

Project Title: Developing a Leadership Program for Academic Medical Directors

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Topic Category: Faculty Development

Background/Significance of Project: Development of specific leadership skills in academic physicians is important and requires further study. Capabilities in self-management such as self-awareness, effective communication, and time management are required to efficiently accomplish typical faculty day-to-day tasks. Additional skills and capabilities are necessary for physician-leaders in the hospital, who establish focus for the organization. These skills include strategic thinking, negotiation skills, financial management skills, and an understanding of complex systems. Many academic health centers have developed Leadership Development Programs to develop their physician-leaders; Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine is among the schools creating such programs.

Purpose/Objectives: The goal of this project is to clearly define the core responsibilities and specific leadership capabilities that are critical for the medical director position. Developing these capabilities will improve patient care and maximize commensurate skills for these leaders. Ultimately, a Leadership Program will be proposed in supporting the leadership acumen for our health system medical directors.

Methods/Approach/Evaluation Strategy: The first step for 2019 is to develop, complete and analyze an IRB-approved needs-based hospital-wide survey to examine the experiences and expectations of current medical directors. In addition, key stakeholders including hospital administration, department and division chairs, nursing directors, nurse managers, and department administrators will be surveyed for their input regarding the role of medical directors. We will specifically explore whether the expectations of stakeholders are well aligned. Descriptive biostatistical methods will be utilized.

Outcomes/Results: During the development of this ELAM Institutional Action Project, our Practice Plan began a reorganization of the Ambulatory Medical Director Program, including a leadership development plan. Several existing programs at our medical center were identified that could collaborate to form a unified Leadership Program for Medical Directors. These include the School of Medicine Faculty Success Program, the Practice Plan Program, the Health System Department of Human Resources Leadership Development Academy, and the College of Health Professions Department of Health Administration. This project will leverage each of these existing strengths to answer the core question: "How can we best develop leadership capabilities in our faculty to meet the operational needs of our hospitals and clinics?"

Discussion/Conclusion with Statement of Impact/Potential Impact: The ultimate impact of this project will be the creation of a robust Leadership Program for our medical center that will foster skills and attributes for medical directors in all settings and departments. The effort will rely on utilization of existing resources and development of additional training based on the results of the needs assessment to support optimal leadership performance.

Developing a Leadership Program for Academic Medical Directors

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BACKGROUND

Development of specific leadership skills in academic physicians is needed to improve the overall quality of patient care. Capabilities in self-management such as self-awareness, effective communication, and time management are required to efficiently accomplish typical faculty day-to-day tasks. Additional skills and capabilities are necessary for physician-leaders in the hospital, who establish focus for the organization. These skills include strategic thinking, negotiation skills, financial management skills, and an understanding of complex systems. Many academic health centers have developed Leadership Development Programs to develop their physician-leaders; Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine (VCUSOM) is among the schools creating such programs.

PURPOSE

To design the VCUSOM Leadership Program for Medical Directors.

PROJECT PLAN

- 1) Design survey for key stakeholders to determine core responsibilities, leadership capabilities, skills, and strategic perspectives.
- 2) Analyze results utilizing descriptive statistics.
- 3) Consult and collaborate with existing programs in the Health System to design and implement VCUSOM Medical Director Leadership Program.

METHODS & APPROACH

The stakeholder survey was developed from the physician leadership literature and Benchmarks® for Managers.™ It was submitted to IRB for approval.

Strategic Perspectives – Sample Items

Considers all perspectives before making a proposal to top management

Works effectively with higher management

Links responsibilities to that of the whole mission

Can recognize underlying problems and patterns after the presenting problem is resolved

Understands higher management values and perspectives

OUTCOMES

Results should answer:

- Which items are the most important in each category?
 - Responsibilities (16 items)
 - Leadership capabilities (18 items)
 - Leadership skills (16 items)
 - Strategic perspectives (8 items)
- Is there mission alignment between Medical Directors and Administration?
- Do we need more information?

DISCUSSION

Next steps are to:

- Distribute and analyze results of the survey.
- Combine survey results with objectives, best practices, and program resources from within existing programs (Figure 1) at the Medical Campus to develop the VCUSOM Medical Director Leadership Program.



Figure 1

References:

1. Image: Freepik.com by coolvector. https://www.freepik.com/free-vector/colorful-infographic-element-with-options_4041730.htm accessed 03/31/19.
2. Lombardo MM, Usher C, McCauley CD, Leslie JB, McDonald-Mann D. Benchmarks® for Managers™ feedback report. 2015. Greensboro, NC: Center for Creative Leadership.
3. Lucas, Goldman, Scott & Dandar, Leadership Development Programs at Academic Health Centers: Results of a national survey . 2018 Feb 93(2):229-236.