, global) (ThrivingFuture.org)
- Founded and leads **HealthPeople**® to help build a healthy and thriving future for individual persons and communities (local, State, regional, national, global) (HealthePeople.com)
- Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary and Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs, DoD
- Senior Advisor to Chief Operating Officer, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, DHHS
- Senior Fellow and Scholar-in-Residence, Institute of Medicine, National Academy of Sciences
- Senior Fellow, National Academy for Public Administration [Current]
- Associate Director, Presidential Personnel, Executive Office of the President, White House
- Chief Information Officer, Veterans Health Administration, VA
- Senior Advisor to Under Secretary, Veterans Health Administration, VA
- Director of Health Legislation, House Select Committee on Aging, U.S. House of Representatives
- Deputy Director, Quality Improvement Group, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, DHHS
- Senior Advisor to Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs, DoD
- Deputy Director, Municipal Health Services Program (funded by The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and based at John Hopkins Medical Institutions)
- Director of Special Projects and of Municipal Health Services Program, Milwaukee Health Department
- States Coordinator, National High Blood Pressure Education Program
- Coordinator, Milwaukee High Blood Pressure Program

Accomplishments

- Developed strategic/operational approaches to building and sustaining a better and preferably thriving future
- Developed strategic/operational approaches to building a healthy future for persons and communities
- Developed strategy, management, policy and performance models and tools for creating, managing and sustaining large positive change
- Led and developed Strategic and Operational Plan for Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services
- Managed \$15+ billion Military Health System for Department of Defense
- Managed \$1.4 billion health information system for Veteran Health Administration
- Designed and obtained new funding of \$125M per year for next generation HealthVet health info system
- Developed national “virtual health system” model for bringing to bear electronic health record systems, personal health/record systems, standards and interoperability
- Developed “person-centered health” model used by VHA, CMS and IOM
- Developed national model for “reducing vulnerability and maximizing thriving”
- Developed “behavioral effectiveness model” for designing, operating and evaluating health services
- Developed “care in the community” model for extending care beyond health facilities’ walls
- Wrote legislation introduced to protect the un- and under insured.
- Wrote legislation introduced to reform Medicare and Medicaid
- Was lead staff for Congress’ hearings on un-/underinsured, Alzheimer’s, long term care, health care costs
- Helped lead effort to increase Alzheimer’s research funding many fold
- Developed and obtained Presidential approval for “force health protection” for military service members
- Designed, developed and managed inner city health and human service system in Milwaukee, WI
- Managed national grant program for The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
- Acquired grant from The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and Medicare and Medicaid waivers from the Health Care Financing Administration
- Designed, developed and managed Project Life, a community preventive health program
- Managed State efforts for the National High Blood Pressure Education Program, NHLBI, NIH
- Developed and managed national model high blood pressure control program in Milwaukee, WI
- Wrote and published public policy books – **Behavior Effectiveness Model (BEM): Building Thriving Future Using Behavior Effectiveness Model (BEM); Thrive! - All Thrive Forever: What Will You Do?® The Game. The Challenge; The Thrive! Philosophy: Thrive! - All Thrive Forever; Thrive! Endeavor - All Thrive Forever; Thrive! – Quick Guide to a Thriving Future; Thrive! – People’s Guide to a Thriving Future; Thrive! - Building a Thriving Future.**
- Wrote and published fiction books – **black box** (scifi); **The Thrive! Endeavor box** (scifi); **Angel – Thriving Creator of Artful Things** (children’s); **T!rrific [terrific] - What will you do to thrive?** (children’s).
- Owns and developed websites: ThriveEndeavor.org, AllThriveForever.org, WeAreVulnerable.org, ThrivingFuture.org, ThriveForever.org, HealthePeople.com, ChildrenThriveForever.org, GChris.com, ThriveBlog.org, ThriveBlog.net