

SUCCESS STORY

Interim Leadership Plays Critical Role in Hospital's Success

Challenge

When Beaumont Hospital's emergency department director and the administrative director of surgical services resigned within two months of each other, Heidi Shepard, vice president of operations, found herself with departments urgently in need of leadership. "I needed to place interims in both departments fairly rapidly," Shepard says. "Ideally, I was looking for two talented people who we could learn from and gain knowledge from their past experiences."

Solution

Shepard turned to VHA-contracted supplier B.E. Smith, a leading health care executive search firm that places experienced executives providing expert leadership in interim roles to support an organization's strategic objectives. "It was incredibly important for us to get the right people in these roles, and we needed the interims to provide stability while taking the departments to the next level," says Shepard. "Having the interims in place made us feel comfortable that it was okay to take our time filling the positions."

Results

B.E. Smith's interim ED director jumped head-first into several of the department's leadership issues. "She brought leadership stability where it was needed," says Shepard. The interim took ED employees for an off-site retreat to better identify their personal interests, enabling her to better understand where each person fit within the department. "She also identified an urgent need to make sure the ED medical director is well informed and is part of the decision-making process for the department, and she worked to establish a

continued on back

Having the interims in place made us feel comfortable that it was okay to take our time filling the positions.

- Heidi Shepard, Beaumont Hospital



Beaumont Hospital

Troy, Mich.

Beaumont Hospital in Troy, Mich., is a 346-bed community hospital with full inpatient and outpatient services. The organization was recently named to the nation's "100 Top Hospitals" for heart care by Thomson Healthcare (formerly Solucient). The annual Thomson award is based on hospitals' performance treating congestive heart failure and heart attacks. The hospital has also been named to the Thomson "100 Top Hospitals" list seven times.



Connecting members.
Delivering results.

dialogue with him that would support the medical staff needs in the department," says Shepard.

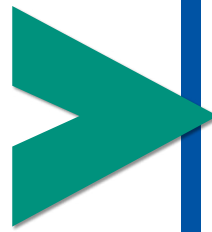
The interim added additional structure to Beaumont's quality plan to ensure that staffing levels were appropriate to meet the demand. "She had the experience to be able to say, 'here's what we need to look at to ensure that we've got the right number of people in the right areas,'" says Shepard.

Beaumont also wanted to address its priority of maintaining high Press Ganey patient satisfaction scores. The interim worked with staff council members and hospital leadership to identify improvement opportunities. She rolled out a new program, "Positive First Impression," after discovering that patients were very influenced by how they were greeted at triage. "The interim worked with our patient satisfaction team to ensure that patients entering triage see employees with smiles and caring attitudes," says Shepard. "Our patient satisfaction scores began trending up shortly before the interim left, so I know that her efforts had a positive outcome."

B.E. Smith's interim surgical services director also faced immediate challenges in his department. Shortly after his arrival, the department's administrative secretary announced her plans to resign. "The interim worked with her to determine why she was leaving and what he could do to keep her in her position," says Shepard. "Through the interim's efforts and willingness to accommodate her needs, the administrative secretary chose to remain in her position."

The interim also collaborated with the leadership team to influence patient safety within the operating rooms. His efforts included moving staff into positions that further increased patient safety, meeting with physicians to determine how they could be involved in enhancing patient safety, upgrading OR information technology to function more efficiently and identifying a patient safety variance review process. He also led a team to determine what the future held for surgical services so that those needs could be included in the hospital's master site plan, including performing a SWOT analysis. "He helped establish a plan that steered us in the right direction," says Shepard.

And while the interims have moved on, their achievements continue to have a positive impact on Beaumont Hospital. "We established expectations with both interims early in the process, identifying two or three key issues we wanted them to address," she says. "We had weekly meetings to keep the lines of communication open, and we developed relationships with both interims where we truly understood each other — and both departments have experienced positive, long-lasting benefits as a result."



Employee shortages, rising turnover and low morale can negatively impact your organization's financial performance, quality of care, customer satisfaction and market position. As a result, having the right talent available at the right time to meet current demand for services has never been more important. VHA-contracted supplier B.E. Smith has provided leadership solutions to health care clients nationwide for nearly 30 years, and such suppliers, along with VHA's products, services, and networking and educational offerings, can help make human resources processes an integral part of an effective total work force strategy.

For more information, please contact VHA at 800-842-5146 or vhacustomerservice@vha.com