

Physician Leadership Program

THE CLIENT

L.A. Care Health Plan

THE CHALLENGE

Community clinics have limited resources for implementing essential workforce education and training activities. In November 2015, L.A. Care Health Plan (L.A. Care) consulted with the Community Clinic Association of Los Angeles County's (CCALAC) physician advisory group about strategies to support workforce development and training.

The advisory group identified leadership development as important for the impact it can have on clinic leaders' effectiveness, professional growth and job satisfaction. This is an especially important need, given that traditional medical education focuses predominantly on the clinical aspects of practice, rather than preparing physicians for management and team leadership responsibilities. As such, most clinicians, move into management and leadership positions without having received adequate leadership training.

The need for such a program derived from L.A. Care's aspirational desire to supplement clinics' limited resources around workforce development and training.

THE APPROACH

L.A. Care asked Health Management Associates (HMA) to develop a Physician Leadership Program (PLP). The PLP provides physicians with tangible leadership and management skills to improve clinic efficiency and quality and experience of patient care. The PLP also included an important physician wellness component, as well as serving to build a connected and supportive network of physician leaders in Los Angeles community clinics who can collectively accelerate change in the healthcare safety net.

Program planning for the first cohort began in May 2016, including curriculum development and participant identification, recruitment and selection. A total of 20 participants were selected and enrolled in the program, representing 17 federally qualified health centers (FQHCs) and community health centers around Los Angeles County. Over the course of six months, September 2016 to February 2017, participants attended five in-person group learning sessions, five webinar sessions, and a final evening celebration in which participants presented completed leadership projects and celebrated their graduation from the program.

The PLP also included individual leadership coaching sessions at the start and end of the program. At the start of the program, and in coordination with the first individual leadership coaching sessions, each participant completed the DiSC assessment, which provided feedback about current leadership style and opportunities for growth and development. Participants read two leadership books and completed a number of written assignments as well.

Program planning for the second cohort began in November 2017. A total of 20 participants were selected and enrolled in the program, representing 12 FQHCs.

THE RESULTS

Overall, participants reported that their leadership and management skills improved, that they received resources to enhance clinic efficiency, quality and experience of patient care. Participants developed a greater ability to lead transformation in the healthcare safety net which was further evident through their Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) projects which addressed real challenges and ultimately produced tangible lessons learned for ongoing improvement in the clinic setting. Participants indicated that the additional focus on physician leader wellness and vitality as well as approaches to culturally responsive care added rich dimension to the program, as did the variety of learning modalities and the personal development offered through the individual coaching sessions.

With the successful completion of the first and second cohort of participants in the PLP, L.A. Care and HMA are extending the program to a third cohort in early 2019.

CONTACT

[Brooke Ehrenpreis](#) and [Jeffrey Ring](#)