

A Lesson in Leadership



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Common themes in high performing organizations include the strength of their leadership team, their ability to align employee efforts with a common purpose, and the manner in which they approach employee engagement. These traits are also recognized within the context of quality awards such as the Texas Award for Performance Excellence and the Baldrige Quality Award. In healthcare we spend a significant amount of time evaluating outcomes, assessing our quality of care, and improving our clinical outcomes. However, as an industry we do not spend nearly enough time assessing how these key drivers of overall organizational performance result in improvements in the broader patient experience.

The Leadership team at BRMCG carefully chose the Texas Award for Performance Excellence model and the Baldrige Assessment process in the belief that the Baldrige methodology provided us with a tool that would focus on overall organizational excellence and align our mission, vision and values with the day-to-day work that occurs throughout the hospital. We strongly believe this methodology puts us in the best position to connect the thousands of daily acts of our over 1,200 staff members with the vision of Baylor Health Care System. This process by design allowed us to amplify our existing efforts to be trusted as the best place to give and receive safe, quality and compassionate care in our related focus on the four components of our Circle of Care: People, Quality, Service and Financial Stewardship.

We did not embark on this journey with the intention of winning an award, but with the specific goal of using this methodology as a way to further align our existing efforts and gain critical feedback regarding best practices. Utilizing this process has also allowed us to do something many consider to be one of the most difficult challenges in healthcare: To take an organization that is doing good work in all levels and creating the energy within the organization to perform at an even higher level. This competitive process allowed us to benchmark ourselves with some of the best organizations at a state and national level and was one of the primary vehicles that created the energy necessary to move the organization to the next level.

Our journey began in earnest almost three years ago with a growing realization that our Emergency Room, while providing adequate care, was not meeting the expectations of our community. Our Emergency Room ranked in the bottom 10% of hospitals nationally in patient satisfaction and led many in our communities to travel outside our service area for medical emergencies.

Over the last three years our efforts to focus our team on identifying and refining the critical processes, such as the admission and discharge processes, the process to order and receive a diagnostic test, and the manner in which we communicate with our patients and their families have resulted in significant improvements. These efforts, combined with a commitment to hold ourselves and our teams accountable for improving in each of these areas, resulted in our patient satisfaction improving from the bottom 10%, to the top 10% of hospitals nationally in patient satisfaction. Along the way, we also significantly



increased the number of patients visiting the emergency room and reduced the number of patients who left our emergency room without being treated.

In a healthcare environment where the transparency of clinical outcome is increasing and our communities are assuming that all or most hospitals deliver the same if not similar clinical outcomes, patient satisfaction has become a key determinant in the consumer value equation. A key learning point for our organization has been the recognition that excellence is much more than a quality outcome but a complete experience, and that by measuring, monitoring and benchmarking patient satisfaction we can elevate the entire experience for both patients and families. This is resulting in a competitive advantage in a very competitive market.

A transformation such as this only occurs when there is a full understanding of the core and supplemental processes, tools to measure results, the willingness to respond to the data, and discipline to hold leadership and their related teams accountable for improved outcomes. Our leadership team's ability to amplify the vision of the organization at the staff level is the driving force behind this improvement. Said another way, the ability of leaders to create an information-driven culture focused on best practices and positive outcomes coupled with the creation of high performing teams is key.

Recruitment of the best and the brightest staff has been a fundamental philosophy of Baylor Health Care System. It is important to performance in almost every area and it is the single most important driver of organizational excellence. The key is in identifying individuals with not only the technical skills, but those that have personal values that align with our System. Recruitment of this nature requires a multi-disciplinary effort beginning with the initial applicant pool, and continues through the behavioral-based interview process. This is difficult, time consuming work. However, like any important initiative, the amount of work you put into a process or an outcome corresponds almost exactly with the output you receive. The work we are doing to recruit and retain individuals with the right technical training and experience and personal values that align with BHCS is central to our success.

In theory, if it can't be measured, it can't be improved. One measure of our success in this particular area is increasing first-year and first to third-year retention. Focusing on these two metrics has been imperative in understanding our ability to not only attract the right person to begin with, increasing 1st year retention, but also our ability to retain this new talent, 1st to 3rd year retention.

I would like to say that it is the intellectual abilities of our leadership team that is making the difference. However, as important as intellectual abilities may be, it is the hearts and souls of our leaders that are truly making the difference. It is our ability to engage employees in the passion of healthcare and our ability to align the hard work that occurs on a day-to-day basis throughout our hospital and our health system that is resulting in the improvements we are seeing today.

Throughout the Texas Award for Performance Excellence journey there has been a committed group of staff dedicated to working together to care for patients and their families as if they were a member of their very own family. It is truly a privilege and honor to be a part of a team with a passion for excellence and a mission to do great work.