

ABSTRACT: 2015 ELAM Institutional Action Project Poster Symposium

Project Title: Integration of Neonatology into the UMMHC Academic Medical Group

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Background, Challenge or Opportunity: Pediatric clinical services for UMassMemorial Health Care, the clinical partner of the UMass Medical School, are provided by faculty in the Children's Medical Center, the only Pediatric tertiary care center in central MA. Except for private practice neonatologists, all CMC clinicians are members of the academic Medical Group. The CEO of UMMHC, the Dean, and the Chair of Pediatrics are united in our desire to transition this private practice to an academic division within the medical group.

Purpose/Objectives: To integrate the Division of Neonatology into the academic medical group. Currently the private Neonatology Associates have an exclusive contract for the NICU. Incorporation of this practice into the medical group is key to the future of our AMC as an integrated health care system and would enable the Pediatric Chair to have a closer role in faculty hiring, including recruitment of physician scientists, create equity in compensation across the Department, expand research scholarship, and increase physician engagement in the academic missions. Revenue from this profitable clinical service helps support the academic and service missions and balance finances of a Department of Pediatrics. Moreover, NICU patients provide unparalleled opportunities for clinical and translational research to better understand premature infant physiology and to explore care innovations and outcomes.

Methods/Approach: I first ensured unequivocal support from hospital and medical school leadership, then identified stakeholders, their stances and values, and reviewed lessons learned from a recent successful integration with retention of valued members and no disruption of clinical services. I mapped out a systematic approach utilizing skills gained from ELAM in managing interpersonal relationships, negotiations, and conflict resolution. I developed a timeline of key steps and critical deadlines, gathered comparable financial and operational information, and prepared a consistent message about integration plans for the community and medical colleagues. We recently started discussions about the process and will continue individual conversations with each physician and NP, and prepare a plan to ensure continuity of high quality patient services during this transition.

Outcomes and Evaluation Strategy: Success would be defined by the creation of a new academic Division of Neonatology with a blend of newly recruited and current neonatologists and with no disruption of patient care during the transition. Other measures of success include: recruitment of a neonatology physician scientist; expansion of neonatology research; and a positive perception of the need for and value of this process by the community and stake holders. Additional desired outcomes are to create an integrated Department of Pediatrics with closer connections among the neonatologists and other academic subspecialists.