

# Developing Effective Leadership in the Healthcare System Through Hospital Operations' Perspectives

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*Prior to his appointment as COO, Mr. Abuiza served MVMC for **six (6) years as the Human Resources Director**, during which he played a key role in strengthening organizational capabilities, workforce governance, and leadership development. Mr. Abuiza holds a **Bachelor's degree in Psychology** from **Our Lady of Fatima University – Quezon City** and a **Master's in Business Administration** from the **Ateneo de Manila University Graduate School of Business**, earned through a dual-*

*certificate program recognized by **Regis University** in **Denver, Colorado, USA**. He also completed a **Certificate in Industrial Relations and Human Resource Management** from the **University of the Philippines Diliman – School of Labor and Industrial Relations (SOLAIR)**. He is currently a **PhD candidate in Business Management** at **Philippine Christian University – Manila Campus**. Before joining MVMC, Mr. Abuiza gained extensive professional experience across multiple industries, including **quick-service restaurants, retail, hospitality, and healthcare**, both locally and internationally. His most recent overseas assignment was in **Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia**, where he served as **Head of Operations**, overseeing **45 restaurant outlets** and managing sub-franchise operations across **Oman, the UAE, Qatar, Kuwait, and Bahrain**. His diverse professional background has strengthened his expertise in **strategic leadership, multi-division operations, and cross-cultural workforce management**, enabling him to lead complex operations and drive organizational performance in a healthcare setting.*

## Healthcare Leadership Principles

Healthcare leadership is the capability to effectively guide and help influence the operational performance and delivery of quality patient outcomes of a healthcare organization (i.e., a hospital). Effective leadership is critical to improving a hospital's overall performance by developing the organization's culture, motivating people to reach their full potential, and supporting its strategic objectives. Leaders in healthcare and hospitals have to navigate many complex challenges from a financial perspective

and regulatory deadlines, as well as the opportunities created by advancing technologies, while maintaining their focus on the overall patient outcome. The actions taken by leaders in healthcare ultimately affect the quality of care patients receive and can create significant opportunities to improve health equity for patients and service excellence for employees.

In the operational environment of a hospital, leaders are instrumental in fostering teamwork and collaboration among physicians and other healthcare team members, which is necessary to deliver comprehensive patient care. By fostering two-way communication and developing methods to encourage and implement new ideas within the organization, leaders in healthcare can create an environment where all staff members can succeed and, in turn, improve patient experience and outcomes. Leaders are also responsible for implementing quality improvement measures; they ensure that their organization follows the necessary steps in safety processes and maintains the highest quality of clinical practice in the hospital (Bhati et al., 2023).

The need for strong leadership is likely to be magnified as the healthcare system continues to change; this demonstrates not only an increased emphasis on effective leadership but also the requirement for specific competencies and skills that healthcare leaders must possess. Identifying and understanding core leadership competencies is critical to preparing tomorrow's successful healthcare leaders to overcome the management challenges of today's healthcare system and achieve the best possible patient outcomes.

### **Leadership Competencies for Healthcare Leaders**

A healthcare leader must possess sufficient competencies to successfully navigate the complex areas of healthcare management. One of the most important competencies is the ability to think strategically. Strategic thinkers are capable of evaluating situations, anticipating potential problems, and developing and executing a plan of action aligned with the organization's desired outcomes and objectives. A leader who can think and act strategically will allocate resources effectively to enhance both patient care and operational efficiency (Upadhyay, 2024).

A second essential leadership competency is the ability to communicate effectively. An effective leader ensures that information is presented clearly and persuasively to a variety of different stakeholders, including staff, patients, board members, and other constituents of the organization. Clear and effective communication facilitates collaboration and ensures that everyone is working toward the same organizational mission. It also builds trust, which is critical in the healthcare environment, as any uncertainty can reduce morale among both staff and patients.

It is critical for leaders to demonstrate emotional intelligence. Leaders with high levels of emotional intelligence recognize and manage their own emotions and demonstrate empathy toward other individuals. Emotional intelligence is extremely important during times of crisis since it creates an environment where employees feel supported and employment conditions facilitate teamwork and resilience among all employees.

Healthcare organizations must provide their leaders with the resources to increase their leadership competencies by developing and implementing a training and development program tailored to their individual needs. Programs designed to help leaders develop strategic thinking and communication skills while also developing emotional intelligence so that they are better prepared to meet the challenges of today and tomorrow.

### **Training and Development Programs**

The training and development of future healthcare leaders by hospital operational departments is a sound approach. There are multiple ways that these programs deliver education (i.e., formal educational programs, on-the-job training, and mentoring opportunities). Formal educational programs provide knowledge and a theoretical foundation to help those interested in leadership understand our healthcare systems (i.e., healthcare concepts, management, and policy). In addition to formal education, on-the-job experience is equally important for applying what was learned in the classroom and improving performance through hands-on work in a real-world setting.

Mentoring also plays an important role in shaping future health care leaders by connecting inexperienced individuals with more experienced individuals to support their professional and personal development. Mentors serve as a source of guidance, sharing knowledge and experience drawn from their own experiences; therefore, they help mentees navigate the complexities of healthcare leadership. This mentoring

relationship develops not only the mentee's ability to make decisions and relate to people but also facilitates their ability to think critically and solve problems (Rahal et al., 2023). In many instances, mentoring is a major factor in career advancement and personal growth, as it aims to close the experience gap between mentor and mentee.

While the advantages of training programs are clear, challenges persist. Many institutions struggle to find healthcare leaders who are properly trained to meet the needs of their positions, resulting in improved patient service delivery and overall operational efficiency. As these challenges are discussed, it is apparent that a strategic approach is needed to further refine the training programs and improve the mentoring programs.

### **Barriers to Developing Leaders**

Barriers exist to developing competent healthcare leaders; various factors can impede the effectiveness of training and mentoring programs. One of the biggest challenges is the limitations of resources. The majority of hospitals operate on "tight" budgets and, therefore, have limited funds available for leadership development. When resources are limited, an organization's ability to allocate funds for leadership training is diminished; therefore, developing leaders are often left without the training required to acquire the skills and experience necessary to master best practices in hospital administration.

Secondly, the culture within the organization may severely restrain the ability to develop competent leaders. For the most part, many organizations may not place an emphasis on developing leaders, which leads to a lack of desire among employees to pursue leadership development or training programs. Further, if existing leaders in an organization do not model and promote continuing professional development, it creates an environment that discourages prospective leaders from recognizing their potential as leaders and diminishes their interest in developing their leadership skills.

Furthermore, due to high employee turnover, there is little to no continuity in leadership development; therefore, developmental programs are ineffective. Regular changes in staff can create an unstable environment in which an organization's leadership style is not adopted consistently, thereby undermining the ability of future leaders to succeed. Overcoming these issues will require strategic planning and commitment of resources from all levels of the organization. Successfully overcoming these obstacles is necessary to develop a strong healthcare leadership pipeline capable

of managing the complexities of hospital operations while improving patient quality of care. The next section will present the future direction of leadership development in healthcare and how organizations can begin adapting to these challenges.

## Conclusion

The development of healthcare leadership in hospital operations is a complex task that will require a systematic approach and consistent commitment. Key competencies necessary for effective leadership, such as the ability to think strategically and be adaptable, were identified during this discussion. The importance of the training and development programs linking formal educational credentials (degrees/certifications) with on-the-job training was also identified as being critical in the production of qualified leaders who will improve patient care and operational effectiveness.

To sustain effectiveness in a continually evolving healthcare environment, healthcare leaders must continually develop throughout their lifetime. This is necessary to address and adapt to the rapid changes in the healthcare delivery system driven by technology and a changing patient/customer base, enabling leaders to effectively respond to and develop innovative solutions to forthcoming issues.

There are several healthcare leadership trends that will impact the development of future healthcare leaders. First, as healthcare delivery models shift toward a greater emphasis on collaborative care and the use of interdependent care teams, future healthcare leaders must develop the skills necessary to create a team atmosphere that promotes effective communication and collaboration among all stakeholders. Secondly, the emergence of new decision-making technologies (i.e., artificial intelligence [AI] and data analytics) will demand that future healthcare leaders be comfortable and knowledgeable in their use and able to leverage them to improve the delivery of care.

The development of healthcare leaders will continue indefinitely. Healthcare organizations that emphasize developing their leaders through continuous development and adopt a forward-thinking approach to organizational change will cultivate future leaders capable of meeting the continuously changing demands of the healthcare environment and improving outcomes for patients and the organization.

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