

VALUES — KEY TO EFFECTIVE LEADERS

REVIEW BY SR. CATHERINE O'CONNOR, CSB, Ph.D.

As we seek to navigate through the turbulent waters of health care, what North Star will guide us? Values, says Carson F. Dye, in his book, *Leadership in Healthcare: Essential Values and Skills*.

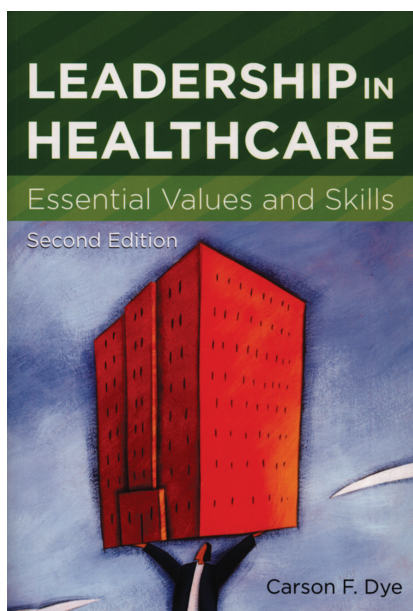
Senior vice president in the executive search firm Witt/Kieffer's Toledo, Ohio, office, Dye suggests there are skill sets and knowledge common to all leaders of health care institutions, but he believes values play a major role in defining the most effective.

In his book, a title in the American College of Healthcare Executives management series, Dye defines values as ingrained principles that guide behaviors and thoughts. Leaders who possess strong personal and professional values that are integrated and emanate from within are leaders who provide direction, inspire confidence and develop trust in a health care organization, he writes.

The book contains four sections. Each section elucidates a particular theme, and each chapter concludes by asking thought-provoking questions, providing vignettes for discussion and recommending current reading in the field.

In Part I, Dye describes realities in health care that have remained with us since his book's first edition in 2000. He outlines current obstacles and challenges and describes how health care leaders need to depend even more on personally espoused values to manage their leadership responsibilities.

Part II invites the leader to explore his or her own code of values and examines its influence on leadership styles. As leadership is about building and maintaining relationships, he emphasizes respect as an essential value.



**LEADERSHIP IN HEALTHCARE:
ESSENTIAL VALUES AND SKILLS**

BY CARSON F. DYE, FACHE

Health Administration Press, 2nd Edition, 2010
284 pages, \$76

He shows how respect is demonstrated through stewardship, ethics and integrity, connection, servant leadership, change management, commitment and emotional intelligence. Although the reader will be familiar with many of these concepts, this section provides perspective on how values can translate into developing an organizational vision in health care.

Part III examines the values that enhance cooperation and collaboration on teams. Acceptance of low performers, a proliferation of "group think" and a low tolerance for change are among the obstacles that can impede development of excellence and effective leadership, Dye says. He calls trust the basis of mission

fulfillment and defines it as a combination of integrity, competency, consistency, loyalty and openness. It is interesting to note that Dye names conflict management, rather than conflict resolution, as a creative and potentially beneficial resource in developing teams.

Part IV, which is about evaluation, addresses team values, team effectiveness and self-evaluation at early, mid- and later career stages. Any reader knows that team meetings can be frustrating and non-productive. Dye provides a checklist for evaluating team effectiveness by reviewing team structure, decision-making processes, meetings and team protocols. He suggests that resistance to meetings is often the by-product of poor planning and that values are the drivers of team practice and productivity.

Many of the concepts in this book are not new, but the author presents them in an organized and useful way, with questions and vignettes at the end of each chapter providing grist for the discussion mill. Although the text may be a review for more seasoned leaders, it can indeed serve as an examination of conscience on one's values and leadership style.

There are hundreds of books available on health care leadership, but I believe Dye's has a place among them. It is a very fine resource in how to develop effective leaders and deepen the mission through living our values. However, the book's useful insights come in an expensive package. The \$76 cover price is a major drawback.

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