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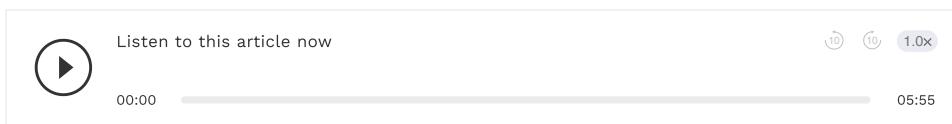
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*Amplifying the voices of Latino leadership in America*

## Karla Valle Builds a Better Company by Building Better People

AUGUST 16, 2021

Karla Valle has a knack for delivering big. As the first-ever CFO at Beecan Health, she's worked to build a robust, mission-driven finance program that's more about people and less about numbers.



When Karla Valle was offered a position as area chief financial officer at Kaiser Permanente in 2012, she felt she was at least a year away from being prepared for the role. Not only that, but her first task as CFO would be to find \$50 million and resolve a financial gap within the organization.

Valle had applied for the role in large part because of her mentor, who had urged her to vie for the job. But that did not stop her from diving into challenges head-on once she actually secured the position: from the outset, she worked to collaborate with those around her in order to establish a clear plan of action. "I remember my first department meeting as CFO," Valle says. "We had about a hundred people there, and I remember thinking that there was no way I could do this by myself. I needed every person in that room to feel ownership for those numbers."

Valle organized the meeting attendees into cross-functional groups: people from nursing, engineering, and financial departments put their heads together to find answers. The goal was clear, Valle explains. "Whenever organizations are over-budget or trying to cut expenses, it's always the same question: 'Who do we get rid of?' I did not want to cut anybody. It may be more difficult, but it keeps people whole."

By the time Valle left six years later, successfully navigating a \$50 million gap was the least of her accomplishments: in her tenure as CFO, she had helped transform the medical center's entire financial outlook, securing the medical center a number one spot in the program from both a financial and quality perspective.

### Seeking Opportunity

That success ultimately led Valle to her current role as the first-ever [CFO](https://web.archive.org/web/20230421015227/https://www.linkedin.com/in/karla-valle-0b1a714/) (<https://web.archive.org/web/20230421015227/https://www.linkedin.com/in/karla-valle-0b1a714/>) for [Beecan Health](https://web.archive.org/web/20230421015227/https://beecanhealth.com/) ([https://beecanhealth.com/](https://web.archive.org/web/20230421015227/https://beecanhealth.com/)), a cutting-edge company dedicated to serving and supporting skilled nursing facilities in Southern



Photo by Philip Cheung

California. In her video interview with *Hispanic Executive*, she sits behind a large desk with an incredible view of downtown Glendale, California. The view is perfect, idyllic—particularly when contrasted with the hardship of her arrival to America from Guatemala in 1982.

Valle's mom was granted asylum in the United States after her life was threatened, but when Valle and her brother attempted to obtain visas to enter the country legally, they were denied. She entered the US without documentation under the cover of blankets in a back seat of a van, relying on her aunt and uncle to help her safely reunite with her mom.

"I believe there is an extraordinary resilience within every immigrant that comes to this country," Valle reflects. "All politics and shortcomings aside, I still believe this is a land of opportunity. Success is defined differently for everyone, but whatever that is for you, I believe it can be achieved if you have the will."

## Hidden Talent

For Valle, those opportunities include helping build Beecan's financial program from the ground up. As the organization's first CFO, Valle had a blank slate when she came on board. "My first duty was to hire a controller, an analytics team, and then bring all of our functions—including accounting, finance, and budgeting—in-house," Valle explains. "The good news was we got to create everything from scratch. The bad news was also that we had to create everything from scratch."

Valle has purposefully sought out unique specialists with diverse experience and backgrounds. Her controller is from the restaurant industry. Another leader is from manufacturing. "If we're going to form the most trusted skilled nursing facilities for your loved ones, then we need to create an environment that generates great ideas," the CFO says. "The only way to accomplish that is through finding different backgrounds and experiences, and hiring people who are smarter than me."

The CFO sees her team building efforts as a chance to bring together the best from all fields in a nurturing environment where they can thrive. "My job is to hire unicorns. I can hire any expert, but I look beyond a person's function or job title and give them the opportunity to offer the added value of truly being themselves and letting their talents show."

## Building a Legacy

Valle's efforts to strengthen the finance team extend beyond hiring. She strives to remind her team members of their real mission, something she has done successfully in previous roles as well. One day, she decided to bring her Kaiser (<https://web.archive.org/web/20230421015227/https://hispanicexecutive.com/berta-alicia-bejarano-kaiser-permanente/>) team members to an intensive care unit. "I wanted them to remember when someone comes to them for extra staff or a new piece of equipment and understand where those [requests] were

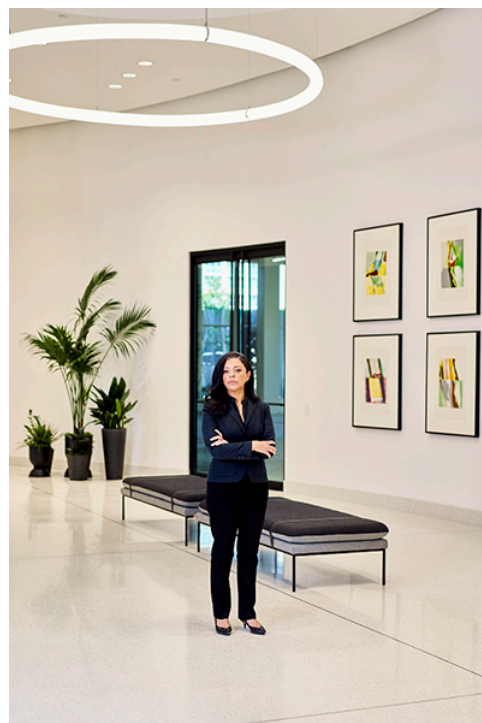


Photo by Philip Cheung

coming from,” Valle explains. “I really felt the need to humanize what we are doing as nonclinicians, and [explain] why it matters to have discussions with our nursing staff.”

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the CFO and her team have continued to roll out new systems and processes that have helped Beecan put its best foot forward, including a new accounting system, HRIS, and a new, easy-access payroll system for employees. “All of these would be implemented one-at-a-time at a normal company,” Valle notes. “But we felt like this was a foundational year at Beecan, in which we needed to put all of these pieces together to strive to be best in class.”

As Valle has worked to build a legacy for Beecan Health, she has reflected on her personal journey, as well as that of her parents. Her mother, she explains, worked for the telegraph company in Guatemala but gave up her professional life for many years to clean houses in California. Now a retired financial counselor, her mother still isn't entirely sure just how high her daughter has climbed. "I've tried to explain that I wouldn't have been her boss, but her boss' boss would have reported to me," the CFO says, laughing. "Maybe this article will help her see how far we've come."



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