
Radiologists-administrators must be partners



Radiologists and administrators working together is key to successfully navigate within the current 'lion's arena'- unpredictable, demanding, shifting healthcare ecosystem. In a report published in the [JACR](#), experts show that leadership of a department or organisation, when there is intentional and mindful doctor-administrator partnership results in success from the individual level to the organisation as a whole.

Many organisations, like the **Mayo Clinic**, are leveraging a long tradition of physician and administration leader partnerships, by elevating their individual competence as valuable partners to facilitate the sustainability and continued success of the organisation. **Radiology** department heads and administrative leaders have made collaboration the centre of their practice foundation, valuing respect, excellence, stewardship and teamwork.

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The report highlights how partnerships between doctors and administrator leaders are what make the real difference today in successful healthcare organisations and report that they will be crucial for future leaders. The report explains how these partnerships in the institutional framework guide for successful leadership include four key elements:

- leveraging organizational history
- fostering a culture that holds leaders accountable to desired leadership behaviors
- maintaining a strong connection to core organizational values
- stewardship in a future-focused mindset

By utilising stories and experiences of past leaders, reviewing the past and drawing from the established culture, the leaders of today gain insights and learn how they can individually partner with their colleague in a vital relationship that adapts to ongoing and ever changing needs. The authors present what they have learned from this practice that can be applied to healthcare institutions universally.

The history of partnership

The report explains how leading collaboratively is deeply embedded in the history and culture of [Mayo Clinic](#), beginning with the founding physician and administrator leaders in 1908. Their predecessors emphasised the importance of the “union of forces”, recognising that no one individual possesses all required understanding or skill needed and that there are advantages to working together.

This union of forces continues today through the culture of partnership across three areas—practice, research, and education—and at multiple levels and in various organisational contexts, including across geographic sites, departments, divisions, committees, project teams, triads, dyads, and so on. The innovations and critical outcomes from these partnerships have been extensive, transformational, and lasting and have been a source of resiliency for the organisation during times of rebuilding communities, surviving war, building globally reaching services, and navigating the constant challenges of change. Current institutional leaders continue to model these effective partnerships to lead their departments into the future and to uphold the primary value that the needs of the patient come first.

Leaders embark on a partnership by “jointly leading an effort, initiative or committee. [Within a partnership] the physician brings the perspective of the patient to the decision making process, and the administrator leverages business acumen. Each perspective is required and dependent on the other”. This interdependence on each other is not mutually exclusive for dyads only; any number of leaders may join together with the purpose and intention to partner effectively and successfully.

An institution can foster a culture of partnership by recognising five key factors for success:

1. **shared core values for the organisation, which leaders display in their daily actions**
2. **a common mission and vision serve as guideposts to achieve the ultimate aims for the medical centre**
3. **clear and transparent communication allows the leadership team to build on the strengths of each other and must extend to the medical centre as a whole**
4. **mutual respect serves as a model of how all members of the medical centre should treat each other**
5. **complementary competencies for an overall position of strength**

"No one organizational leader is good at everything that needs to be done . . . and is precisely why organizations deliberately look for two individuals who will complement each other", notes the report.

Creating a successful **partnership** does not happen by accident. Partnerships are valuable when there is a deep sense of self as a contributor to the success of the relationship. Leaders have the "opportunity to learn from others, to serve and listen, to build trust, to hear and respond to feedback, and discover the values of others". Effective leaders align their own goals and priorities with institutional values, specifically the values of respect, teamwork, stewardship, and excellence. Physician-administrator partnerships thrive when leaders work in cooperation, are mindful of values, and rely on their whole selves.

Based on their institutional organisational models and expectations, the authors present that an illustration of partnership has been developed with the patient at the centre of the system. The role of the physician-administrator partnership is first and foremost to view the members as a team, looking out for the needs of the patient today and tomorrow. Surrounding this team are four institutional values imperative to the success of partnership: **respect, excellence, stewardship, and teamwork**.

Each of these values is summarised as:

- **Respect** is the treatment of everyone in our diverse community with dignity, including patients, their families and colleagues.
- **Excellence** refers to delivering the best outcomes and the highest quality service through the dedicated effort of every team member.
- **Stewardship** is sustaining and reinvesting in our mission and extended communities by wisely managing our human, natural, and material resources.
- **Teamwork** is valuing the contributions of all and blending the skills of individual staff members in unsurpassed collaboration.

Partnership between physician-administrator leaders the report concludes, to finding a practical, harmonious balance between medical ideals and philosophies on the one hand and profitable business methods on the other. The physician and administrator must work together as a team with core values including working with respect, excellence, stewardship, and teamwork. Within this framework, the leadership team must act with professionalism and effective leadership that respects the experience of the patient and effectively moves the medical centre toward the complex and unpredictable future.

Sources: [JACR](#), [Mayo Clinic](#)

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