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Let the Hospital Work for You

The Physician's Survival Guide for the Hospital.

Success in healthcare delivery today requires an ability to balance quality, service and efficiency. An appropriate balance can be achieved only if there is a strong working relationship between healthcare executives and clinicians. In particular, healthcare executives and physicians must share a level of trust and collaboration. But unfortunately trust and collaboration are not always present, and it often seems as if there is a significant chasm separating the two groups.

The prevalence of mutual distrust of motives means that almost all healthcare leaders struggle with developing improved working relationships. The situation can improve, however, if healthcare executives focus on some of the major sources of physician concern, thereby generating teamwork and avoiding pitfalls while making the hospital a better place for patients and staff.

Value of Physician Time

Time is the critical, limited resource that physicians possess and from which they earn a living. In forging a positive relationship, healthcare executives can begin by implementing processes that help enable physicians to efficiently provide patient care and manage their day. Just as healthcare executives strive to eliminate waste in

operational processes, it is important that they bring the same perspective to using physicians' time. And this includes not providing physicians with information overload. Too frequently, executives bombard physicians with extra information. Eliminating this behavior means listening more carefully to physician needs while providing more practical information and insight to physicians.

Executive Visibility

From a physician perspective, there is an expectation that the executive leadership of a hospital is visible and well-versed in core operations affecting clinical care—the “big four” of admitting, nursing, medical staff and medical records. Physicians also tend to have limited appreciation of the complexity of the interrelated systems within a hospital and assume that executives are knowledgeable and in control of every aspect affecting a patient visit, from parking to discharge. Physicians want to know that leadership is concerned about everyone who cares for patients and has a clear sense of how the hospital actually functions at every level. A cornerstone of a stronger relationship between healthcare executives and physicians is the joint objective of making sure patients are being cared for successfully.

Clinical Teamwork

Physicians share responsibility for patients with a wide range of staff, including nurses, therapists, residents and increasingly specialty physicians such as hospitalists and intensivists. Thus, clinical decision-making authority regarding the care of the patients may be diffused, with many people exercising authority over patients while controlling assets and resources that executives need to manage. Each of these parties in the transaction of patient care has differing needs, responsibilities and skills. The patient and the system benefit when the blending together of each of these skill sets is done correctly and with support from all of the professionals involved. Helping physicians understand and practice effectively within the shared environment is an important role for healthcare executives.

Information Technology

A growing body of evidence indicates that the use of information technology can be a major benefit in the reduction of medical errors. For hospitals to thrive and grow, the physician and executive leadership must become knowledgeable about information technology. Though there are real concerns about cost and ultimate impact, several leading institutions are showing the benefit of using information systems throughout the hospital; and there is a great deal more to learn and adopt in administrative improvements as well as in patient care delivery as the healthcare field evolves. However, as all those who have implemented variations of electronic medical records or computerized physician order entry systems know, adopting new technology often involves cultural transformation to ensure acceptance.



**ICDDR,B: CENTER FOR HEALTH
AND POPULATION RESEARCH**
Administrator, Dhaka Hospital
Pay Level: P5 (UN/WHO)

Budget Strategies

Healthcare executives are used to understanding and operating within a budget. That is not always true for physicians. Therefore, executives need to work together with physicians to ensure there is joint understanding of what is driving the budget strategies for the organization. Making the numbers should become a part of everyone's goals, while having the right numbers in the budget—those that medical staff agree contribute to quality care and growth—is critical to a strong working relationship. Being aware of priorities and understanding return on investment also help everyone assemble a capital budget for facilities and equipment that minimizes disputes over which program should receive increased investment at a particular time, as well as how to balance capital investments over time.

The well-functioning hospital masters the art of having everyone work together. Improving communication between parties will move physicians and executives closer together. For a hospital to be successful, physicians and healthcare executives both must be seen as the patient's advocate and must effectively communicate their needs to each other. ▲

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ICDDR,B: Centre for Health and Population Research is a large, non-profit international health research organization headquartered in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The Centre conducts research, and provides services and training on most important public health problems of developing countries at the highest international standards.

The Centre is seeking an Administrator to operate the Dhaka Hospital including the support units, personnel management, and finances. Primary responsibilities include hospital management, including setting standards of care and quality assurance of patient care, maintaining and improving inter-unit collaboration, establishing effective hospital infection control practices and monitoring research and training activities.

Incumbent should have an established record as a hospital administrator in a large hospital/health care facility preferably in a developing country with strong personnel and financial management skills, an understanding of quality standards and controls, mentoring and staff development.

Requirements: Master's degree in Hospital/Health Services Management or MD with 10 years administrative experience in a very large hospital, excellent analytical and communication skills, and ability to work and interact within a multi-cultural and multi-lingual environment.

Qualified applicants are requested to send a confidential letter of application summarizing the relevance of their experience with a detailed curriculum vitae, including salary requirements and three references complete with contact information to Director, Human Resources, ICDDR,B, GPO Box 128, Dhaka-1000, Bangladesh or email to: awalton@icddr.org or facsimile to 880-2-8823116.

For detailed information, visit our website: www.icddr.org

CLOSING DATE: September 30th, 2006

ICDDR,B is an equal opportunity employer and particularly welcomes applications from women candidates.

Opportunity in Japan

A mid sized psychiatric hospital with an additional 100 beds serving geriatric patients is seeking an American trained hospital administrator to lead a corporate culture change that will make it one of the leading psychiatric hospitals in Japan. The physical plant is modern. Located in a beautiful rural setting about an hour north of Tokyo, a successful applicant should have experience in managing inpatient and outpatient psychiatric organizations, possess a Master's degree in Hospital Administration, and preferably have some knowledge of Japanese life and culture. Japanese language is not a requirement, but strong consideration will be given to an otherwise qualified applicant with language skills or other cultural ties to Japan. Initial period of employment envisioned to be for a one year period, with a multi-year contract offered by mutual agreement. Position reports directly to the CEO, who speaks English, and many staff physicians also speak English. Some relocation assistance, including low cost housing and other benefits. Attractive salary. Position is open now until filled. Inquiries and applications are being initially screened by John C. Woher, FACHE - Inquiries and resumes in confidence by -Fax to Japan (81) 4 7093 0420.