

Work Environment NEWS

GULF COAST HEALTH SERVICES STEERING COMMITTEE

APRIL 2004

Practicing Professionalism

The University of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB) in Galveston is an academic health center of considerable size with more than 12,000 employees spread throughout a network of six hospitals and 92 campus- and community-based clinics. Because of its complexity—both physically and in its tripartite mission of research, education and patient care, and the fact that a considerable portion of its patient population is uninsured—UTMB has been particularly vulnerable in recent years to the financial fluctuations that afflict the health care industry.

About seven years ago, when now president Dr. John Stobo came to UTMB, the institution was facing a financial deficit and layoffs for the first time in its over 100-year history. In addition to operating at a financial deficit, Dr. Stobo recognized several other institutional challenges. For example, communication across clinical units was lacking and there was a lack of trust in the administration. In addition, there was a general attitude of entitlement, and professional behavioral was neither expected nor rewarded.

Under Dr. Stobo's direction, the institution has initiated a series of communications and programs centering on professionalism to reinforce a message of accountability to all faculty, staff and students.

The importance of professionalism is promoted through the creation of a professionalism board,



chaired by Dr. Stobo, as well as through a series of lunches with university leaders. Professionalism also has become a key focus of student and employee orientations.

On a broader scale, UTMB has revamped and expanded an existing institutional program, called Principles of Service (POS), to communicate and build consensus around UTMB's core purpose and core values, so that faculty and staff have a shared understanding of the institution's

mission. The program leads participants through exercises and discussions, structured primarily to gain input and to ensure that all employees embrace, promote, and model the principles of professionalism, teamwork and improvement.

More than 10,500 employees have attended POS. Each class is purposely a mix of employees from the academic, business, clinical, and research sections of the university, and employees respond with very positive feedback, saying it had gives them a much different perspective on future planning and on the work they do at UTMB.

Last year, UTMB launched a follow-up program to POS called Values in Professionalism (VIP). The goal of this program is accountability and

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focuses on supervisors. This program brings leaders from the same area together to discuss how they can increase their employee satisfaction scores.

Other institutional programs have been implemented to promote and reward professionalism. One such program is GEM, or Going the Extra Mile program. GEM is a peer recognition program that reinforces professional behavior among staff by rewarding those individuals who model professionalism at UTMB.

The GEM program is open to all employees, students, and volunteers. GEM point cards can be received from anyone who wants to recognize them for going the extra mile in the course of their daily activities. When a person has accumulated three GEM point cards, they may submit them for entry into a semi-annual drawing, where participants' names are drawn to receive prizes.

In addition to promoting the importance of professionalism at all levels of the institution, Dr. Stobo is also committed to increasing communication and raising the level of trust that employees have in their leaders. One way UTMB leadership solicits ideas and perceptions employees have about the institution, its environment, and about the work done is through voluntary, confidential surveys called You Count! The survey's goal is to find out what employees are thinking about the institution and the role they play and to

implement change based on this feedback.

We are pleased to say that the trends have been positive. Participation continues to increase, as do the satisfaction scores. For example, in 2001, when the survey was first rolled out, UTMB's overall employee satisfaction score was at 55%. In 2002, the score rose to 58% and last year UTMB's score increased further to 64%.

Professionalism at UTMB is also measured through You Count! The results of questions that deal with professionalism issues are tracked and there has continued to be a positive trend in how UTMB employees answer these questions. In 2001, UTMB's professionalism score was 60%, with an increase to 63% in 2002 and an increase to 67% in 2003.

In addition to these institutional activities focusing on professionalism, the American Board of Internal Medicine (ABIM) Foundation selected UTMB to participate in a medical professionalism pilot project called Putting the Charter into Practice. Aimed at applying the principles and responsibilities found in the ABIM's landmark International Charter on Medical Professionalism to medical students, UTMB eagerly embraced the challenge. While the other four participating schools applied the charter solely to their medical schools, Dr. Stobo had UTMB apply the charter to the entire institution.

Throughout 2003, a Professionalism Charter Subcommittee, consisting of students, administrative and clinical representatives, worked to tailor a professionalism charter specifically to UTMB. The UTMB Professionalism Charter is now introduced to new students in all four schools on their very first day at the university, and several other changes have also been instituted as a result of both the subcommittee's work and other efforts across campus.

For example, at the leadership level, a 360° performance management assessment tool, which allows co-workers to provide feedback on an individual's level of work effectiveness, was created for the President's Council (UTMB's governing body) that incorporated all of the elements of the charter. This 360° tool is serving as a model for other 360° performance management assessment tools used on UTMB's campus in 2004. In the classroom, professionalism is now a measure in the student evaluation process, and a professionalism web site was created <http://www.utmb.edu/professionalism/> to serve as an information resource. The Professionalism Charter Subcommittee also initiated campus focus groups to help broaden awareness of the UTMB Professionalism Charter. Focus group participants are asked to identify the charter principles and responsibilities that resonate most with them personally.

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GO FOR THE GOLD!

Improving the Work Environment in Hospitals

First Annual Learning Exchange

The 1st Ideal Hospital Work Environment Learning Exchange will be held on Friday, May 14, 2004 at the Houston Community College — Southwest Campus. An anticipated gathering of over 150 health and human resources professionals from the 45 hospitals participating in the Ideal Hospital Work Environment Project will come together to share best practices and network with peers about innovations to improve the work environment.

Like the Olympics in scope and quality, all participants will “bring home the gold” --- excellent ideas for improving their hospitals’ work environments! We know how difficult and time consuming it is to find out the why’s, how’s, and success stories that lead to improving the work environment. That’s why this Learning Exchange was created. You will hear stories of real actions taken by top performers of area hospitals to improve their work environments — actions that range from inexpensive “quickie” ideas to major change efforts. All have been selected by committees of your peers to showcase the best of what is being done today! These individuals are eager to “pass the torch” of what they have learned to others.

Highlights of the 2004 Learning Exchange:

- Nationally-known Expert, Dr. John Stobo, President of The University of Texas Medical Branch, will share with us how he has led the way in introducing professional behavior into the hospital work environment
- Small group, interactive sessions will be offered on five key components of an Ideal Work Environment: Professionalism, Teamwork and Interpersonal Communication, Staff Training and Development, Environmental Factors and Economic Factors – each session highlighting how-to’s for 3 best practices
- Opportunities to exchange information abound with hospital staff who have implemented practices that achieved improved work environment outcomes
- Learning in a fast-paced, uplifting atmosphere
- Fun and door prizes

What the day will look like:

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| 8:00 - 8:30 | Registration, continental breakfast and live entertainment |
| 8:30 - 9:15 | Opening Remarks, Project Overview, and Survey Highlights |
| 9:15 – 10:15 | Two interactive sessions – you choose which components you want to attend:
Professionalism
Teamwork and Interpersonal Communication
Staff Training and Development
Environmental Factors
Economic Factors |
| 10:30 – 11:15 | Dr. John Stobo “Using Professionalism to Drive Institutional Transformation” |
| 11:15 – 12:15 | Two more interactive sessions – you choose which components you want to attend:
Professionalism
Teamwork and Interpersonal Communication
Staff Training and Development
Environmental Factors
Economic Factors |
| 12:30 – 1:30 | Informal, networking lunch |
| 1:30 | Door prizes awarded |

How to Attend:

Invitations for this event will be mailed to your hospital’s primary contact for the Ideal Work Environment Project (typically either your hospital’s chief nursing or HR manager). He or she will be given multiple invitations to share with staff members.

Cost:

The Learning Exchange is offered at no charge to employees of hospitals participating in the Project as one of the many benefits of engaging in the Ideal Hospital work Environment project.

Come and Go for the Gold with us!



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The result of these communications measures and Dr. Stobo's continued commitment to professionalism has resulted in a culture with a shared pride and purpose. To learn more about the work UTMB has been doing in the area of professionalism, please attend Dr. Stobo's presentation on professionalism at the upcoming May 14 Go for the Gold! Learning Exchange at the Houston Community College – Southwest Campus.

Requests for copies of the UTMB Professionalism Charter can be sent to Andrea Strahan at anstraha@utmb.edu. The charter can also be found online at <http://www.utmb.edu/professionalism/activities/charter.htm>



Grant UPDATE

All hospital survey data has been submitted and data analysis has begun. The reports will be completed and distributed to participating hospitals within the next two months.

Of the 91 hospitals invited to participate in the survey, 45 (49%) completed the survey. Our goal was to have at least 30 hospitals participating in Year 1.

Those 45 hospitals account for 71% of the total hospital beds in the region. The 13 Disproportionate Share Hospitals (DSH) that completed the survey account for 73% of the DSH beds in the region. Our goal was that participating hospitals account for 50% of the total hospital beds and 50% of DSH beds in the region in Year 1.

Thank you for participating in this project!

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