

Dennis Williams



Dennis Williams of Kirkland & Ellis LLP served as the lead regulatory attorney for Bain Capital and Hellman & Friedman in the private equity firms' \$17 billion acquisition of health care IT services provider Athenahealth, earning him a spot among Law360's 2022 Health Care MVPs.

A notable deal he's worked on in the past year:

Williams advised Bain Capital and Hellman & Friedman on the legal considerations and concepts that they needed to weigh for the Athenahealth deal, which was announced in November. He also evaluated Athenahealth's data-based platform, which serves providers, payors, life sciences companies and other entities.

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"It is the largest information technology platform," Williams said. "It touches hundreds of thousands of health care providers around the country."

Why he became a health care attorney:

Health care is not just a legal theory for Williams — he started his career by practicing it.

Williams worked as a registered nurse at New York-Presbyterian, Weill Cornell Medical Center in New York City for 10 years, serving in its critical care and burn intensive care units.

Even after transitioning to law and graduating from law school, Williams said he continued to serve as a nurse,

working weekends or whenever else he could.

"It was one of the most challenging and yet rewarding experiences in my life," Williams said. "Health care is what I love, so day to day, it's really not a job for me, it's my passion."

What motivates him:

Williams said he is driven by the fact that health care is always evolving and touches everyone every single day.

Regulations are altered not only in how they are written but also in how they are interpreted, pushing Williams to stay on top of the changes.

"You can use your prior experience and expertise, but you need to be

current and abreast of any changes in the regulatory environment,” Williams said. “You need to keep yourself on top of where things may be going in the near future.”

His advice for junior attorneys:

Williams encourages younger attorneys to find an area of the law that they love and to pursue

it wholeheartedly, with the aim of understanding it better than most.

“By staying on top of the constantly changing environment or field that you’re interested in, it’s going to serve yourself and the client and help differentiate you from others as you grow in your career,” Williams said. “We are always learning and continuing to grow.”

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