Checklist for Developing and Formalizing the Hospital-Physician Relationship

- ✔ Does the assessment of the current relationship between physicians and hospital staff indicate a need for improvement?

- ✔ Is the organization well-positioned to improve the relationship between staff and physicians?

- ✔ Has the need to develop and formalize a mutual understanding between staff and physicians been clearly communicated to all levels within the organization?

- ✔ Has a core team consisting of formal and informal leaders been established, prepared and assigned roles?

- ✔ Are there fair, transparent and meaningful engagement and communication strategies in place to facilitate success during implementation?

- ✔ Do staff and physicians within all levels of the organization have fair, transparent and meaningful opportunities to participate in the consultation process?

- ✔ Has the relationship between staff and physicians working at the organization been formalized in a way that is effective and meaningful for the staff and physicians at all levels within the organization?

- ✔ Is there evidence to indicate that the communication strategy has been implemented effectively and that all organizational practices and policies and have been updated to support the new relationship?

- ✔ Are there opportunities for staff and physicians to incorporate the mutual understanding into their day-to-day practice?

- ✔ Are there various mechanisms to monitor, evaluate and improve the effectiveness and impact of the formal mutual understanding between staff and physicians?

The full version of the **Guidance for Developing Effective Hospital-Physician Relationships** is available at:
www.oha.com/hpr or www.oma.org/Resources/Pages/default.aspx

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Guidance for Developing an Effective Hospital-Physician Relationship

Quick Reference Summary
September 2015

OHA ONTARIO HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION

OMA ONTARIO MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

OHA ONTARIO HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION

OMA ONTARIO MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

Introduction

The Ontario Hospital Association (OHA) and the Ontario Medical Association (OMA) agree that positive relationships between hospitals and physicians at all levels are critical to high-quality patient care. Their shared objective is to be part of creating a high-performing, integrated and sustainable health care system with the common goal of providing high-quality, effective and efficient patient care. As the demands for change continue to increase due to factors such as health system transformation, funding reform and changing patient expectations, it is critical that hospitals and physicians navigate through the changes as partners with shared goals and expectations.

To achieve this, leaders (includes non-physicians and physicians), must build on current partnerships and relationships to ensure that they have a highly effective working relationship built on mutual trust, understanding and respect. Foundational to this relationship are the hospital's mission, vision and values which are developed by leaders, staff, physicians and the hospital's Board of Directors (Board).

The OHA and OMA recognize that there are various tools and approaches that hospitals and physicians can use to foster effective working relationships, which build upon shared values. While there is no 'right way,' it is important to note that whichever tool or approach is used the value to all is in the collaborative and transparent process that leaders, non-physician and physician staff participate in to arrive at the final framework.

Goals:

- To create alignment and shared purpose among non-physician and physician leaders
- To foster collaboration and transparency
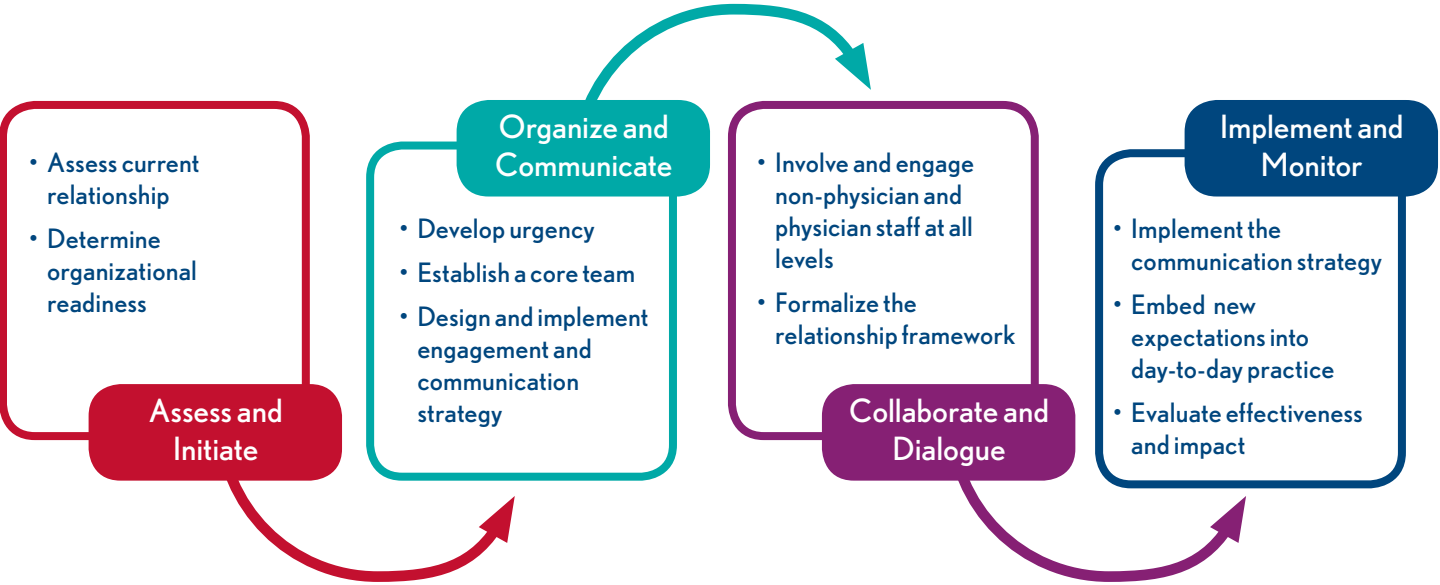- To improve quality, value and patient experience

Guiding Principles:

- Commitment to patient care
- Respect
- Accountability and decision-making
- Leadership
- Communication

The Role of Organizational Culture and Leadership

- Chief Executive Officer
- Board of Directors
- Chair, Medical Advisory Committee
- President, Medical Staff Association

Hospital Boards are responsible for setting the vision, mission and values of the organization and for ensuring continuous improvement in outcomes (i.e., such as quality,, access, patient safety and patient-centeredness). In an environment of continual financial pressure and increasing patient demand, the Board is more likely to succeed when there is a tripartite effort from the Board, hospital management and physician leaders (formal and informal).

Organizational culture plays an important role in sustaining behavior because it is rooted in shared assumptions and beliefs of individuals.

The process of developing and formalizing a mutual understanding among leaders, non-physician and physician staff requires an inclusive process for new learning and adaptive change. All members of the organization will likely require some change in order to leave behind old expectations and move forward together in a new relationship with mutual understanding.

A hospital's Board is ultimately accountable for the success and sustainability of the corporation it governs. As such, the Board has an important role to play in striving to ensure that leaders are creating and promoting an organizational culture that supports an effective working relationship between leaders, non-physician and physician staff at all levels of the organization. As leaders, these individuals are visible champions and should strive to model the desired organizational culture.
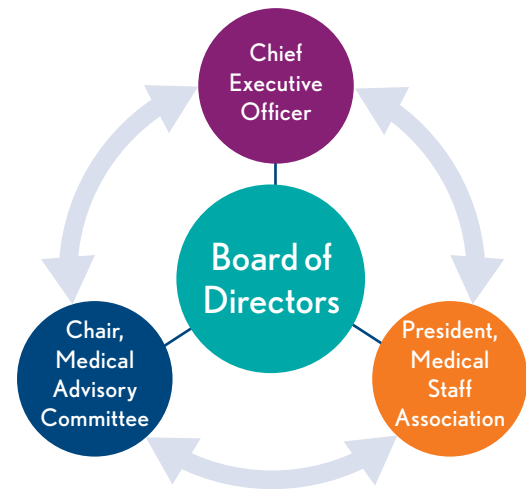
Developing and Formalizing the Hospital-Physician Relationship Framework

The OHA and OMA have developed the following practical approach to provide hospitals and physicians with guidance as they build the foundation for an effective relationship framework.

Assess and Initiate
- Assess current relationship
- Determine organizational readiness

Organize and Communicate
- Develop urgency
- Establish a core team
- Design and implement engagement and communication strategy

Collaborate and Dialogue
- Involve and engage non-physician and physician staff at all levels
- Formalize the relationship framework

Implement and Monitor
- Implement the communication strategy
- Embed new expectations into day-to-day practice
- Evaluate effectiveness and impact

Hospitals and physicians across the province may be at different stages of developing and implementing best practices in creating and improving relationships between the hospital and physicians. Whichever stage an organization is at, this guidance is not meant to replace or override existing policies, such as the Professional Staff By-Law, Hospital Rules and Regulations, and the Code of Conduct. Furthermore, the approach presented should not be viewed as a standalone process, but rather complementary to and integrated into existing organizational initiatives.