

2024 Ohio Council Compliance & Quality Conference - Speaker Biographies



Nelson D. Cary
Partner

Nelson is a partner in the Vorys Columbus office and a member of the labor and employment group. He represents management in a broad range of labor and employment matters, including counseling employers on compliance with, and defending employers in litigation arising out of, the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Title VII, Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA), Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and similar state laws. He also advises employers on union elections and unfair labor practice proceedings before the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) and the Ohio State Employment Relations Board (SERB), negotiates union contracts (including project labor agreements (PLAs)), and defends labor contract arbitration proceedings. Nelson has experience advising clients with government contracts on the Service Contract Act (SCA), Davis-Bacon Act (DBA) and Ohio prevailing wage issues.



Michael C. Griffaton
Of Counsel

Mike is of counsel in the Vorys Columbus office and a member of the labor and employment and government relations practice groups. He has significant experience with wage and hour law, noncompetition, drug testing, discrimination, wrongful discharge, Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification Act (WARN Act), affirmative action and prevailing wage. In his practice, Mike advises Ohio and national employers on policy development, personnel matters, and litigation avoidance and represents them before government agencies and the courts and through alternative dispute resolution. He also advises clients on legislative advocacy and strategizes, drafts, and analyzes state and federal legislation.



J. Liam Gruz
Partner

Liam is a partner in the Vorys Columbus office and a member of the health care group. His practice focuses on advising health care industry clients on legal, regulatory and business issues impacting their operations. He brings in-house health care industry experience, which enables him to understand client expectations and apply a unique perspective to his practice.

Liam regularly advises a variety of providers — including hospitals, physician practice groups, home health care agencies, behavioral health care providers, medical equipment distributors, and Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) — at all stages of the compliance life cycle, including strategic counseling, developing effective policies and procedures, and vigorously defending government audits. Liam also regularly advises a variety of clients with various technology contracting issues, focusing on software licensing, software-as-a-service (SaaS) subscription models, and related data privacy and security issues.



Jolie N. Havens
Partner

Jolie is a partner in the Vorys Columbus and Houston offices and the immediate past chair of the firm's health care group. She also serves as the firm's chief diversity & inclusion officer where she leads the firm's strategy, policies and practices related to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Jolie maintains a national practice focused on health care transactions, contracting, compliance, and provider/practitioner reimbursement, with significant experience involving hospitals and physicians.



Nikkia Knudsen
Associate

Nikkia is an associate in the Vorys Columbus office and a member of the health care group. She has experience drafting, reviewing and revising commercial and confidentiality agreements. Nikkia is also active in the privacy space and has experience with a variety of issues such as incident response and data breaches, HIPAA/HITECH, and privacy compliance.

Nikkia received her J.D. from the Syracuse University College of Law where she served as an editorial member of the Syracuse Law Review. She received her M.H.A. and B.S. from The Ohio State University.



Sydney N. Pahren
Associate

Sydney is an associate in the Vorys Columbus office and a member of the health care group. She focuses her practice on health care law including, transactional, regulatory and compliance matters. She counsels clients on fraud and abuse issues, federal and state antikickback statutes, data, technology and privacy matters, and administrative appeals before government agencies. Additionally, she counsels clients in the cannabis and medical marijuana industry.

Sydney has extensive experience in preparing employment agreements and negotiating and preparing transaction documents.

Sydney received her J.D. from The Ohio State University Moritz College of Law and was an articles editor for the Ohio State Law Journal. She also was on the executive board of the Black Law Students Association.

Sydney received her B.A. in political science with a double minor in public policy and economics from Case Western Reserve University.

Sydney is also the president of the John Mercer Langston Bar Association.



Suzanne J. Scrutton
Partner

Suzanne is a partner in the Vorys Columbus office and chair of the health care group. She has experience representing providers in the fields of long term care, behavioral health and developmental disabilities. Suzanne has extensive experience with regulatory issues, Medicaid reimbursement and regulations, as well as contract negotiations with various payor sources. She represents several statewide health care provider trade associations in Ohio and Pennsylvania and their many members. Most recently, she was elected by her peers to serve a second term on the Board of Directors of the American Health Law Association (the AHLA).



James A. Wilson
Partner

Jim is a partner in the Vorys Columbus office and a member of the litigation practice group. He has litigated and tried a wide variety of antitrust and complex business matters over nearly thirty years, including class, injunctive and multidistrict actions, involving issues of price-fixing, tying arrangements, vertical restraints and alleged monopolization. In addition, he has extensive experience representing clients in criminal investigations, having represented numerous companies and individuals in antitrust criminal investigations, including a number of foreign nationals. Jim has also represented clients in civil investigations by the Department of Justice, Federal Trade Commission and state antitrust enforcers concerning mergers, pricing practices and allegedly monopolistic conduct.



Sonda Kunzi, CPC
President
Coding Advantage LLC

With more than 30 years of experience in healthcare, Sonda's expertise includes comprehensive knowledge of ICD10 and CPT coding concepts, documentation and training, compliance, and healthcare reimbursement methodology. Her experience comes from working in a variety of positions both as an outside consultant and as a professional within hospital-owned and private medical practices.

She has experience with review and application of the Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) relating to her work with community behavioral health agencies in Ohio. Sonda holds many certifications including coding, billing, compliance, practice management, risk-based coding. Sonda also taught ICD-10 and Advanced Coding at Lakeland Community College in Kirtland, Ohio.