

ABSTRACT: 2019 ELAM Institutional Action Project

Project Title: Integration of an Academic Cardiovascular Division into a Community Hospital

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Topic Category: Administration

Background: A partnership between the University of Arizona-Phoenix and the Banner University Medical Center in Phoenix has prompted an overwhelming need for change in a former community hospital. This, coupled with the need to improve clinical and financial outcomes, has prompted this new academic medical center to direct renewed efforts toward achieving high quality care and seek physician partners through clinical alignment.

Purpose/Objectives: The purpose of this project is to develop a step-wise approach to enable a sustainable integration of a formerly community hospital and its community cardiologists, with an academic university faculty to create an academic cardiovascular center.

Methods:

1. Identify community cardiology groups with whom U of A/BUMCP can collaborate with as engaged partners.
2. Conduct a feasibility study to identify the specific benefits and barriers of integration with these community groups regarding teaching, clinical practice and research
3. Establish a community & academic advisory board to offer feedback on the process of integration
4. Finalize a 5-year strategic plan to fully integrate these groups with U of A/BUMCP mission and cardiology division

Results: Since the initiation of the academic heart institute, specific local practices were identified as key potential partners, with 4 Phoenix-based practices which already practice in the university hospital, 2 groups not practicing within the hospital but partnering in teaching at a community hospital, and 1 practice not part of the academic center but interested in becoming part of the teaching center.

Strategic alignment opportunities identified:

1. Faculty appointments were designated for community partners who work within either the university hospital and community teaching hospital.
2. Co-Management vs Purchasing of groups: On-going discussions with one group; One community group had offer made and refused and now aligned with a competitor hospital
3. Recruitment Agreements offered to remaining 3 community groups
4. Teaching Agreements currently being negotiated

Preliminary Data from Community Cardiology Groups: 20 community faculty respondents; 65% report unengaged in cardiology fellowship with 40% involved in teaching cardiology fellows. The majority looking for more opportunities to be involved in fellowship

Discussion: Efforts are ongoing to explore aligning community cardiologists within a new academic university medical center. Multiple initial approaches are being explored. Initial exploration regarding role within teaching is an opportunity that seems desired by community cardiology practices based on survey results (preliminary). Teaching roles and stipends may assist in academic alignment and may be a good initial step to improve community relations in a hospital dependent on our community partners. Future steps include (1) recruitment agreements; (2) co-management vs acquisition of practices; (3) shared hospital services based on involvement in teaching and alignment with quality measures; (4) alignment of research resources; and (5) collaboration on building & recruitment of specialized services/faculty for the academic medical center.