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HEALTHCARE
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**BURT
HUDSON**

Chief Operating Officer, LeadingAge

REDEFINING THE FUTURE OF AGING



BURT HUDSON

Redefining the Future of Aging

The future of healthcare will be shaped not only by scientific discovery and technological innovation, but by how well society responds to one of the most significant demographic shifts in its history.

As Americans live longer and expectations around aging continue to evolve, healthcare organizations are being challenged to think differently about how care is delivered, how communities are supported, and how innovation can improve quality of life.

Few leaders have a broader perspective on this transformation than Burt Hudson, Chief Operating Officer of LeadingAge. Working with nonprofit providers serving older adults across the country, Hudson has spent his career helping organizations navigate change while remaining focused on their mission of serving older adults with dignity, compassion, and purpose.

His perspective extends beyond today's challenges. It is centered on preparing organizations for a future where collaboration, innovation, workforce development, and technology will define how Americans experience aging.

For his leadership and contributions to advancing aging services, Icons of Industry recognizes Burt Hudson as a Healthcare Icon 2026.



FOR HIS LEADERSHIP AND CONTRIBUTIONS
TO ADVANCING AGING SERVICES,
ICONS OF INDUSTRY
RECOGNIZES HIM AS A
HEALTHCARE ICON 2026.

Q

When you think about the future of aging, what excites you the most?

BURT HUDSON

Every day, about 11,000 Americans turn 65. By 2030, one in five of us will be over 65. You can read those numbers as a challenge. I read them as the best opportunity this field has ever had to rethink what aging looks like in this country.

What excites me most is the shift from treating illness to supporting a good life. Healthcare providers, housing organizations, community services, and technology companies are actually working together now, and that changes what's possible. We can build systems that help people stay independent longer and get the right care at the right time, in the place they actually want to be. That's the whole game.

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What do you believe will define successful aging services over the next decade?

BURT HUDSON

Success won't be about how many services we deliver. It will be about whether people's lives are actually better because of us.

By 2050, more than 80 million Americans will be over 65, and they won't accept the old model. People want choice. They want independence. They want to stay connected to their families and their communities.

The organizations that win the next decade will pair compassionate care with smart innovation, making healthcare easier to navigate while protecting the human relationships at the heart of this work. That's what mission-driven, nonprofit providers have always done best, and it's why I'm confident about where the field is headed.

Q

Workforce continues to be one of healthcare's biggest challenges. How should leaders think differently about it?

BURT HUDSON

Workforce is the defining issue in healthcare right now, The Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that healthcare will produce some of the fastest-growing jobs in the economy over the next decade, driven largely by the aging of America.

But recruitment alone won't get it done. We have to build careers, not just fill positions. That means real leadership development, real paths for professional growth, technology that takes paperwork off people's plates, and support that lets caregivers focus on the people in front of them.

The organizations investing in their people today are the ones that will be standing strong tomorrow.

Q

Artificial intelligence is transforming healthcare. Where do you believe it can make the greatest difference?

BURT HUDSON

The biggest near-term win for AI is giving time back to caregivers. Too many healthcare professionals spend their day documenting, coordinating, and pushing paper instead of being with the patients and residents they came to serve.

If AI can take on that administrative load while improving accuracy and decision-making, caregivers get to do what only people can do: build trust, show compassion, and deliver care that's truly personal.

My rule on this is simple. Technology should never replace the human experience. It should strengthen it.

Q

Healthcare increasingly depends on collaboration across hospitals, physicians, home health, senior living, and community organizations. What does that future look like?

BURT HUDSON

Nobody experiences healthcare one organization at a time. It's one continuous journey, and right now that journey has too many gaps and rough hand-offs.

The future depends on stronger connections across the whole continuum: better information sharing, closer collaboration among providers, and real attention to helping people move smoothly between care settings.

Here's the shift I see coming. Success won't be measured by how well any single organization performs on its own. It will be measured by how well the entire system works together for the person at the center of it.

Q

**What leadership principle
has guided your career?**

BURT HUDSON

Leadership begins with listening.

The best ideas almost never come from one person. They show up when talented people with different perspectives gather around a common purpose. My job has always been to build the kind of environment where that happens, where collaboration, trust, and getting a little better every day are simply part of the culture.

When people understand the mission, feel empowered to contribute, and stay focused on the folks they serve, an organization can accomplish far more than any single leader could alone. I've watched it happen over and over.

Q

Looking ahead, what gives you confidence about the future of aging services?

BURT HUDSON

The people. I've spent my career around the folks who do this work, and their resilience and dedication never stop impressing me.

Every challenge in aging services is also an invitation to do better. We're seeing more collaboration than ever, continued investment in technology, new models of care, and a growing recognition that healthy aging is about far more than healthcare.

If we keep bringing providers, policymakers, innovators, and communities together around a shared vision, I believe we'll look back on this period as the moment America fundamentally changed how it supports people through the aging journey. I'd like to be able to tell my kids we got that right.

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