Today’s integrated delivery systems call for new governance models

In an environment where cost, quality and performance are transparent, health systems and physicians must embrace new governance models that foster cooperation and shared decision-making. They can no longer compete for precious healthcare dollars. Rather, physicians must be more strategically integrated with hospital models, enhancing patient safety, outcomes and experiences.

To accomplish this, doctors and hospitals must share decision-making responsibilities pertaining to organizational governance and individual physician issues. But that’s not all. Hospitals must also invest in personnel dedicated solely to communicating with individual practices and physicians in the community.

Managing governance after integration

New integrated delivery systems (IDSs) should establish an executive committee that includes administrative and physician leaders who play an active role in leading the organization. The committee must establish organizational goals and monitor the system’s medical group enterprise.

Be aware that bringing physicians into IDSs so the doctors can “get rid of the administrative duties of running a practice” is a sure sign of disaster. Why would the professionals with the most expertise in running a medical practice want to remove themselves from the process? Although the administration at successful health systems should work alongside physicians to minimize administrative headaches and manage the day-to-day responsibilities of running the practice, physicians should still play an active role in leadership, operations and strategic planning.

Along with physician leaders, the committee should include administrative leaders whose expertise includes information technology, operations and finance. These leaders should have the authority to make decisions and represent the hospital.

This article summarizes post from a series originally written for the MGMA In Practice Blog. To read the entire post (including a third post not summarized here), visit mgma.com/blog.