
3 Trends *Defining* Mission-Minded Healthcare Today

Health systems can express their dedication to their mission in a myriad of ways, but in today's healthcare landscape many mission-minded organizations are going deeper than simply providing quality care to patients. They are shifting mindsets, looking at issues holistically and mining for root causes of widespread problems to truly affect change in their communities.

There are three trends emerging among mission-minded healthcare organizations today that speak to their commitment to breaking through the status quo and always working to expand their impact.

ONE

Making the organization a great place to work.

Many mission-minded healthcare organizations know that a great health system isn't just about the services provided but the culture within. If employee satisfaction is high, those employees are going to give a better experience to the patients they serve. The overall environment will be positive, and employees will be more accepting of changes designed to improve the quality of care and safety of patients, which is crucial in today's changing healthcare priorities. It may sound trite, but one of the best ways to provide outstanding care is to first provide an outstanding work environment. People who enjoy coming to work every day — who feel valued, appreciated and heard — simply do their jobs better, and people who are working hard and working together make many other things possible.

"As hospitals and health systems undergo large change management initiatives around transitioning to value-based care and reducing unnecessary care variation, they should not overlook the role of employee engagement," says John Johnston, National Partner, Consulting at Advisory Board Survey Solutions.¹

A recent study by Advisory Board Survey Solutions proves that improved employee engagement can make a significant difference in performance. It found that for every 1 percent increase in engagement, hospitals saw a .33-point improvement in patient satisfaction assessments as well as a .41-percent gain in patient safety grades. The data also showed that engaged employees are three times more likely to receive top performance ratings than disengaged employees.

Other healthcare leaders say an organization's culture impacts its effectiveness in population health efforts.

"In order to make such efforts successful, you really need to have a culture of action and improvement," says Dr. Howard Grant, President and CEO of Lahey Health. "If employees have the mindset that they will just come into work, do what they're told and go home, there is no way you can transform your organization."²

If a health system is truly mission-minded, making organizational culture and employee engagement priorities is crucial to success.

"The strongest cultures thrive, even during periods of the greatest stress, because their caregivers have the confidence to navigate whatever challenges are placed in front of them," says Dr. John Chessare, President and CEO of GBMC HealthCare System. "The new era of healthcare is about change. Most of us agree that this change is moving us toward the national triple aim of improving the patient experience, improving the health of populations and lowering the cost of healthcare. At GBMC we've added a fourth aim: To increase joy among those providing the care."

¹ <http://www.modernhealthcare.com/article/20170919/NEWS/170919885>

² <https://www.beckershospitalreview.com/hospital-management-administration/changing-healthcare-means-changing-organizational-culture-3-health-system-leaders-weigh-in.html>

TWO

Promoting overall wellness by supporting community initiatives and partners.

As the focus of health reform and mission shift toward entire population health and prevention rather than simply medical care, providers are being required to look into the community it serves, assess the needs and determine how best to improve the overall health of the community. Often, mission-minded health systems that are taking this new vision seriously are realizing the need to partner with other organizations and public entities to help address community health needs like healthy foods, health education and follow-up care.

Maulik Joshi, President of AHA's Health Research and Educational Trust, says leaders of hospitals and health systems should consider partnerships outside of the obvious, expanding their thinking past post-acute providers and community health agencies to mayors' offices, YMCAs and civic, social and religious organizations.³

"Hospitals are doing amazing work in health care, and now they're branching more and more into health," Joshi says. "We know that, to impact health, it is about socioeconomic, healthy behaviors and the physical environment. It's much more than the actual medical care. As hospital leaders, we need to continue to broaden our thinking of who we partner with to get to those things and sharpen how we go about it."

HRET conducted a report entitled "Hospital-based Strategies for Creating a Culture of Health," which found that the most common partnerships for hospitals and health systems are with schools, local public health departments and chambers of commerce, depending on the needs being addressed.

³ <https://www.hhnmag.com/articles/3801-hospitals-are-engaging-the-community-to-improve-care>

Methodist Le Bonheur Healthcare in Memphis, Tenn. is thinking outside the box by taking a different approach, partnering with churches to form the Congregational Health Network, deploying volunteer liaisons, who keep in touch with paid navigators at the system's hospitals after enrolled congregants are discharged, to approximately 500 congregations and faith communities in the area.

Some systems are partnering with CSAs, community gardens or other organizations to provide healthy foods to those who need it. Some are partnering with a neighbor organization educating the public on the dangers of lead poisoning to a population of Somali women who were not aware of the issue. Some are partnering with organizations like the Catholic Charities to provide respite care for the homeless after being discharged. All of these efforts prevent illness, unnecessary ER visits, readmissions and more, increasing the population health drastically.

Community partnerships are growing increasingly important as systems move toward a focus on population health.

THREE

Focusing on behavioral and mental health, specifically concerning the opioid crisis.

Another trend emerging with mission-minded hospitals is a focus on holistic health, digging deeper into the root causes of issues like opioid addiction and overdoses to determine what kind of factors are at play and how they can be addressed in the community.

Knowing that addiction is not just a physical health issue but a behavioral and mental health issue as well, many organizations are committing more efforts to increasing the availability of behavioral health facilities and mental health resources for patients in their

community. CHI St. Gabriel's in Minnesota, for example, is enabling pharmacists to consult prescription histories while caseworkers assess behavior health, addiction and homelessness.⁴

With an issue as large as the opioid epidemic, partnering with government entities and social services may be helpful or even necessary to create change, while also doing what is possible in terms of prescription restrictions to minimize the issue. Educating providers and the public on the dangers of opioids and how to manage chronic pain in other ways is also a major component for prevention.

Patricia Maryland, CEO of Ascension Health, is particularly passionate about holistic care when it comes to the opioid crisis. Ascension has assembled dedicated teams to combat opioid dependency which includes provider and community education, standardizing pain assessment tools and implementing pain management guidelines.

"We've partnered with the city and other community organizations to launch a pilot program, the first in the state, that places peer recovery specialists in the emergency department to help identify individuals as they overdose and help encourage and guide them through treatment and rehabilitation," she says. "We must move from a punitive culture that shames those who are addicted to a compassionate culture that treats this vicious scourge for what it is — a disease."⁵

⁴ <https://www.aha.org/system/files/content/17/17-nova-awards-winners.pdf>

⁵ <http://thehill.com/opinion/healthcare/362027-we-must-deliver-holistic-solutions-to-address-the-opioid-public-health>

These three paradigm shifts are being led by organizations that put their mission at the forefront of their efforts and aren't afraid to challenge the status quo in the name of improving patient care and safety. By implementing these philosophies, mission-minded healthcare systems are making an incredible impact in their communities.

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