

Combating Inertia of the Status Quo



Tennessee

With a firm belief that only cooperative relationships among employers, health plans, hospitals, and providers can produce positive and progressive changes in healthcare at the local level, the Healthcare 21 Business Coalition (HC21) has taken a multi-pronged approach to making an impact on healthcare quality in its region.

One method HC21 has used to spur improvement is introducing hospitals to the Leapfrog Group's national standards, which have been shown to increase patient safety. As one of seven original rollout leaders for Leapfrog, HC21 is one of the most successful regions in the nation to encourage local hospitals to complete a self-evaluation tool on how they've implemented national patient safety standards.

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Lessons Learned

- Recognize the link between health and productivity, and recognize it as a national crisis.
- Tenacity with constant focus on your vision and a bit of risk will develop perseverance and solutions.

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Another approach involved working with the Memphis Business Group on Health to use the nationally recognized eValue8 tool to encourage health plans to improve their quality processes.

eValue8 provides detailed results on every health plan and can compare each to others in their market. Additionally, the reports compare the health plans' performance to national best practices for HMOs and PPOs.

But value is also an important part of the equation, so every two years HC21 works with regional and national health plans to endorse plans that offer the best value—in other words, a combination of quality and cost.

HC21 staff and member purchaser committees select the plans to endorse after thorough review of request for information responses and health plan interviews.

One of the greatest challenges HC21 has faced, according to HC21 President and CEO Jerry Burgess, is the “inertia of those that want to protect the status quo.”

To combat this inertia, HC21 developed a health risk management model, a training program for benefit managers. The model, known as the College of Value-Based Purchasing, or CVBP, has trained more than 400 buyers and suppliers in the principles of value-based purchasing of health benefits.

“Developing the model was a real ‘ah-ha’ moment for us,” said Burgess. “As a result of these combined efforts, we’ve seen measureable improvement in hospitals and in the quality health plans provide our members.”

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