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AHE 2014 President

STRONG, VIBRANT AND **VISIBLE**

Welcome to 2014 and what will certainly be another year of big change in health care. The implications and ramifications of the Affordable Care Act will become ever more apparent as we move forward. There are plenty of questions surrounding this new program but, at this point, not many answers. One thing is for sure: business as usual will not be an option if health care institutions are to continue to grow and thrive. Shrinking reimbursements and increasing regulations will force all of us to seriously review our operations and strategy. In other words, we need to be strong, vibrant and visible leaders in our institutions.

A recent survey of hospital CEOs listed financial concerns as the main issue on the table in 2014. Reduced Medicare and Medicaid payments, anticipated decreases in volumes, increasing acuity levels, and increasing equipment and supply expenses are all adding to a situation that will take knowledge and leadership to address. We are dedicating this edition of *EXPLORE* to the discussion of how these issues will affect environmental services across all care settings. Let's take a look at a couple of the most pressing problems confronting our profession in the immediate and the near future.

Measureable and defensible evidence

If CEOs are worried about finances, then it would be prudent for us to more than consider them and how we can contribute to ease some of the pressure on the executive teams and the

boards of directors. Most of us are accustomed to staffing cuts at this point. A manager swallows the pill and does what has to be done to meet the targets. However, a leader understands the importance of being at the table armed with not only passion for what we do but more importantly, armed with the data we need to substantiate the investment being made in our services.

Do you have the data, information and leadership skills to represent yourself and your department at the table? Simple answers and explanations will not serve us going forward. We need measureable and defensible evidence, metrics and data to illustrate the impact and value of our services to our customers. We need to be worthy of the respect we desire. Do you know who has this information or how to create your own?

Impact of HCAHPS scores

Because a portion of reimbursements are tied to satisfaction, we cannot forget about the impact of HCAHPS scores on our institutions. With dwindling resources and increasing expectations, we need to think innovatively when looking at staff productivity and ask ourselves whether we are getting the return from our labor dollars. Have we developed a hiring protocol for the department that addresses not only experience but behaviors? Are we conducting behavior-based interviewing and hiring for customer-focused skill sets to ensure we have the service-minded personalities on the front line? Do we teach strategic skill-building? Can staff make ethical choices? Are we hiring the first person through the door hoping we can on-board them with a fast wave of technical training? Are we hiring coachable, teachable staff that will assimilate into the culture of service? Are we coaching *and* nurturing the next wave of supervisors and managers so we can lead, not just work?

As leaders, we need to develop criteria and expectations for our hiring and orientation programs to ensure we are getting the best and brightest. Great attitudes and high performance will be the key to our success with customer service.

Increasing territories and responsibilities

In addition to finance and customer service issues, we also need to be focused on the increasing territories



and responsibilities being added to our plates. Most of us are dealing with more than one facility, and many of us are being asked to take on other departments. According to the trending experts, health care is and will continue to be delivered away from the acute-care hospital setting. What types of issues does this present to us as patients are seen farther away from our concentration of resources? What is your vision for the care and services that are provided away from the core? Who are the partners that will help?

Utilize tools and resources

These are the questions AHE has received in conversations with members throughout 2013. Just as we delivered on your requests for free member education and training as part of dues, 2014 promises to provide you with the tools and resources you will need to respond to these challenges, demonstrate leadership, and formulate the vision necessary to make you and your teams invaluable. Keep asking, and we'll keep listening. As we prepare to deliver these exciting new tools, programs and resources, I am asking you to do a few things to enhance your skills:

- Achieve or renew your CHESP.
- Maintain your AHE membership and encourage a peer to join.
- Visit www.ahe.org often for the latest information on what's coming and when.
- Visit www.aha.org – that's right www.aha.org. The American Hospital Association website has resources that will get you thinking about what keeps your executive management team awake at night. It will help you with the vision I spoke

of earlier. It will help you ready yourself, not only for what may be coming but how you leverage what we will be delivering.

Of all the resources we will be launching in 2014, your CHESP, your membership and its benefits, the information offered on the websites above, and your passion for what you do will be your most valuable resources as you navigate the uncertainty of health care and your role.

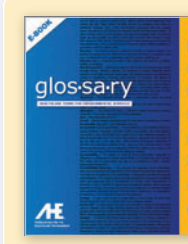
As you read the pages of this important issue of *EXPLORE*, take note that vision and leadership will be the key to success for all of us. Please take advantage of your membership benefits. ENGAGE in AHE's webinars and courses, and leverage the knowledge and intellectual capital available to you from others who participate in courses and committee work. Consider getting involved and join them. Take advantage of the AHE and AHA library of publications that are inexpensive yet critical to our mission.

Don't forget to budget for and attend the best learning and networking event for the profession at EXCHANGE 2014 in Tampa, Fla., September 21–24. You will be surrounded by amazing talent, unfettered networking opportunities and an information repository that extends beyond the program dates. Make 2014 the year of vision, growth and success! Let us help you! Help yourself! ENJOY this issue of *EXPLORE*, and I hope to see you in Tampa! ●



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