Did you miss the 2015 LeadingAge New York Annual Conference and Exposition?

Our 2015 annual conference was all about YOU – the voice of aging in New York State!
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Alphabet Soup for the Soul(s)

This article is based on two sessions presented at the LeadingAge New York Annual Conference and Exposition. Seven Lessons for Future Success with Managed Care by Andy Edeburn and DSRIP Update by Meghan McNamara, Esq. and Jonathan Gilleman, Esq. of Hinman Straub.

What does the future look like for healthcare? No one really knows but the one thing everyone can agree on is this: value plus volume will equal success. The care you provide to the “souls” in your facility will establish their satisfaction, which will be reflected in their survey responses, which will be a determining factor in the reimbursement you receive for those souls. The Delivery System Reform Incentive Payment (DSRIP) program has begun. We are in the early stages but this can be your path to success in the future. Your planning, partnering and Prospective Payment System (PPS) will determine whether you succeed or fail.

The Board of Directors at LeadingAge New York adopted a proactive approach early on and now LeadingAge New York has a seat at the proverbial planning table. We have already had input on the roadmap outline of how the State plans to achieve Value Based Payment (VBP) by 2020. It’s all about value and if you are able to protect your reputation as a value provider, your ability to improve quality and outcomes will be rewarded. Value and volume must go hand-in-hand. Shorter lengths of stay are inevitable but if you increase the access points into your facility with partnerships, you will have a greater volume to offset those shorter stays.

How do you do this? Where do you start?

Pay attention to new providers in your market. When you are negotiating with them understand your outcomes and value. You must offer a robust Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) program to be able to negotiate your best deals.

Evaluate your existing business model. Can you develop new operations that include assisted living, transitional care or Hospice? Start it now. Your director of nursing and business office staff need to be rock stars. They are your frontline to meeting the requirements of your negotiated contracts.

Decrease hospital readmissions and increase patient satisfaction. This is critical to your value. You may see a reward and incentive benefit from keeping people out of hospitals.

The Managed Long Term Care (MLTC) plans are the dominant players across the country. They will initially partner with many providers. It won’t be that difficult to begin these relationships. The key to success will be in your ability to retain the partnership by demonstrating long-term value. When you are negotiating you must understand your environment, your competition and be able to show how to tie solutions to problems. By the fifth year of implementation the transition will be to value-based relationships and MLTCs will be looking for the best and the brightest as they develop permanent partnerships. The contracting window will be brief. Be ready to negotiate and show your value. Start your “soul-searching” now so you can succeed!
Great Strategy is a Win on Every Front

Based on the conference program entitled:

STRATEGIC PLANNING IN AN ERA OF HEALTHCARE REFORM

Strategic thinking is as vital to gaining competitive advantage in business as it is on the battle front. During the session, attendees learned that “strategy” is derived from the Greek word “strategia” defined as “the art of the troop leader; office of general, command, generalship.” War, hence strategic thinking, is really an art and, in fact, Scott named his company Artower based on the book The Art of War, by Sun Tzu. According to Park, “one must think, plan and act strategically for a plan to work and thinking strategically requires gaining a perspective that is objective relative to the world around you. Planning strategically requires the ability to position within that framework of objective understanding and acting strategically requires the pursuit of initiatives leveraging the value of the position attained.”

According to Scot, there are four macro drivers for planning strategically, which include:

- **Demographic & Socioeconomic Realities**: The wave of aging people effects basic supply and demand and the new generational attitude about cost will lead to a global revaluation within aging services.
- **Healthcare Reform**: The new models are integrated, transparent and will have different reporting structures, all effecting the market position.
- **Sick Care environment to a Healthcare environment**: There has been a paradigm shift in thinking and the new payers and consumers look to health management, wellness, behavioral health, personalized care and precision medicine.
- **Technology**: This is a game changer in terms of communication, information management and care delivery. Survival will depend on being visionary, competitive, adaptive, resilient and valuable. Value will equal outcomes and cost.

The second half of the session featured, Mike Keenan CEO of Good Shepherd Communities (GSC) in the greater Binghamton area. According to Keenan, the first couple of experiences with strategic planning at GSC resulted in plans that essentially failed because they were based on a fear-driven model as the organization attempted to plan for significant changes in demographics and payment structure that were looming on the horizon. As a result, the organization retained consultants and formed an initial alliance with a health system but upon assessment it was clear that the decision was not the best choice for satisfying the organizational vision/mission.

Subsequent strategic planning was opportunity driven and explored improvements at the existing facility and explored the possibility of building a new facility. A consultant was brought on to better understand the needs of Broom County’s elderly population. The resulting plan, based on the consultant’s assessment, was to build a Continuing

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Great Strategy is a Win on Every Front  (Continued)

Care Retirement Community (CCRC). A CCRC is a model that includes independent housing, assisted living and skilled nursing care on one campus with either an insurance model built in or with services offered on a fee-for-service basis, depending on the type of community. Good Shepherd Village at Endwell offers both models.

In 2013, a new “vision driven” planning process began. This process, driven by the board, consisted of a two-day board retreat which included all board and senior staff members and a one-day follow up meeting three months later. The focus of the retreat was strategic plan imperatives, organizational initiatives and measures of success. It was facilitated through a Strength, Opportunity, Weakness and Threats (SWOT) analysis, and included visioning and ranking potential initiatives. The result was a new vision statement, along with new strategic imperatives, organizational initiatives and metrics.

The implementation process included management training programs, changing the employee recognition program and increasing employee engagement. The operating boards held more frequent and joint meetings and worked cross-functionally. Community activity increased GSC’s public recognition, for example, the medical director began hosting a monthly spot on a local radio station about senior care to feature Good Shepherd Communities. Another part of the process was to seek partnerships and expansion ideas.

Keenan was clear that to avoid any pitfalls that might lead to the failure of their current plans, GSC has been creating deadlines and benchmarks to stay on task; has clear assignments/targets; holds board level strategic planning committee meetings; and, has created a culture of creativity and infrastructure that allows time to devote to planning, as opposed to simply “putting out fires.”
Managing Change

At the 2015 Annual Conference and Exposition held in May, Harvard University’s David A. Shore explained to a room of aging services leaders the different ways that success is typically measured. Generally, the success of a project is measured on three very basic points: Was it on time? Was it on budget? Did it meet specifications? Shore challenged the audience to consider if these simple questions really gave enough information to adequately determine success.

When thinking about true measurements of success, it is clear that a project can hit each point above but still be a complete failure for many reasons, first and foremost, was the problem solved? In order to experience true success, it is imperative to be open-minded about opportunities for robust change. Shore explained that with positive change comes success.

Shore, founder and director of several executive programs involving the management of change, argued that the most effective, albeit high risk change, is changes that exceeds existing paradigms. Pixar Animation Studios is a great example of the potential for transformational change. The 29-year-old animation company located in Emeryville, California has deliberately released only 14 movies throughout its existence, but all reached number one at the box-office on release. Complex change strives for the transformation of the status quo, a concept that Pixar Animation understands well, as indicated by the company’s profitability, brand awareness and the success of its projects.

On transformational change, Shore noted that it requires radical modifications, innovation and the willingness to interrogate reality. Questioning the way things are done creates the innovation that distinguishes a leader from a follower. Shore noted that there is an absolute need for innovation and transformational change within the nursing home system. He pointed out that in the U.S. there are currently 11 states with nursing homes that are rated a 2 or below on the Center for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) Five-Star Quality Rating System; New York is one of these eleven.

In conclusion, Shore discussed the Buddhist philosophy of the suffering of change which teaches that the fear of change is ever-present, even when the change is perceived as for the good. There will always be people against change who are comfortable to maintain the status quo. However, in order to truly succeed, it is imperative to exceed the boundaries of expectation with change.
Post-Acute Care: Challenge, Opportunity or Both?

How do you turn a challenge into an opportunity? You change your mindset. Showing that you can reduce re-hospitalizations will be your value, maybe even your brand. Partnering and securing a network of providers will build the infrastructure you need to improve your revenue and case mix. All of this comes under the umbrella of increased quality and decreased cost. That is the golden formula for the future.

Partnering with other like-minded facilities can broaden your services and increase your case mix. Merging offers savings in many areas of operation, and early retirement incentives can provide that long-term relief you need. Don’t be afraid of initial costs to offset future expenses. Only the best and strongest partnerships will survive the unavoidable post-acute healthcare challenges. Value-based payment will represent tremendous opportunity if you know how to show that you are the gold standard.

One way to build value is to increase capital. Where will the capital come from? There is equity on one end of the spectrum and liquidity on the other. Your ability to fundraise can give you the equity; but for liquidity, you need to strategically review your assets. Do you have real estate that you can sell, develop yourself or allow someone else to develop then pay you rent? No matter which you choose, you can offset your taxes with rent or an outright sale of the property. Regional banks are willing to work with you and HUD financing can be a great option for property development.

The demographics are in your favor if you are able to negotiate with Medicaid managed care and have an informed conversation. Don’t think you have negotiating power – yes you do! When you recognize the need to backfill shorter lengths of stay with increased admissions, and do it efficiently, you provide value. Look at the benchmark rates for the State and for your competitors, they are out there. Talk to LeadingAge New York staff. Your membership provides you with access to our staff and free resources. Start your negotiations and gather the facts, but don’t be late to the party. One-third of the industry’s facilities are in transition but by the end of 2016 the “easing into” this transition ends.

Be aggressive in your pursuit of value, do a better job and turn the inevitable into an opportunity for your facility.
An Industry Poised for Change

In the future, baby boomers want to live in a place that makes them feel as special as their mothers told them they are, and we should be planning accordingly. Richard Rosen, principal at Perkins Eastman, said it best: “Businesses that are able to respond to that eternal wish ‘I want to stay in my own home’ will thrive.”

But what is home and what will it be in the future? Perkins Eastman Research surveyed major not-for-profit providers and industry consultants across the country to more thoroughly understand current trends in senior living care. Almost 200 respondents addressed four major areas of interest: industry trends, healthcare and senior living convergence, memory support and neighborhood and Small House programs. For more information on these results go to “Senior Living 2015 Survey: An Industry Poised for Change” in the handouts section from the LeadingAge New York annual conference.

Current trends indicate a desire for communities that support people as they age in their home. These communities can be clustered housing, built in existing neighborhoods with support and services or near college communities where boomers can continue to learn in their senior years. Home can also be what is known as a “household.” Households are being created for two primary reasons. One, they are in response to the fastest-growing sector of care, dementia or memory care. This form of home is considered to be the gold standard for patients who have memory issues. Two, they are being created for the boomers who grew up in the 60s where communal living was desired. This is a return to sharing tasks and responsibilities for all aspects of daily living. Almost one third of respondents said they either have a household-type building existing or in the planning stages. Co-housing is another trend where retired seniors share housing costs and other responsibilities that come from living together.

What is certain as we look ahead is that people will age, they will want to age in their homes and they will need to have access to services

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An Industry Poised for Change (Continued)

that allow them to do both. They are going to want a continuity of lifestyle. Some of the CCRC future includes inviting the broader community in to share libraries, dining areas or even partnering with non-senior providers. This could be in the form of retail integration with senior housing provided over the retail space. Hospice incorporation into senior living is expected to increase as well. This trend will be in keeping with retiree’s desire to stay out of hospitals at the end of life. Finally there is the future of memory care, which is one of the fastest-growing senior population needs. Many providers are already looking to expand in order to provide enough memory care beds.

Rosen says we are looking at a sea change. There is a shift from things to experiences, and total control to partnering. Senior consumers are going to demand the best service and value and they aren’t going to care who provides it.

The great recession of 2008 changed our expectations about housing choices. People don’t seem to be moving through the continuum as quickly as before but one thing we can count on is the growing trend toward of providing services in our “home” and on our terms. Industry realignment is underway and we need to be thinking about our partnerships now. As long term care providers, we have great opportunities and challenges ahead of us. If we are flexible and open to thinking in new ways, the services we provide will make our seniors feel as special as their mothers told them they are. 🌟
Effective Communication, What’s Your Position?

Many people think you communicate with words alone but actions can speak louder than words. Truly effective communication is an exchange. It isn’t talking or listening, it’s both. When you interact with people, are you communicating in a verbal or nonverbal manner? Don’t focus on your words alone; your eye contact, tone of voice or body language can tell a person more than words ever will. The effectiveness of communication depends on many factors, including roles of the participants, time pressures, stress and the presence of other people, to name a few.

When you listen effectively you aren’t just waiting for your turn to talk. Listening takes practice and some of these reminders may sound simple but over time, they can be forgotten:

1) Don’t interrupt
2) Show your interest by nodding
3) Smile occasionally
4) Use small verbal comments like “uh huh” or “yes” to encourage the speaker to continue and,
5) Be sure you have an open posture.

One goal of effective communication is to find a healthy balance between thinking and feeling. This emotional awareness can build strong, trusting and rewarding relationships. If executed successfully, effective communication can help you deliver difficult messages without destroying trust, resulting in a profound personal connection.

Be aware of the role stress plays in your ability to communicate. When you’re stressed, it can interfere with your capacity to think clearly causing you to act inappropriately or have knee-jerk reactions. Unmanaged stress can lead to conflict and being aware of stress is the first line of defense in reducing conflict, allowing you to communicate more effectively.

As long term care providers you are all in the service business. People today can easily recognize good and bad service. When you are in a store and someone acknowledges your dissatisfaction you feel heard. When a resident, family member or guest feels wronged, your apology isn’t an admission of guilt. Rather, it validates the person’s feelings and emotional reaction to a situation. It is much easier to diffuse a situation early by apologizing for the inconvenience caused by not meeting his/her expectations. This is the first step toward customer satisfaction. Next, ask what will make things right and follow up to be sure the situation was handled to everyone’s satisfaction.

Remember, each employee is important to the overall impression of your organization. Try to imagine every patient, guest and family member signing your paycheck. A smile, enthusiasm, warmth and good communication among staff can make being a part of your facility a five-star experience.
Shift Your Approach and You Can Change the World

Service is action, action leads to success and success creates value. Servant leadership can be a very different approach to the way you manage your organization but the resulting business success is undeniable. Serving and caring for staff before personal achievement can inspire them to take meaningful action and in turn, creates a better workplace for everyone.

Matt Tenny is a man who turned a mistake into a lesson and is working now to be of service. His practice of serving starts with his staff. He suggests that if you take care of the people in your organization – from the frontline staff to the executives – success will follow. He says that when you are a servant leader your staff members feel rewarded, are fully engaged, and don’t want to leave your organization. Lower turnover results in better service, and better service leads to success. He asks leaders to do little things every day to prove to the members of the team that they are valued. These genuine and sincere gestures show staff you are a servant leader. He reminds us that often, the best way to serve our staff is to ask them how they want to be appreciated. You will undoubtedly be surprised by the answers.

Whether you send a letter recognizing someone’s extra effort or take the time to thank them in person, people respond to your service leadership with extraordinary results. Tenny encourages leaders around the world to step back and place value in their people. In his book, Serve to Be Great: Leadership Lessons from a Prison, a Monastery, and a Boardroom, Matt talks about how to attract top talent, increase engagement and lower turnover; and in doing so, provide better customer service.

These principals aren’t new to most of us, in a time when change is inevitable, he asks us to remember: when you serve your residents and your staff, with a philosophy of meaningful action, you are changing the world.
Thank you 2015 LeadingAge New York award winners for your dedication to the field of aging services!

**Lawrence E. Larson Memorial Award of Honor**
Audrey S. Weiner

**Carl S. Young Advocacy Award**
Jeannie Cross

**James W. Sanderson Memorial Award for Leadership**
Robert Wallace
Mark R. Zwerger

**Professional of the Year**
Cynthia Canzeri-Labish
Sandra Allen-Simms

**Trustee of the Year**
Michael Green
Philip Kaplan
Beverly Karpiak
Ellen Ricciuti
Kathleen Whelehan

**Innovation of the Year**
Art Without Barriers
Center for Jewish End of Life Care

Do you work with someone who contributes their time, energy and professionalism to the field of aging?

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Go to [leadingageny.org](http://leadingageny.org) for more information.