
Management Wears Scrubs for Team Building



Administrators, board members and reporters donned scrubs for a typical working shift at Mission Health's innovative Immersion Day programme to create new paths for key stakeholders to better understand the real challenges and opportunities facing health systems. It has resulted in improved insights on how to lead, regulate and report on the most complex health care issues facing the U.S..

A description of the program entitled, "Immersion Day – Transforming Governance and Policy by Putting on Scrubs," was published in the *New England Journal of Medicine (NEJM)*.

The study reported on the benefits of an immersion day for board members, journalists, legislators and regulators to put on scrubs and spend 9 to 12 hours behind the scenes, immersed in the nuances of care delivery so that they could see first-hand the daily work that occurs in the healthcare system and understand operations as deeply and fully as possible.

The program – now in its third year – has improved insights on how to lead, regulate and report on the most complex health care issues facing the nearly 900,000 people who are cared for at Mission Health.

"We realised the obvious when deciding that there was no better way to inform our board members, community and policy makers about the real challenges and opportunities our caregivers and health system face than by simply letting them see for themselves in an unscripted, transparent manner," said co-programme writer, Ronald A. Paulus, MD, President and CEO of Mission Health. "Our Immersion Program has been incredibly successful in leading to greater understanding and producing real change and we believe that it has implications nationally. Programs like this continue to provide new opportunities to provide the highest quality care for our patients and the best work environment for our staff."

"This unprecedented level of access and ability to hear directly from our doctors, nurses and patients is not only eye-opening but also incredibly valuable in enabling our Board to make better, more informed decisions to meet the needs of our communities and caregivers," said Wyatt S. Stevens, Chair, Mission Health Board of Directors.

Mission Health, based in Asheville, North Carolina, is the state's sixth-largest health system and the region's only not-for-profit, independent community hospital system.

A similar programme exists at University Hospital in San Antonio, Texas for executive stakeholders called "Walk in My Shoes." These programmes are examples of innovative approaches to team building available to healthcare.

Source: [PR Newswire](#)

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Published on : Mon, 4 Apr 2016