

BoardBrief

Prepared for Colorado Hospital Association Trustees

Exceptional Community Service The Governance Connection

Community service is central to the mission of every hospital and health system in America. The Foster G. McGaw Prize for Excellence in Community Service for many years has recognized health care delivery organizations that have demonstrated an exceptional commitment to community service through leadership, partnerships, deep and meaningful community involvement, and service excellence at every level.

The following three organizations have distinguished themselves for their commitment to community service and discovering a governance connection to meet their communities' needs. Memorial Healthcare System, Hollywood, Florida, and John C. Lincoln Health Network, Phoenix, Arizona, were Foster G. McGaw Prize winners in 2006 and 2002 respectively. Sisters of Charity Health System, Lewiston, Maine, was a Foster G. McGaw Prize finalist in 2006.

Memorial Healthcare System

Memorial Healthcare System is a public, non-profit organization governed by a seven-member Board of Commissioners appointed by the Governor of Florida. The health system consists of seven facilities: 1) Memorial Regional Hospital, a Level 1 trauma center; 2) Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital, a facility within Memorial Regional Hospital; 3) Memorial Hospital West, a 299-bed facility; 4) Memorial Hospital Miramar, a 128-bed facility; 5) Memorial Hospital Pembroke, a 301-bed facility; 6) Memorial Manor, a 120-bed nursing home and short-term rehabilitation facility; and 7) Memorial Primary Healthcare Services, serving uninsured and underinsured adults and children through three primary care centers, adult and children's mobile health centers, two school-based programs and homeless programs.

Memorial Healthcare System is an active community leader in southern Florida's Broward County, the state's second largest county with a population of 1.6 million people and

pockets of deep poverty. More than 18% of the area residents are uninsured, and one in 10 are poor, including more than 58,000 children. The county's Latino population accounts for 17% of the population, and includes an estimated 650,000 recently arrived immigrants who face significant financial and cultural barriers to receiving timely and appropriate care.

The Governance Connection

Balanced Outlook. Memorial Healthcare System's board maintains a balanced outlook on all seven of the health system's organizational "pillars," ensuring that discussion, decision making, and the dedication of resources does not favor one of the pillars over the other. The board understands that all seven pillars – safety, quality, customer satisfaction, people, growth, finances and community – are equally important to the organization's ability to fulfill its mission and ensure long-term success.

To ensure that a careful balance is maintained, the CEO is evaluated quarterly using a report card that measures performance in each of the seven areas. The CEO's priorities are weighted by the board, so that both the CEO and the senior leadership team understand which board priorities are most critical. In addition to the CEO's report card, senior leaders' performance is also measured based on the same priorities. Each administrator's performance evaluation and weightings vary depending upon their individual role in the organization. The CEO and senior leaders'

MHS Mission

Memorial Healthcare System provides safe, quality, cost-effective, customer-focused healthcare services to its patients regardless of their ability to pay, with the goal of improving the health status of the community it serves.

compensation is highly dependent upon their performance in the areas they are held accountable for.

Understanding of Roles and Responsibilities.

The health system's trustees understand precisely what is and what is not expected of the board and of them as individual board members. Because Memorial Healthcare System is a public hospital, trustees are directly responsible to the community for ensuring the health and welfare of the population they serve. At the same time, trustees understand that they are not responsible for the day-to-day decisions and activities at the health system. The board relies on receiving the necessary education and information required to make high-level, strategically-focused leadership decisions.

Generative Thinking. Generative thinking is a critical component of board deliberations and decision making at Memorial Healthcare System. Rather than senior leaders presenting an idea for the board to approve, trustees receive an overview of the challenge that needs to be addressed, and a minimum of three proposals or approaches to addressing the challenge. This approach requires the board to interpret the information and be willing to ask thorough, probing questions before making a decision.

Probing Dialogue. Memorial Healthcare System's board meeting schedule and leadership protocols ensure that trustees are prepared to engage in wide-ranging, deep, probing dialogue at every board meeting. Board meetings are brief, lasting only about an hour to an hour and a half, and are supplemented and supported by committee meetings. Every board member serves as a co-chair on at least one board committee.

Board meetings are held twelve times a year; and three to four additional workshops are also held annually, focusing on specific strategic topics. Board packets are sent out at least five days in advance of each meeting and workshop, during which time the CEO is available for questions from trustees prior to the meeting.

Finally, at each board meeting committee chairs report to the board, framing and leading the governance discussion, rather than the CEO. While the CEO answers board questions and is a critical participant in the dialogue and discussion, this process ensures that strategic decisions are board-driven, not staff-driven.

Community Focus. Memorial Healthcare System's board made a significant shift in 1992. After evaluating the hospital's

commitment to providing 100 percent of the indigent care in its service area and the financial challenge associated with this commitment, the board redefined its definition of the

MHS Vision

Memorial Healthcare System will improve the health of the community it serves by fully identifying and striving to satisfy the needs of its constituents and be a world-class model of excellence for safety, quality, customer service and cost-effectiveness.

hospital's primary focus from hospital patients to the community at-large. Trustees attended several educational conferences where they learned the critical components of a community-centered mission, and the board held additional workshops where they explored Memorial's current commitment to the community, efforts underway, and the areas with the greatest need.

This shift in thinking led to the development of a Community Relations Committee, focused solely on meeting community health needs and regularly evaluating the system's ability to significantly impact community health. The health system decided to support a public community clinic offering pre-hospital care, and shifted to a community health model. As board members began to receive positive feedback from community members and employees about the changes, the new approach was reinforced and the community health focus continued to expand.

The board is fully committed to its community-centered mission, a focus that is ingrained in not only the efforts of the Community Relations Committee, but the entire board and senior leadership team. The board has made a clear commitment to ensure that despite any changes in the health system's financial position, community health initiatives always will remain an important part of the health system's focus. The board is committed to seeking out new resources to support these programs, such as through philanthropy and increased hospital efficiencies.

After taxes in 2006, Memorial Healthcare System returned approximately \$120 million to the local community. The board is proud of this commitment, and regularly communicates its "story" to the community.

Build Champions. The key to success in community service and community health improvement is ensuring champions for the efforts. The champions may be board members, senior leaders, members of the medical staff, or staff members. The passion for community health must be an integral part of the organization's culture, so that when one individual (or individuals) champion an effort that has the potential to make meaningful gains in community health, the rest of the organization will fully support the initiative. It takes a continuous commitment from every level in the organization to ensure success.

Tips for Success

- The board must maintain a balanced outlook on all of the organization's goals and primary areas of emphasis. Trustees must be careful to not channel too much of their energy into one area, ignoring the others (for example, focusing on quality and patient safety but minimizing attention to finances and community health).
- Encourage generative thinking within the board by always presenting multiple options or proposals to the board for consideration. Memorial Healthcare System requires senior leaders to prepare at least three proposals to address a challenge or need, giving the board the opportunity to engage in a deep dialogue and discussion about the pros and cons of each option and determine the best alternative that fulfills the mission and meets the community's needs.
- Don't ever be satisfied that you've done everything you can do. Keep striving for the next initiative or effort that will strengthen community health even further.
- Committed trustees are community-based: they live in the community, play an integral role in the community, understand the community's needs and are committed to helping fulfill those needs.
- When implementing a new community benefit program or initiative, start with a focus on those most in need, rather than trying to reach all populations at once. As the program grows and successes are realized, then expand the program to reach additional populations.

John C. Lincoln Health Network

John C. Lincoln Health Network (JCLHN) was founded in 1927 by the Phoenix First Presbyterian Church as the Desert Mission, a social service agency charged with addressing the spiritual, health and social needs of people living in health camps in the Sunnyslope community north of Phoenix, Arizona. The health system continues to serve the Sunnyslope community today, an area with many residents living on the brink of poverty and struggling to meet their basic needs, as well as the broader north Phoenix area.

JCLHN Mission

To assist each person entrusted to our care to enjoy the fullest gift of health possible, and work with others to build a community where a helping hand is available for our most vulnerable members.

support/resource center, well child daycare center, a daycare center for mildly sick children, a community health center for family primary care, neighborhood development services, a community meeting/education facility, and mobile meals program.

Leadership for JCLHN's operations is provided by four volunteer boards of directors.

John C. Lincoln Health Network is a community-based, 501(c)(3) non-profit health care network. It includes a 262-bed hospital with a Level 1 trauma center; a 174-bed community hospital with the only pediatric emergency center in north Phoenix; a network of primary care physician practices; an adult day health care center; and three free-standing diagnostic imaging centers.

Community services include a food bank, children's dental clinic, family

- The Network board directs activities for the overall Network and health care functions.
- The Desert Mission board oversees community service programs and ensures their long-term success.
- The Foundation board is the philanthropic and fundraising arm that supports the organization's charitable mission.
- The non-profit development corporation, Desert Mission Neighborhood Renewal, is directed by a board that reports to, and coordinates with, the Network board.

The Governance Connection

Commitment to Mission. JCLHN's trustees are truly committed to the mission of the organization. The board consists of a mix of long-tenured trustees who are infused with the mission and values, and newer members who benefit from the perspectives and leadership of the more experienced trustees. Governance succession planning at JCLHN is accomplished primarily through referrals from current board members. When the organization seeks new trustees, it looks for individuals who:

- Are already somewhat "tied" to JCLHN and have an understanding of the organization's mission and commitment to the community;
- Are good thinkers, with the ability to focus on the big picture and ask tough, probing questions when appropriate; and
- Have sound business experience and judgment.

Objectivity. The JCLHN board brings clarity to the issues at hand and leads decision-making processes objectively. For example, one of the board members once asked the question: “are we in a business that can survive?” This stark and direct question resulted in a careful evaluation of the Network’s current position, and in a number of critical board decisions that have propelled the organization’s thinking and strategies forward. Trustees who think critically and objectively are expected to ask penetrating questions to ensure the organization continually considers all possibilities and solutions.

Clear Roles and Responsibilities. The Network’s board understands its leadership role and does not micromanage or attempt to participate in day-to-day operational decisions. Because trustees are deeply involved in organizational policy and strategic decisions and direction-setting, they are expected to pose thoughtful and challenging questions to the Network’s leaders and spark deliberative dialogue on the big-picture impact and potential decisions.

The board recognizes that in order to ensure a high-performing organization, a high-performing management team must be in place. By working within their respective roles and responsibilities, both board members and senior leaders are able to excel in their respective areas of accountability and expertise.

Leading with Strength and Commitment. John C. Lincoln Health Network board members recognize that while they do not need to understand the complex details of the business operations of the hospital, they must understand the current and future implications of the decisions they are considering and the directions they chart. To enable knowledge and evidence-based leadership, trustees receive focused education that shapes their understanding and guides their decisions. Board members understand that their role is to think broadly and bring new perspectives to bear in a collaborative approach with the Network’s senior leaders.

Culture of Community Service and Community Health Improvement. Because John C. Lincoln Health Network’s predecessor organization was created as a social service agency, providing services that strengthen the community’s health is an integral part of the Network’s culture. The board’s commitment to these community service and community health improvement services is evident in its discussion and decision-making style: the board would simply never consider jeopardizing social services, no matter how difficult the organization’s financial position might be. Instead, trustees and administrators work together to ensure that the organization’s

community service priorities are met despite financial constraints and other potential barriers to their service commitment.

JCLHN Vision

To be an organization worthy of honor by experts while always remembering our greatest honor is to serve others.

The organization backs its mission and vision with dedicated manpower and resources to ensuring that the community’s health needs are met. For example, one Network executive has as a primary accountability for the development and oversight of the community service programs under the auspices of John C. Lincoln Health Network’s Desert Mission. The Desert Mission is dedicated to addressing the health and social needs of struggling families in north Phoenix, meeting the basic needs of the area’s most vulnerable community members and helping them reach their full potential for health and self-sufficiency. It has its own board, which is engaged full-time in community services. The Desert Mission board provides regular reports to the Network board, and the chairman is an ex-officio member of the Network board.

Mission, Vision and Values at the Center of all Board Decisions. John C. Lincoln Health Network’s mission and vision are routinely evident in the organization: they are printed in board materials, discussed regularly at meetings, and are at the center of governance responsibility and leadership thinking. The board has also learned that a good way to keep the mission at the forefront is to talk regularly about community health success stories. Frequently at board meetings trustees and administrators share personal stories about the impact of specific community service and community health programs on individuals in the community. Whether a simple story, a picture or a video, the personalization of the experiences helps keep the organization’s leaders focused on the reason JCLHN exists, and on the importance and impact of their decisions on the lives and livelihoods of those they serve.

Reliance on Understanding of Community Needs. An objective, in-depth community needs assessment is the critical first step to understanding and addressing community health needs. There may be significant differences between what the organization thinks the community’s needs are and what they actually are. By conducting a wide-ranging and probing community needs assessment, the board can evaluate how the organization can collaborate with others in the community to make the most efficient use of resources while addressing the greatest needs.

Business Discipline. After a community needs assessment has been conducted, programs should be developed and

Tips for Success

- Community benefit programs must be approached in a business-like manner; organizations should only undertake initiatives that can be sustained for the long-term, and that achieve the desired impact.
- Sharing specific stories about community service and community health success at board meetings reinforces the vision, and “humanizes” the mission.
- Conducting a thorough community needs assessment is critical to understanding and addressing community health needs – there may be significant differences between what the organization thinks the community needs are and what they actually are.
- Recruiting new trustees through referrals from current board members ensures that new trustees exhibit the board’s desired characteristics, including a commitment to the mission and vision, the ability to focus on the big picture and ask tough, probing questions, and sound business experience and judgment.

implemented in a coordinated business-like manner. That is, a business plan is essential for assuring that a program will be sustainable over time. At the same time, a process of continuous evaluation is essential to assure that services provided are in tune with the evolving needs of the community. They should start small, grow as successes are achieved, and continually evolve and change to meet community needs.

Sisters of Charity Health System

Sisters of Charity Health System provides health care in central and western Maine from a 16-acre campus in Lewiston. The organization is a member of Covenant Health Systems, based in Lexington, MA. The system is comprised of seven facilities: 1) St. Mary’s Regional Medical Center, a 233-bed acute care hospital and comprehensive behavioral health facility; 2) St. Marguerite d’Youville Pavilion, a 280-bed long-term and rehabilitative care facility; 3) Maison Marcotte Independent Living Center, a 128-apartment independent living facility for the elderly and disabled; 4) Community Clinical Services, a diverse physician network of 55 providers located throughout the county that offers services on a sliding scale fee basis, and includes four school-based health centers; 5) WorkMed Occupational Health Services, providing a range of preventive and occupational medical services; 6) Renaissance and Genesis Houses, residential treatment homes for children and adolescents; and 7) Renaissance School, a licensed, special-purpose school that meets the educational and behavioral needs of children with the educational diagnosis of Emotional Disability.

A lack of well-paying jobs is a major feature of downtown Lewiston, Maine. In the immediate area of the hospital and its B Street Health Center the poverty rate jumped from 12 percent for all of Androscoggin County to 24 percent and 37 percent

in 2007, respectively. The county is also in a federally designated medically underserved area. In addition, cultural differences and language continue to be barriers in need of community attention.

The Governance Connection

Clear Understanding of the Organization’s History. Sisters of Charity Health System believes that a deep understanding of the system’s history and a strong commitment to the mission are the most important characteristics of a successful board member. Ensuring a deep understanding of the organization’s reason for being requires more than reading a history of the organization and its mission statement – Sisters of Charity builds and sustains a personal understanding of its history by taking new board members to Montréal, Quebec, where St. Marguerite d’Youville, the founder of Sisters of Charity, ran a hospital in the 1700s. Trustees tour the building where she cared for the poor, and visit the room that she used to treat patients and assist community members. This experience helps board members to not only understand the mission, but to feel and experience the organization’s rich history first-hand, instilling a passion in new board members for the Sisters of Charity mission and commitment to the community.

In addition to visiting Montréal to build a foundation of understanding of the organization’s fundamental purpose of caring for those in need, Sisters of Charity also believes it’s important for trustees to have a solid understanding of its Catholic identity. Many of the system’s trustees are not Catholic, and it’s critical that they understand the Sisters of Charity commitment to the Catholic Healing Ministry. To bring its deep-rooted Catholic commitment alive, trustees are invited to visit Rome every five years. Board members learn how the church works, better understand its history, and

SCHS Mission

To continue the healing ministry of the Catholic Church in the Spirit of St. Marguerite d’Youville by providing preventive, curative, restorative, and supportive services with compassion and respect for everyone.

SCHS Vision

Sisters of Charity Health System is a vital community health care provider widely recognized for its high quality, innovative and cost effective approach to care delivery. The health system is a valued asset and integral component of the community it serves.

programs, such as employing local teenagers to clean up vacant lots in the summer, or operating the Sisters of Charity food pantry. Efforts such as clothing drives or food drives are also done with little or no cost to the organization, but significantly impact the community.

Governance Education is Critical. Board education is a critical component of the Sisters of Charity board's ability to successfully lead the health system. The system conducts some trustee education independently, and also participates in system-wide education available through Covenant Health System. Educational sessions are conducted separate from board meetings, ensuring that board meetings are focused on strategic issues and decision-making and may be concluded in a reasonable amount of time.

Strategic Focus. To ensure a focus on strategy rather than routine business items, Sisters of Charity board meetings are divided into two types: "regular" and "strategic." "Regular" meetings are dedicated to routine business items, and "strategic" meetings are set aside for a "strategic conversations." Each strategic conversation explores only one topic, such as quality, strategic planning, or marketing. By focusing on one topic at each strategic session, trustees are able to engage in deep, wide-ranging discussion about the topic and its strategic implications.

Executive Sessions. In the past the board had staff members present and answer questions at meetings; however, trustees found it difficult to disagree or ask probing questions of the CEO when staff were present, as they were concerned that it would appear they weren't being supportive of the CEO in front of his staff. To address this problem, the board began holding executive sessions to discuss difficult or sensitive

connect the Catholic commitment of caring to today's community health issues and challenges.

Fulfilling a Community-Centered Mission Is Not About Money.

Sisters of Charity has learned that success in fulfilling its community-centered mission does not require a significant amount of money. The organization has undertaken many efforts that are important to the community, but that have little or no financial cost to the hospital. For example, a combination of community partnerships, grants and fundraising has helped support a variety of community benefit

issues. As a result, the board has been more candid and willing to ask critical, tough questions of the CEO before making decisions.

Non-Traditional Board Self-Assessment. Rather than conducting its board self-assessment using a traditional survey tool, the Sisters of Charity board conducts a series of small focus groups. The board is divided into three groups, with each group's focus session asking the same questions. Board members are encouraged to raise concerns, and to delve into the challenges to determine potential solutions. A complete list of recommendations developed is reported to the full board for discussion and decision-making. Some of the suggestions are translated into goals for the CEO to accomplish in the following year.

Trustee Champions. When board members have a particular interest or idea that they would like the organization to undertake, the board encourages trustees to lead an initiative in that area. For example, a previous trustee was a City Councilor who recognized the need for improving housing in the area. He encouraged the board to undertake an initiative to address this challenge, and the board empowered him to spearhead what became the Housing Initiative.

Encouraging these "trustee champions" helps the board stay focused on the most critical issues, and provides the board with the information, knowledge, and perspective they need. In addition, when addressing certain issues a trustee-led initiative may be more powerful than an initiative led by the CEO.

Focus on Community Health Needs. The Sisters of Charity Health System board ensures a continual focus on the area's community health needs using two primary approaches: 1) Conducting a regular "mission assessment"; and 2) Encouraging trustees to be actively involved in the health system's community service efforts.

The mission assessment consists of Covenant Health System representatives meeting with hospital employees and board members to review a comprehensive list of questions that determine how the organization is fulfilling its mission in the community. In addition to measuring the health system's ability to meet its mission, the assessment stimulates board discussion about the mission, and encourages trustees to regularly engage in questioning, probing dialogue that ensures the organization is "on track" with its community improvement goals.

Board members are also encouraged to actively participate in the health system's community service efforts. For example, the health system renovated an old house the hospital was no

longer using, preparing the building to be a refugee house. Trustees and the CEO helped prepare the house, including cleaning and painting. Trustees also participate in Covenant Health System's Day of Caring, where board members from a variety of Covenant facilities work together on a wide range of community service initiatives.

Mission, Vision and Values in the Forefront of Board

Decisions. Every Sisters of Charity board meeting begins with a reflection, generally presented by one of the board members. The reflection relates to the hospital's purpose, and may be a simple observation or reflection, a poem, or a prayer.

In addition, at every board meeting "tent cards" displaying the health system's mission are prominently placed throughout the

boardroom. The cards provide a constant reminder of the mission, ensuring that the board keeps it in the forefront of every discussion and decision.

Finally, the board ensures that the mission remains the focal point of all board activities by holding board meetings at various local sites where the system serves the community. For example, a board meeting was once held in the nutrition center attached to the health system's food pantry. By holding the meeting at this location, board members were able to experience the environment and hear the employees and volunteers talk about the organization and its impact. These first-hand experiences help trustees build a deeper understanding of the organization's daily operations and its commitment to the community.

Tips for Success

- By taking new board members to Montréal, Quebec to visit the original hospital that the founder of Sisters of Charity operated in the 1700s, trustees are able to understand the historical context of the mission, relate to it personally, and "feel" what it means, rather than simply view it as a statement written on paper.
- Living a community-focused mission doesn't have to be expensive. There are many efforts that organizations can undertake to ensure a continual focus on meeting local needs that are not a financial burden to the hospital.
- Display simple tent cards with the mission printed on them at every board meeting. This ensures that trustees are constantly reminded of the mission, and reminds them to keep the mission in the forefront of every discussion and decision.
- When the board deliberates difficult or sensitive issues, the necessary staff members are present to provide the information required for the board to make an informed, educated decision. An executive session is then held to debate the issue and make a decision – this ensures that trustees ask the CEO the necessary deep, probing questions without the fear of disagreeing with the CEO in front of his staff.