Service-Line Development

Length: 1.5 Hours

Target Audience: Early to Mid-Careerists and Clinical Executives

Description: Many healthcare organizations are using a service-line approach to organizational development for the purposes of strategic planning, business planning, operations and marketing. Service-line development is not only an organizational tool, but also can increase physician involvement, align resources and provide an integrated continuum of care for the patient. Benefits can include increased customer satisfaction, quality and performance improvements, market share gains, and financial improvement. This program will review common operational and cultural issues of organizing around service lines followed by panelist presentations of specific service-line case studies. The program will conclude with a question-and-answer period.

Faculty: Moderator plus two to three panelists. We recommend that the moderator be a consultant with expertise in service-line planning or a senior hospital executive with operational responsibility over several service lines.

The panelists should consist of hospital executives with strategic and operational responsibility over a specific service line or center of excellence. Service line examples include: cardiovascular services, cancer services, women’s health, ortho/neuro, rehab care, integrative medicine, etc.

Topics for Discussion:

- Common successful service lines and centers of excellence
- Management and leadership issues involved in organizing around service lines
- Financial and resource allocation issues
- Operational/Implementation issues involved in organizing around service lines
  - Integrating departmental systems, staff, culture and leadership
  - Medical staff implications and turf wars
  - Integrating/including ancillary services
  - Evaluating success
Questions for Discussion:

1. What are the key issues and priorities in the decisions about adding or deleting clinical services?
2. How do you balance customer/community needs vs. financial impact to the organization?
3. What are the there ethical issues and how is organization prepared to address them?
4. How do you reorganize around service lines?
5. What are some common organizational structures for leadership?
6. What are some common tools used in service-line development?
7. Can service line development be applied to a community or rural hospital setting as well as a large health system setting?
8. What are the key measures in assessing the effectiveness of a clinical service line?

Materials for Distribution:

"Re-Emergence of Clinical Service Line Management", Healthcare Executive (July/Aug 2007) pp 14-18. (Go to: Chapter Education Manual Appendix for handout)

Additional Resources:


