

A Human-Centric Leadership Development Approach to System Integration in a Regional Non-Profit Healthcare System

Organization's Background

Over the course of three years, a regional non-profit healthcare system based in Central Pennsylvania, grew to a total of six hospitals through acquisition. They prepared to become a teaching hospital through an affiliation with a medical school.

Objective

To enhance system integration through a human-centric leadership development approach.

What TLD Group's APLA™ Accomplished

- The Applied Physician Leadership Academy™ graduated close to 100 physician leaders across three cohorts.
- Participants reported increased feelings of connectedness, strengthened relationships, and increased organizational commitment.
- Participants designed a physician onboarding and orientation program.
- Improved the referral process of PCPs to specialists.
- Optimized physician/patient communication.
- Resulted in a process for identifying and managing incidental findings during patient visits.

The Challenge

Market forces, such as the push for lowering costs, improving quality and clinical outcomes, value-based care, and cost transparency, caused this single entity hospital to re-think its "stand-alone" strategy. The organization decided, instead, to embark on a growth strategy through M&A and physician integration.

The organization was motivated to develop a mature, clinically integrated approach, yet the physicians lacked a sense of ownership and accountability for change. The CEO recognized that physician leadership was a necessary ingredient in the transformation toward creating a high-performing healthcare system with value-based care, design, and delivery.

The organization partnered with The Leadership Development Group (TLD Group) to create and implement a growth and integration strategy through the development of its physicians as partners with executive leaders to manage change and enhance overall performance.

TLD Group's Solution

The Leadership Development Group's Applied Physician Leadership Academy (APLA™) is a multi-faceted physician leadership development program which fosters physician engagement and strengthens physician leadership capabilities.

APLA™ focuses on building skills in four competency clusters which are a part of TLD Group's Physician Leadership Success Model™. These competencies, when mastered, create leaders who are capable of managing change in collaboration with health system executives:

- **Leading Self:**
Understanding, managing, and developing self as leader and in relation to others
- **Leading Others:**
Building, developing, and enhancing team collaboration and effectiveness
- **Leading Change:**
Building the capacity for resilience and strategies for change management
- **Leading for Results:**
Applying business fundamentals, strategic planning, and value-based decision-making for enhanced outcomes



“I feel much more a part of the system now, part of the team rather than a silo. The APLA™ experience reinforced the connectedness. You grow as a person, and by extension you help the whole system become better, which I think is the goal of the program.”

APLA™ Physician Participant

APLA™ Customized Program Design Elements

The APLA™ includes:

- Leadership assessments and coaching
- Interactive training sessions
- Collaborative problem solving

APLA™ Program Outcomes

- Participants experienced growth across 11 assessed competencies, with the largest growth occurring in business acumen, change management, and building effective teams.
- HR team members report receiving unsolicited feedback from hospital employees about the positive and productive change noted in the behavior of APLA™ participants.
- APLA™ created an integrated leadership mindset helping the health system to integrate and evolve into a more cohesive culture.
- Physician leaders brought their learning back to their teams, further dispersing these new competencies until a critical mass was reached. They were then able to shape the culture into one that is inclusive of perspectives across the system and aligned to accomplish strategic objectives.
- The health system received multiple prestigious awards including Healthgrades' 100 Best Hospitals Award, being named to Becker's Hospital Review – 50 of the Greenest Hospitals in America, and Verras Medical Value index – 10 Best Value Hospitals In Pennsylvania.
- By building relationships between the administration and physicians and between physician leaders across the system, the APLA™ graduates were able to solve system-wide challenges while learning the skills and competencies for the future.

