

What are the characteristics needed to be the right physician leader?

Choosing the right physician leader is a major factor in determining the success of your project. When choosing a team, there is a need to pick people that represent the spectrum of roles from clinical to administrative but more importantly the physician leader must be someone who has the following attributes:

- Must recognize and agree that change is needed
- Must have the respect of his/her colleagues, both clinical and administrative
- Must either have or be willing to learn leadership skills, be a team player, and be trustworthy
- Must be willing to stand up at in meetings of his/her peers, say what needs to be said, and then be willing to disagree with the popular choice and lead the group to the right choice
- Must be able to think on his/her feet and under pressure
- Must be willing to learn and collaborate
- Must be willing to put in extra time and work to ensure the process proceeds smoothly
- Should be knowledgeable, or willing to learn, both the current process as well as the options that are in use in other jurisdictions
- Should be able to, or learn to, speak well and present in front of groups
- Should have a least some clinical role other than administration

While the attributes listed are important in choosing the right leader, the desire and passion to stand up and disagree with the popular choice, under criticism of one's colleagues, is something that cannot be taught and is vitally important to be a great leader.

The right leader is not necessarily the person with the most seniority or the most respected person, but someone who can gain buy-in from the team and respect from those who will follow him/her. Choosing a person that is either from within the process or outside the process is not as important as choosing the person based on the above criteria. The ideal person is passionate about improving the process, although this can come with the process itself. Finally, this physician leader must be equally comfortable dealing with physicians and administration. This is a difficult balance to achieve, as both groups must consider the leader trustworthy for the process to succeed.

The right leadership physician, if chosen well, will engage the right clinical leaders to move the initiative along. The respect of one's colleagues is something that is earned and although it can