

Change Management in Health Care

In an ever evolving and demanding environment like health care, change can be both a difficult and daunting prospect. Instrumental to the success of change within any organization, including health care, is the understanding of effective change management practices. As we can likely all attest to, change is hard. Good change management practices, though, help to prepare, equip and support people to successfully move through the change process and adopt the change.



What is Change Management?

Before we delve into change within health care organizations specifically, let's first understand exactly what is meant by change management. According to Prosci, an organization that focuses on and studies change management techniques and principles, change management is an enabling framework for managing the people side of change. (Prosci, 2024c) The key piece to focus on here is *people* – change management processes exist to help guide affected employees through the change process, leading to a more streamlined and successful adoption.



What drives change in health care organizations?

There can be many reasons for change within a health care environment, but these can be boiled down to four overarching reasons: (Cancer Care Ontario, 2017)

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1. The introduction of new technologies
2. Changes in the social environment of the organization or surrounding community
3. Advancements made in medical knowledge and research
4. Improving the experience of health care workers

How can change management principles help guide successful changes in health care settings?

Regardless of the reason, change in health care organizations is always complex. Health care environments often have many different professions working under one roof (physicians, nurses, administrators), existing alongside many other stakeholder groups, including patients and government officials. Oftentimes, these groups have different perspectives and interests, which can and do conflict. (Golden, 2006) When you add these varying opinions to an environment that often operates 24/7 with staff who are in constant demand, it can be very challenging to bring about successful change.

Many successful changes within a health care setting share a few commonalities – the creation of a change management plan and the breaking down of the change into stages to help with a more organized roll-out. For example, in executing changes to their models of care, Cancer Care Ontario broke their change into four phases (Cancer Care Ontario, 2017):

1. **Phase One: Plan.** What is the problem being solved? What is the desired end state? Who does this change affect and to what degree?
2. **Phase Two: Implement.** What are the potential barriers or paths of resistance that may slow / halt implementation of the change? How can this resistance be addressed?
3. **Phase Three: Evaluate.** Is the change achieving the outlined goals? What lessons were learned? Are there adjustments that need to be made?
4. **Phase Four: Sustain.** Do the teams have what they need to make the change sustainable?

In a project focused on the implementation of a new Medication Order Entry system at Toronto's University Health Network, leaders broke the change process down into four stages: (Golden, 2006)

1. **Stage One: Determine Desired End State.** This involves setting measurable goals, tracking progress, and amending strategies as needed, all while keeping the end goal top of mind.
2. **Stage Two: Assessing Readiness to Change.** In this stage, the focus is on understanding the organization's readiness for change, seeking input / feedback from key players, and identifying change agents who will help bring those affected on board with the change.
3. **Stage Three: Broaden Support and Organizational Redesign.** Here is where the larger group impacted by the change is brought onboard through effective, consistent and clear communication. Always practice honesty and transparency.

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4. **Stage Four: Reinforce and Sustain Change.** The focus here is on communicating successes, monitoring performance, recognizing efforts, and gathering feedback on both the change process and the change itself.

These examples demonstrate some of the ways you can plan for change effectively, creating an organized and thorough approach with the people affected at the center. Understanding the reasons behind the change, making space for feedback, effective communication, transparency, and sustainment are all critical pieces of effective change management. Implementing these practices in your change process will significantly increase the likelihood of success for both change leaders and health care workers.

For more information, feel free to contact: jessicadoyle@ihis.org

Dragon Medical One (DMO) software upgrade

On May 20th we initiated a software upgrade to Dragon DMO 2023.4.0.3 on government issued computers using DMO across PEI. This version is the most recent CIS certified version of DMO and was required in advance of the CIS Code upgrade. After extensive testing the process was finalized on May 26th. All DMO users of government issued computers should now see the new black flame icon, if not they should contact Service Centre servicecenter@ihis.org and request the new software. Providers using personal computers can reach out to dragonsupport@ihis.org for assistance to update. For more details please see posted Bulletins: <https://src.healthpei.ca/e-health>.

Thank you to the Clinical Informatics Leads in Acute Care facilities and the EMR Advisors in the community for their support in making this project a success!"



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Sources

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