2 of Chicago’s notable LGBTQ+ execs find home—and purpose—at AMA

SEP 27, 2021

Andis Robeznieks
Senior News Writer

A leading business publication recently recognized Chicago’s “50 Notable LGBTQ+ Executives” chosen from banking, finance, law, health care, retail, young ventures and nonprofit organizations—and the list includes two outstanding professionals at the AMA.

“To qualify for the list, nominees must serve in a senior role, make significant contributions to advancing equality at their own workplace or beyond, and act as a role model or mentor,” stated Crain’s Chicago Business, which is has been published since 1978 and is read by over 200,000 people weekly.

Two AMA professionals who certainly fit that definition are Elliott Crigger, PhD, director of ethics policy, and Craig Johnson, group manager of the AMA Minority Affairs Section (AMA-MAS).

Elliott Crigger, PhD
Crain’s noted Crigger’s work providing medical ethics expertise for the AMA Council on Ethical and Judicial Affairs, his essays applying the AMA Code of Medical Ethics that provided guidance to physicians seeking answers to ethical dilemmas during the COVID-19 pandemic, and co-leading one
of the teams implementing the AMA’s policy on racism in medicine.

“I wasn’t sure what to make of this award, to be honest—I’ve never looked for public recognition,” Crigger said. “But when I look at the people who’ve been honored over the last few years, I’m very proud to find myself in such company—especially my colleagues at Howard Brown Health, who are outstanding servant leaders in the community.”

Working for better patient care—for all

Johnson’s work with the AMA-MAS enhancing minority health policy and improving workforce diversity were cited by Crain’s, as was his management of the AMA Advisory Committee on LGBTQ Issues and its 500-member caucus. The publication also mentioned his contributions to AMA policy briefs on transgender health care (PDF), gender-affirmation surgeries and public accommodations for transgender people.

Craig Johnson

“I appreciate the public recognition by a major business publication of my intentional efforts to improve life circumstances for Black, Indigenous and LGBTQ+ communities through my professional career, as well as through civic engagement and advocacy in my community,” said Johnson, who also directs the AMA Doctors Back to School™ program.

Johnson noted that his position as a group manager puts him in a liaison role between AMA staff and physician leaders who represent the medical and public health interests of patients who are part of racial, ethnic, sexual or gender-minority groups.

“My work at the AMA presents opportunities on a daily basis to work collaboratively and in a leadership capacity to make a difference among countless lives by developing impactful policy,
developing physician leaders, and delivering quality programming that will ultimately improve the health outcomes of patients and the professional lives of leaders in the house of medicine,” Johnson explained.

“Making a difference in the real world”

Crigger described how his work with the AMA Council on Ethical and Judicial Affairs carries forward work that began at the very founding of the AMA and involves articulating the “essentials of honorable behavior for physicians.”

“That work isn’t always as visible as some of AMA’s endeavors, perhaps, but in one way or another it touches the practice of virtually every physician in the country,” Crigger said.

Crigger finds the work of helping physicians, individuals and communities make thoughtful decisions on challenging issues particularly satisfying.

“If it’s work that stands a chance of making a difference in the world,” he said.

Colleagues’ exceptional dedication

Johnson, who also chairs AIDS Foundation Chicago and serves on Mayor Lori Lightfoot’s Advisory Council on LGBTQ+ Issues, said he is inspired by the exceptional dedication to improve health equity demonstrated by his colleagues and among AMA members.

“It is especially rewarding to know that every day, in some way, I am helping the very people with whom I share identities, struggles and victories,” Johnson said. “That I do so in collaboration with a number of supportive colleagues and organizations across health care is particularly reassuring, as our combined efforts will positively impact generations to come.”

Read about the other people named to this year’s Crain’s Chicago Business list of notable LGBTQ executives.