INTRODUCTION

The U.S. health care system is continually adapting to government regulations, shifts in access to health care, growing populations and new standards of care. Health care organizations need strong leaders at all levels to help successfully navigate this increasingly complex and dynamic system—leaders who are able to model, address and drive the following components of care:

- Health care quality & equity
- Population health
- Compliance with new laws and regulations
- Patient Safety
- Operations
- Work environments

Leaders are called to be visionary catalysts who promote a shared goal, are forward-thinking and can execute transformational change. Any clinician, with any job title, who seeks to be a positive influence and model excellent patient care, can be a leader. YOU can be a leader.

THE CASE FOR LEADERSHIP

Substantial evidence exists to support the fact that engaging clinicians in leadership roles can have a significant impact within health care organizations. Clinician leadership can help to:

- Improve patient outcomes
- Decrease clinical operational and capital expenditures
- Improve efficiency
- Increase staff satisfaction

Without leaders to drive change, there will be minimal improvement.

HEALTH CARE LEADERSHIP CHARACTERISTICS

As the health care environment becomes more collaborative and team-based, the competencies and characteristics needed from emerging leaders have also changed.
HEALTH CARE LEADERSHIP CHARACTERISTICS (cont.)

To be a catalyst in directing changes in clinical care, competence in the following areas will be necessary:

**Professionalism:** Maintaining patient centeredness, following evidence-based practice, committed to improving health care quality

**Self-management:** Serving selflessly, achievement orientation/pursuing excellence, emotional intelligence

**Team management:** Relationship management, developing new talent

**Influence and communication:** Communicating effectively, nurturing a Just Culture, advocacy, having challenging conversations, navigating politics, sharing goals and visions

**Systems-based practice:** Understanding systems thinking, implement systems solutions to solve challenges, understand and apply available data to plan and make operational decisions

**Executing toward a vision:** Values-based visioning and strategy, create a positive culture, create sustainable solutions, change management

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### PHYSICIAN LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

As a physician, it is important to understand that people will view you as a leader. While a medical student, you have ample opportunities to gain leadership experience:

- Practice good communication with your team
- Join or develop a program to mentor other students
- Review resources on leadership to envision a solution when you encounter a challenging situation
- Identify leaders who can mentor you
- Approach faculty whose topics/research interest you
- Encourage a systems-based approach to problem-solving

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### QUESTIONS TO ASK:

- Can you recall a situation in which an effective leader proved essential to a positive outcome?
- What skills, behaviors or attitudes do you have that are inherent characteristics of a successful leader?
- What training opportunities might you take advantage of in order to improve your leadership capabilities?
- How might you develop and/or utilize leadership competencies within your active learning or service-learning environment?