Engaging Early Careerists Creatively

Chapter takes advantage of grant program to involve early careerists.

ACHE established the annual Grant Program for Chapter Innovation in 2008 to encourage chapter innovation in the delivery of new programs, products and services. The program is designed to add value for ACHE members by funding demonstration or pilot projects that can be replicated by other chapters. The intent is that the grant money will encourage a chapter to try a new service or offer a program in a new geographic area without incurring financial risk. A total of three grants were awarded in 2011. One chapter, Health Care Executives of Southern California (HCE), was awarded a grant in 2011 to launch its Leaders in Policy and Practice Series for early careerists in 2012.

HCE’s board was brainstorming program ideas when Ellen Zaman, FACHE, director, community affairs, Children’s Hospital Los Angeles, and current HCE president-elect, conceptualized a program that would provide early careerists (healthcare executives under the age of 40) with a greater understanding of healthcare policy. The program would also link its focus to ACHE’s policy initiatives. The chapter used ACHE’s innovation grant program to help fund what would later become the Leaders in Policy and Practice Series.

The education sessions through LIPPS offered a toolkit of relevant healthcare and ACHE policies while building networking and collaboration among the group. The purpose was to enhance leadership development and help participants gain a better understanding of the broader picture through policy discussions.

“We wanted to offer early careerists a framework to understand policy and be able to integrate this in their practice in their organizations,” says Zaman.

The participants were nominated or recommended by the CEOs and COOs of their organizations or by HCE board members. They came from a variety of workplace settings such as hospitals, health systems, health plans and other healthcare organizations. Thirty participants comprised the cohort and represented diverse backgrounds, levels of experience and job settings.

Zaman recruited a health policy graduate student to assist with program development and to design the toolkit of ACHE policy summaries and online health policy resources relevant to each session. Specific ACHE policy initiatives covered in the LIPPS sessions included workforce diversity, access to care and healthcare executives’ responsibility to their communities.

The sessions also focused on why policy matters (the overall theme of the program); the top 10 healthcare policy influencers of 2012; putting policy into practice; and shaping healthcare policy through advocacy. Local experts from the Hospital Association of Southern California, physicians, healthcare and academic leaders, and others served as faculty for the series.

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—Ellen Zaman
Health Care Executives of Southern California

In addition to learning from the speakers, another key feature of these sessions was the opportunity for participants to learn from each other, says Zaman. For example, a long-term care administrator and a chief information officer who were part of the cohort provided their viewpoints on key issues.

“I hope this series gave the group the leadership perspective that they can...
be effective as change agents in their roles,” says Zaman.

Participant Danielle Robey, director, business development, RightSourcing, Irvine, Calif., had a valuable experience in the LIPPS program.

“As someone in the human resources field, it was interesting to learn the bigger picture and see the way we tackled policies and how they affect the workforce,” says Robey. “It was a wonderful program, and the attendees had enough experience to contribute to the discussion.”

Michael W. Wilson, director, communications, Los Angeles County Department of Health Services, also learned a great deal from the program and appreciated the diversity of the group’s job roles and organizations, which provided a variety of perspectives.

“It was a great experience to come together with different backgrounds and talk about solutions to the complex health policy issues where there are no easy answers,” says Wilson. “The advocacy training, where we learned best practices to shape policy directly, was a particular highlight.”

The program provided added benefit to HCE and to LIPPS participants both in leadership development and networking. The chapter appointed two attendees to its board, and one participant obtained a new position through another.

Plans are under way for the chapter to build from the 2012 program and scale it into a more formal, sustainable program for Southern California members. The chapter, with the help of the Regents Advisory Council of Kim Athmann King, FACHE, Regent for California—Southern, is pursuing a collaborative program with the Hospital Association of Southern California. This will help further raise awareness of the program and more broadly engage CEOs and their early careerist nominees from local hospitals and healthcare organizations. The plan is to promote the program in fall 2013 and launch it in 2014.

“The chapter continues to work to bring value to members in meaningful ways,” says Zaman. “We are committed to professional development.”

Editor’s note: To view all ACHE policy statements, visit ache.org/Policy/policy.cfm. We hope these Statements, which are regularly reviewed and updated, are helpful as you advance in your career and address increasingly complex and challenging issues. Updated policy statements appear throughout the year in Healthcare Executive. See this issue’s statements on Ethical Issues Related to a Reduction in Force and Board Certification in Healthcare Management on pages 92 and 94, respectively.

To find your ACHE chapter, search the online Chapter Directory at ache.org by entering your ZIP code on the left side of the page. Then contact the chapter officials listed for information on how you can get involved. To discuss your ideas for chapters, contact the Chapters Committee’s ACHE staff liaison, Desmond J. Ryan, FACHE, CAE, associate director in the Division of Regional Services, at (312) 424-9325 or dryan@ache.org.

Additional Grants Awarded

Health Care Executives of Southern California developed its Leaders in Policy and Practice Series through funding from ACHE’s Grant Program for Chapter Innovation. Additional grants were awarded to two chapters for new programs implemented in 2012:

Indiana Healthcare Executives Network

Recruit new early careerist members and engage them further in networking activities and a mentoring program.

San Diego Organization of Healthcare Leaders

Engage students by encouraging attendance at the chapter’s educational programs, developing opportunities to make contacts with local healthcare executives and establishing a chapter-coordinated interviewing event for internships.