

Engineering a Shared Quality Agenda to Deliver Optimum Patient Care



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Introduction

Engaging healthcare providers can lead to improved quality and better patient care. However, getting engagement is tricky, especially if when constructing a hospital-wide shared quality agenda. In order for hospitals to deepen staff engagement to ensure the delivery of quality patient care the former need to feel good while working and want to be sure that the hospital reflects positively upon them. This is supported by the hospital providing an appropriate platform for its staff to support the delivery of exceptional patient care. The aim of gaining staff engagement in a shared quality agenda is that they will be aligned to the same purpose and work towards achieving a common outcome.

Establishing Alignment

Max Weber, a German sociologist, established that four dimensions (shared purpose, self-interest, respect, and tradition) motivate and drive people to establish an alignment among healthcare providers in ensuring the delivery of optimum patient care. It is necessary that the

four dimensions of motivation are implemented together, not disjointedly. All in aim of establishing a hospital wide joint quality agenda

Hospital staff at large is considered healthcare providers whether being nurses, doctors, technicians, allied health professionals, administrators, and ancillary services including laundry, kitchen, engineers, information technology, maintenance, and housekeeping. All these professions are considered as healthcare providers due to the contribution that each has to the cycle of care delivered to patients. Doctors provide the diagnosis and treatment plan aided by results generated from the laboratory or radiology departments, nurses provide direct care as implementers of the treatment plan all while other hospital staff such as housekeeping and laundry services are providing a clean environment for patients by performing principles of infection control therefore, providing optimum quality patient care.

Engaging in a Shared Purpose

The entire purpose of why doctors, nurses or allied health professions chose their career path typically is to provide care and improve the lives of patients. This notion should be the primary focus shared by the entire hospital staff. Establishing a shared purpose is not an easy task. Healthcare organizations must be cognizant to guarantee that quality initiatives are employed efficiently. Hospitals must also be aware of the culture at the organization. Are physicians, nurses, administrators, and the whole hospital staff equipped for implementing quality initiatives? Implementing quality initiatives can only be successful when there is staff buy-in and a sense of partnership between the staff and administration.

Aligning their work with quality patient care will only result from facts proving their role is essential to the delivery of optimum patient care; facts translated through data collection methods and analysis are key for

articulating a clear path for hospital staff whether nurses or housekeepers of their role in providing patient care. Data revolving around improved efficiency and patient outcomes can get the staff to think about the kind of care which makes them feel mortified or proud.

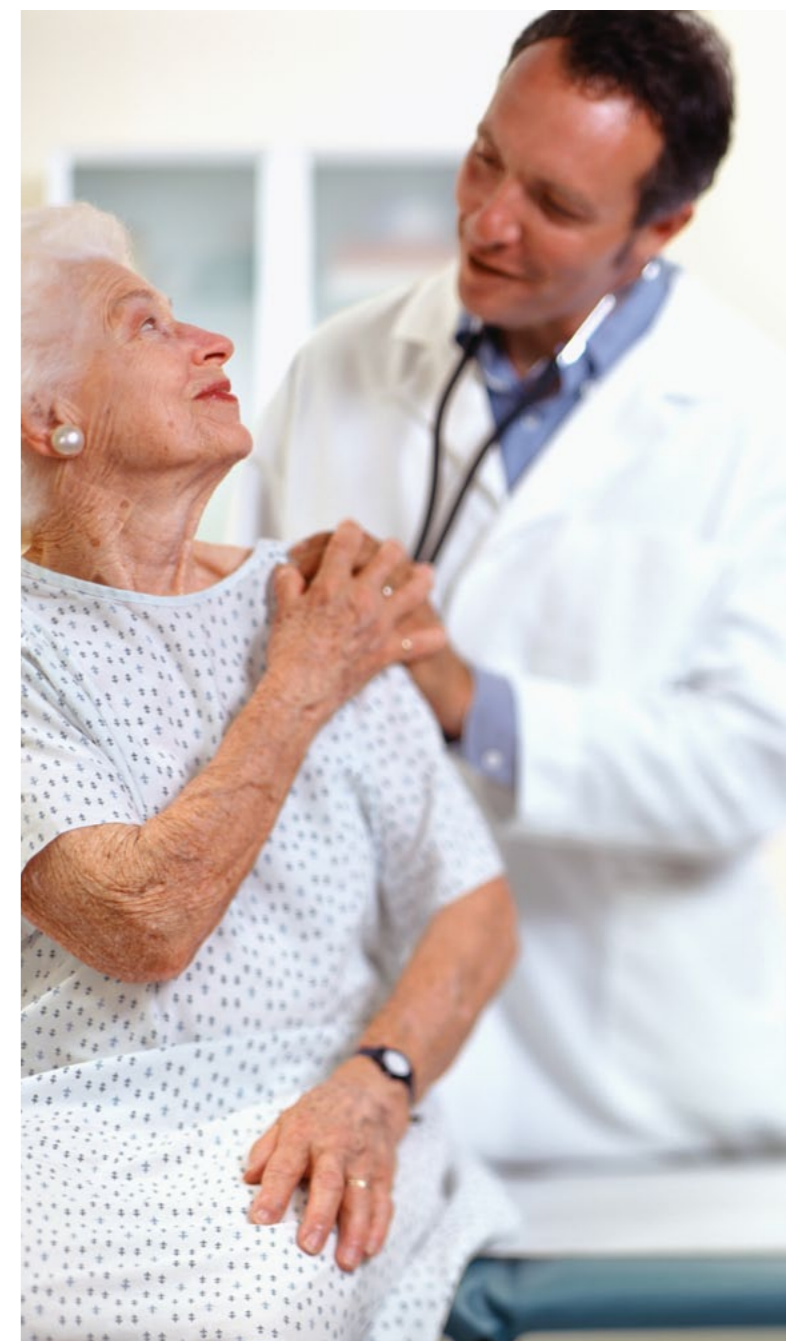
Constructing such a shared purpose starts by formulating harmony among the organization staff; listening, demonstrating respect for diverse views, and creating processes through which all involved stakeholders (hospital staff) can help shape the organization mission in constructing a shared purpose is necessary. In a nutshell, the sense of partnership among the staff will prep the ground for responsibility and accountability so that quality is promoted and subsequently the act of reframing their work values and beliefs will engrain the concept that, health care will be better and maybe even great for patients as the staff perform their duties in line with quality requirements.

Appealing to Self-Interest

Hospital staff like everyone else is generally motivated by financial incentives and job security. This natural self-interest can be directed to strengthen engagement in various ways. Continuous education and development of staff knowledge and skills are essential for staff involvement in the process of implementing a shared quality agenda. The staff needs to feel that they are not just routine job handlers but rather they need to feel the sense of development in what they know and perform. Providing support and staff education help them in understanding the hospital strategy and rationale of the shared quality agenda in order for them to be equipped with the know-how for implementation. Moreover, it is necessary to engage staff intellect in helping them understand why the quality patient care initiatives are taking place and what are related consequences and outcomes. For example staff would be able to reason that improving patient care will allow for fewer mistakes, reduce waste, and provide patients the right care at the right time in the right place. Allowing and empowering them to brainstorm and assess improvement ideas of quality initiatives will ameliorate how they fit in to the process and why they are important to the success of the initiative.

Cultivating Trust and Earning Respect

Intrinsic non-financial incentives and rewards also play



a role in engaging hospital staff. Employees appreciate positive feedback, and they particularly worry about losing the respect of their colleagues. Organizations may report to their staff how their personal performance compares with that of their colleagues and providing those data in ways that intensify peer pressure.

Hospital performance is always under scrutiny as the

Ministry of Health and accrediting bodies report and make public the performance of hospitals through various means such as the classification ranking of each hospital. Whether clients those being patients or their families utilize such data to make decisions on where they want to receive care remains uncertain; nevertheless, hospital employees, knowing that their performance is on public display, would generally be motivated to improve.

Building trust and respect among hospital staff is a key building block to the process of getting better staff engagement in achieving a shared quality agenda. Communicating often and openly, addressing concerns and issues in a timely and obvious manner, identifying and overcoming barriers to engagement are all contributions that the administration and leadership should guarantee and provide.

Embracing Tradition

When employees value the sense of membership in an organization they are motivated to hold on to that organization's standards and traditions. For example, a hospital might have an engrained culture of each staff

member considering other staff members as an internal customer if they provide them a service. This in turn facilitates communications and results in enhanced teamwork. A hospital may also have a standard of how its physicians communicate and respond to the delivery of patient care for example, when paged, they respond right away. Additionally, nursing staff may have a tradition for interacting with patients for example, before patients are discharged, nurses meet with them to discuss their ongoing care and answer any of their questions or concerns. The symbolic relationship between a certain characteristic or act and an organization's standards for performance would be that there is a unique unified way of doing things at the organization. Even newly introduced standards would be effective motivators when staff know that they could be shunned or even lose their jobs if they discount them.

The existence of such standards and traditions creates uniformity in the way staff works with one another which is an essential step towards more proactive teamwork. Additionally, these standards and traditions translate into well-coordinated care that patients appreciate and staff is proud of. Such standards may also serve to be instrumental in customer retention both external and internal.

Conclusion

It's important to not only understand how staff engagement in a shared quality agenda would be implemented, but also to learn the best way to gather support and commitment. At the onset of the implementation of any quality initiative it is imperative to discover and stimulate champions. Staff should detect and believe that the administration supports them because they respect and acknowledge and appreciate them as a vital part of the process of going forward with elevating quality patient care.

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