



OUR ESSENTIAL JOURNEY

In 1994 Provenant Health Partners (PHP), a Denver healthcare system, decided it would begin to "grow" its own leaders. The idea was to permit individuals to self-select themselves as potential leaders of the organization and to guide their development so that their daily work behavior would consistently reflect PHP's values and heritage.

In the more than 100 years of their healthcare ministry to the Denver community, the women religious who have sponsored PHP—the Sisters of St. Francis of Perpetual Adoration—had successfully led many healthcare transformations. But today lay leaders are guiding those changes within the larger Catholic healthcare systems. PHP realized it was vital that these new lay leaders share the knowledge and experience of the Catholic tradition. Tom Rockers, PHP's president and chief executive officer, says: "An ongoing rededication to our core values and Catholic identity at all levels of the organization will be key to our future effectiveness in this challenging moment of history."

A FOUNDATION IN VALUES

PHP is a part of Sisters of Charity Health Care Systems (SCHCS), which is based in Cincinnati. As the foundation for its leadership development

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process, PHP used SCHCS's Values in Leadership program. (See Maureen Maxfield, "A Commitment to Values," *Health Progress*, January-February 1991, pp. 71-75.) Organized in nine sessions, the program increases leaders' awareness of their role as stewards responsible for continuing Jesus' healing ministry and encourages them to develop effective skills based on their sponsor's core values.

The Values in Leadership program:

- Recognizes that strong leadership arises in organizations that respect employees' dignity,

Summary Last year Provenant Health Partners (PHP), a Denver healthcare system, decided it would begin to "grow" new lay leaders. The idea was to allow PHP personnel to self-select themselves as potential leaders and to guide their development so their daily work would come to reflect the system's heritage and values.

PHP is part of Sisters of Charity Health Care Systems (SCHCS), based in Cincinnati. As a foundation for its project, PHP had its senior and middle managers participate in SCHCS's Values in Leadership program, which increases leaders' awareness of their role as stewards of Jesus' healing ministry and encourages them to develop effective skills based on their sponsor's core values.

PHP then formed an 11-person leadership development planning team representing its three hospitals and various system departments. The team drafted a plan which encourages PHP leaders and potential leaders to develop leadership skills with the aid of feedback from their colleagues. PHP is currently fine-tuning the plan in a pilot project. In addition to using the plan to develop leaders, the system is considering adapting it for use in employment screening, intraorganizational promotion, and the allocation of educational funds.



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autonomy, and self-esteem

- Is rooted in SCHCS core values: Catholic identity, respect for persons, excellence and high-quality service, value-oriented management, and stewardship

- Defines four roles of effective leaders: servant, visionary, catalyst, and mentor

- Identifies leadership competencies and behaviors and uses a variety of adult education methods to impart these competencies and behaviors

- Is designed to be flexible, to incorporate current practical applications, and to use the organization's internal managers to facilitate the program

A RECOGNIZED NEED

But once most of PHP's senior and middle managers had completed the Values in Leadership program, they realized they needed to go further. They decided that PHP needed to create its own leadership development plan.

"We knew from observed behaviors and explicit requests that we needed more information and a tool to guide us," recalls Jeanie Thorne of PHP's human resources division. "What we needed," adds Mary Jo Bay, a PHP parish nurse, "was a systematic way to identify and 'grow' dynamic leaders from within the organization, persons who are committed to—and live—PHP's vision and mission."

It was clear that no leadership development plan could succeed unless it had the support of PHP's senior management. That support was soon provided. The senior managers know that a values-driven organization has a duty to develop high-quality leadership—and that, besides, it makes good business sense. In an environment where health service organizations compete in terms of cost and quality, an organization based on mission and values will clearly stand out.

Senior managers did more than support the idea. From across the organization they recruited an 11-person planning team. Represented on the team were the three PHP hospitals, its senior care and human resources divisions, and its finance, marketing strategy, and quality improvement departments. Team members met every other Friday afternoon, beginning their work by studying the available literature on leadership development and plans from other healthcare organizations.

SOME KEY DECISIONS

Early on, the team made what it now sees as key decisions:

- It would design a leadership development plan without the aid of external consultants.

It was clear that no leadership development plan could succeed unless it had the support of PHP's senior management.

- Work on the plan would be a lay-religious partnership, based on a common language and vision.

- The plan would be based on the Values in Leadership program.

- Creation of the plan would not be a top-down process; it would involve leaders at all levels of the organization.

The team defined its mission: "To identify and develop empowered and learning leaders among our health partners; these leaders will live out PHP's core values and fulfill its mission and strategic objectives." The team also defined a vision: "United, effective, and dynamic leaders who daily fulfill their mission and live PHP's core values in service to the community."

In addition, the leadership development planning team established a framework of principles to guide its work:

- Organizational mission, vision, and values provide the most powerful tools for responding to the external environment and achieving partnership with patients, physicians, insurers, sponsors, the community, and other stakeholders.

- A strong vision enables people to embody their values in practice and behaviors.

- Mission helps people achieve results, because it helps them form strategic goals realized through the completion of specific objectives.

Having established a vision, mission, and framework of guiding principles, the team divided itself into subcommittees to work on various topics. Following that, the team wrote a draft leadership development plan.

PHP'S LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PLAN

In brief, the PHP Leadership Development Plan is a process through which leaders and potential leaders guide themselves with the help of their co-workers. Part of the plan is a PHP Leadership Profile (see **Box**, p. 30). The profile, adapted from the Values in Leadership program, describes broad organizational expectations in the five SCHCS core values (Catholic identity, respect for persons, excellence and high-quality service, value oriented management, and stewardship) and the four roles of an effective SCHCS leader (servant, visionary, catalyst, mentor).

In each of these categories, the leaders and potential leaders are periodically assessed by colleagues in various parts of the organization. The leaders and potential leaders can then gauge their strengths and challenges from this feedback, using it to help them pursue their professional and organizational goals.

The PHP Leadership Profile has recently been computerized, creating a feedback process that is simple to administer, maintains the anonymity of



those providing the feedback, is perceived as both fair and accurate, and provides a feedback report that motivates leaders and potential leaders to improve their leadership skills.

"The plan is for every person at PHP, whether they are now formal or informal leaders or only aspire to leadership," says Kathy Harris, a team member from PHP's Mercy Medical Center. "We have identified leadership competencies—as distinct from management competencies—and have created a process through which individuals can understand these competencies and put them into practice."

"The plan is an invitation to take ownership and initiative," adds Bay. "The mark of true leaders is their desire to be involved in their own leadership development."

At present, PHP is fine-tuning the plan in a pilot project for which it has recruited volunteer participants. In addition to using the plan to develop leaders, the system is considering adapting it for use in employment screening, intraorganizational promotion, and the allocation of educational funds.

PHP sees its plan complementing the Transformational Leadership Competencies for the Catholic Health Ministry developed by the Center of Leadership Excellence. SCHCS is committed to using the competencies process as part of its executive leadership development.

THE JOURNEY CONTINUES

But the leadership development planning team found that its work did not end with the plan's completion. Indeed, its members have come to think of their work as an "essential journey." Team members say the planning process itself helped them develop their own leadership skills. By remaining faithful to team decision making, they deepened their commitment to teamwork in

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leadership. "We had frank discussions of some very sensitive issues—such as what should happen when managers stray from the values, or how peers can question each other's behaviors," says Jeanie Mamula, a team member who is director of quality at two system hospitals, Provenant St. Anthony Central and Provenant St. Anthony North. "Through these discussions, we removed barriers to implementation," she says.

The "essential journey" had its difficult moments, say team members. One occurred when they were forced to move beyond thinking in terms of the traditional benchmarks of management development and, instead, begin considering the much more unfamiliar concept of leadership development linked directly to mission integration. Another difficult moment came when team members realized that PHP had not been especially good at developing leaders. "We learned, for example, that we offered strong support for new leaders," says Bay, "but less support for leaders who were already experienced."

But the journey is necessary, team members realize:

As Catholic healthcare facilities struggle to survive in an increasingly competitive market, they feel constant pressure to attract and retain highly competent administrators. Faced with a critical shortage of vowed religious, they grapple with succession planning. . . . In an attempt to both preserve and rekindle the spiritual commitment that was once pervasive in these institutions, Catholic facilities throughout the United States are now developing "formation programs" for key administrators. (Annelle Fitzpatrick and Christine Gaylor, "The Three Stages of Leadership Development," *Health Progress*, June 1992, p. 64.)

SCHCS, PHP's parent organization, is currently considering including the PHP Leadership Development Plan in its Values in Leadership program. Maureen Maxfield, SCHCS's vice president for education, says PHP is "one of the premier examples of program integration within a broader organizational development and transformation process." The PHP Leadership Development Plan, she says, "marks another step in integrating values into daily work life." □

☎ For more information about the PHP Leadership Development Plan, contact Sr. Jeannette Kneifel, OSF, 303-629-4430. For information about SCHCS's Values in Leadership program, contact Maureen Maxfield, 513-347-1134.

THE PHP LEADERSHIP PROFILE

The following is one item on a questionnaire that colleagues of a PHP leader or potential leader complete. Respondents use the numbers to rate the person on behaviorally specific indicators of leadership practices as related to each core value.

Visionary . . . N 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Creates a vision for the department's/ organization's future using data analysis and exploration of values consistent with SCHCS values.

- Maintains the core values in an ever-changing world.
- Develops and promotes processes to ensure that values and mission are integrated into policies, structures and operations.
- Integrates the values and priorities of SCHCS into strategic and operating plans.