A Profile of Key Leadership Roles and Relationships in Long-Term Care

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Background and Abstract

- This research project attempts to describe the profile of the Administrator, Director of Nursing (DON), and Medical Director (MD) roles and relationships in long-term care (LTC) facilities.
- Preliminary relationships with performance of care and organizational outcomes were also explored. The research team surveyed the current practicum sites of the University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire (UWEC) health care administration undergraduate program, which includes 54 facilities that were contacted by mail.
- The research team developed a survey, based on the literature and past research, that examined the roles and relationships of the LTC leadership team. The survey was reviewed and critiqued by the members of the field in December 2014, and will be further reviewed by faculty experts.
- The survey was distributed in Spring 2015 to each facility that is a UWEC practicum site, which are primarily located in the Midwest. A survey was sent to each leadership team member. Additionally, the perspective of the practicum student at each site was obtained, along with the necessary organizational information. The survey data will be assessed using a structural equation modeling approach and a series of regression analyses.
- In the future, the research team believes the results will display significant evidence that the LTC leadership team members’ positive relationships with one another will correlate with facility performance of resident care and their organizational outcomes.

Methods

- Surveys have been created to distribute to UWEC Health Care Administration Program 2014 – 2015 cohort students and their Administrator, DON, and MD at each current practicum site.
- These individuals completed the mailed surveys and returned the data to the research team by the end of March 2015.
- The lower response rate from participants was challenging, as well as identification of surveys, which resulted in an approximate 90% response rate from students, a 50% response from Administrators and DONs, and a 25% response rate from MDs.
- The research team also examined and explored the various information that describes the current profile of these leadership roles. Team members are also examining the initial relationship between team effectiveness and reported performance outcomes.

Preliminary Findings

- 70% of the facilities reporting have six or fewer physicians providing care for residents.
- Preparedness
- There appears to be a strong relationship between the reported effectiveness of the team and the average score of performance outcomes. The Administrators reported the relationship the highest of the three, followed by the DON and then the MD.
- There is a lack of substantial evidence to support the importance of relationships being analyzed by the team. Additional findings support a balanced operational approach for both the Administrators and DONs. Strategic thinking is a style more prevalent with Administrators, and especially high with the MDs. This may be an organizational opportunity for navigating relationships with providers in the ACO environment.
- Initial conclusions drawn from this study include:
  1. Team outcomes were impacted by respondents’ responses for importance of activities, and fact of time spent on the activity, and preparedness of the respondent.
  a. Administrators divided their time among all of the job, and felt that their time spent and level of preparedness were at good levels.
  b. DONs also divided their time evenly among tasks, and felt well prepared across the spectrum. It was interesting to note that strategic planning and financial responsibility were two areas deemed less important for DONs.
  c. MDs emphasized the importance of administrative relations, resident relations, and care practice in their work, consistent with the review of their reported job descriptions.
  d. A consistent pattern of negative correlations emerged between the responses of the Administrators and DONs, which suggested some internal accommodations for each other regarding duties.
  2. Leadership styles reported by respondents suggest a balanced approach to the LTC team.
  3. Initial outcome evidence suggests that DONs have the most impact when their professional efforts are focused on care-related practices, and also on both human resources and regulatory compliance.

Discussion and Conclusions

- Additional surveys are still being received by the research team. Further analyses will be conducted to evaluate the results and statistically determine how LTC leadership team roles and leadership impact specific key facility performance measures using a series of regression analyses.
- This study will also enable the research team to connect the evidence found concerning the roles and relationships of the LTC leadership team with the Certification and Survey Provider Enhanced Reports (CASPER) dataset this summer.

Future Plans

- Funding for this effort was provided by Golden Living and the Center for Health Administration and Aging Services Excellence (CHAASE).
  - The initial advisory group includes: Dr. Nicholas Castle [Senior Advisor], Dr. Jane Peterson, Dr. Joanne Davis, Barbara Bowen, Chad McKenzie, RN, Joey Pettitt, RN, and representatives of CHAASE.
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