

# 2010 HMRA Request for Proposal

The American College of Healthcare Executives (ACHE) is offering affiliates an opportunity to submit a proposal that will set forth a research plan to study the perceptions that senior executives have about the interpersonal skills of recent entrants to the field of healthcare management. Researchers are encouraged to use both qualitative and quantitative approaches to enlarge our understanding of this issue.

Prior research on this issue is limited. One recent study (Cherlin et al., 2006) asked preceptors to rate the competencies of postgraduate administrative residents and fellows. The findings showed that about one third of those surveyed assigned an A grade (excellent) to residents'/fellows' interpersonal skills. Overall, the third most frequently-cited skill needing improvement concerned interpersonal, team, and communication skills (after real-life experiences and finance).

ACHE would like more information about how high-level executives in health delivery organizations feel about the interpersonal skills of recent entrants to the field as they relate to superiors, peers, subordinates and physicians.

Some of the questions and approaches we consider important to study include:

1. What does the literature generally report about the interpersonal competencies of recent entrants to the healthcare management field? Consider various aspects of interpersonal competencies including team leadership, team membership, self awareness, knowing personal strengths and weaknesses, and acting ethically and professionally.
2. What criteria are used to evaluate interpersonal competencies in health delivery organizations?
3. How do senior executives rank interpersonal relationship skills relative to other competencies in assessing the promise of a recent entrant to the field? To what extent are interpersonal relationship skills used to identify "fast-trackers" and potential successors to current leadership?
4. What resources, if any, are used to enhance interpersonal skills of recent entrants to the field?
5. What have been the most useful strategies and programs that have enhanced interpersonal skills of executives new to the field?
6. Recently, several healthcare organizations have been recognized for excellence (e.g., Thomson's Top 100 hospitals, Baldrige award winners, etc.). To develop their survey instrument, researchers may wish to conduct interviews to determine whether or not these organizations differ from others with regard to enhancing the interpersonal relationship skills of their junior managers and executives. In general, do CEOs of leading health delivery organizations have unique philosophies and practices regarding the skill levels required by their recent management recruits?

We encourage academic submitters to partner with a healthcare practitioner. The principal investigator must be an ACHE affiliate and must not have received the Health Management Research Award during the past five years.

### **Proposal Submission and Deadline**

Proposals must be received no later than close of business **Tuesday, May 18, 2010**. Please provide an electronic Word file or PDF document. Selection will be made by the Higher Education and Research Committee in July 2010. Finalists may be invited, at ACHE's expense, to present their proposals to senior ACHE staff.

Please address your proposal to:

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Cherlin, E. Helfand, B. Elbel, B. et al. 2006. "Cultivating next generation leadership: Preceptors' rating of competencies in post graduate administrative residents." *Journal of Health Administration Education*. 351-365.