

Culture Change

Although the challenges facing healthcare may seem insurmountable, hospital executives can address and overcome many of these obstacles at the institution level. While some problems may be subject matter related, many are process and cultural barriers that can be implemented and sustained by hospital staff.

The ease or difficulty in removing these barriers is dependent upon hospital culture. Cultural barriers include the way people think about their jobs, their colleagues, and the norms and values of the organization. This can be particularly challenging in a hospital environment where there may be multiple physician organizations that do not share the same goals and values as hospital administration, or even each other.

Removing these barriers requires a collaborative effort where administration, physicians, nurses, clinicians, and support staff work in a culture of openness, mutual support, and joint success. It also requires a structured approach.

How Thomas Group Can Help

Thomas Group typically works with clients to:

- Select the target groups. It is important to decide which focus groups should be brought together first.
- Select collaborative teams involving key stakeholders. The best approach to designing and implementing operational improvements is with collaborative teams that involve key stakeholders.
- Focus on values. Values are a good beginning because they are the primary foundation of the culture.
- Transform values to goals. Once mutual values are uncovered, it will be easy to determine common goals. However, it is important to realize the difference between goals that are shared and those that are independent and competing.



- Determine necessary changes. Once goals are clearly defined, the next step is to determine the barriers that must be removed to achieve them. This normally involves identifying both process and cultural barriers.
- Focus on concrete operational improvements. After identifying key process and cultural barriers, the possibility for real operational improvements can be realized.
- Communicate. Communication is critical to the success of any initiative. However, it is particularly important between two groups that have divergent interests.

Meeting the challenges faced by hospitals requires the successful integration of patients, physicians, and healthcare staff. Achieving the satisfaction of all parties must be driven by operational processes that consistently deliver a smooth, efficient flow of patients while maintaining the highest quality standards of patient care and satisfaction.

Ideally, a healthy hospital environment is characterized by open communication, integrity, and mutual respect, with clearly articulated common values and goals and the efforts of all parties focused on achieving those goals. Most importantly, the successful environment is characterized by low employee turnover and improved patient care. Improved care not only draws insurers and other healthcare purchasers

concerned with cost and patient outcomes, it helps to restore trust and confidence in the healthcare system as a whole.

Thomas Group helps health organizations build, apply, and maintain performance-based cultures that focus on collaboration, patient care, and results. Performance-based cultures have strong leadership and accountability, human talent and organization strength, and organization alignment. 