

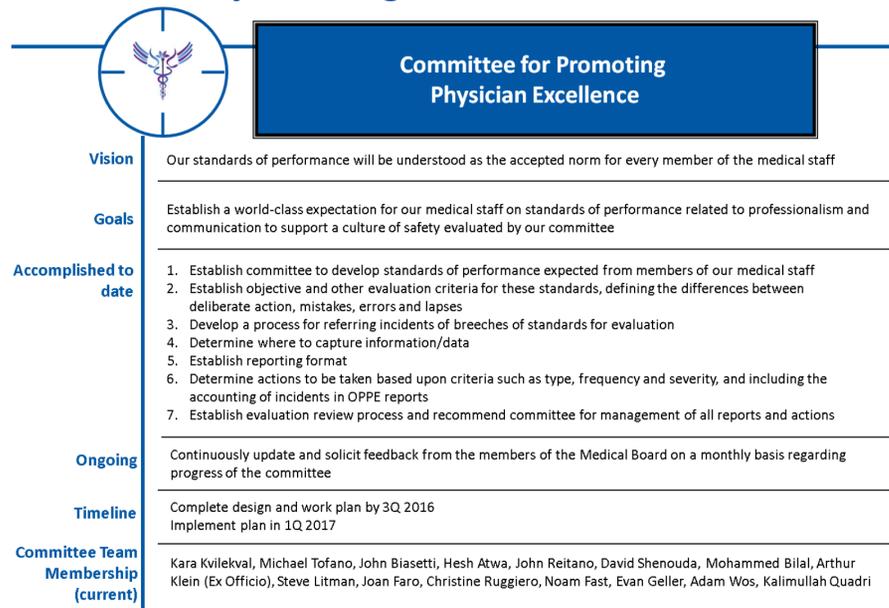
# Engaging Physicians in Safety: Promoting and Sustaining Physician Excellence in Professionalism and Communication

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## Charter & Project Design



## How Our Information Flow Works



## Background

Our Medical Staff Bylaws refer in general terms to the obligations of professional behavior and communication for medical staff members. Specific guidance on standards of performance is not given. Medical Staff leadership recognized the connection between provider behavior and communication style in supporting the goal of zero preventable harm. A new committee was chartered to explore the relationship between behavior and safety outcomes, define a code of conduct and develop a process for ongoing evaluation of, and feedback to, medical staff members. We developed a database for reporting and review to enhance our OPPE assessment of associated core competencies.

## Project Aim

Establish and enforce expectations for our medical staff on respectful professional behavior.

## What We Did

Our **Committee for Promoting Physician Excellence** was launched in the fall of 2015 to engage the Medical Staff in the hospital's work on our culture of safety. As an initial action, members reviewed and discussed background reading on leadership, principles of Just Culture, foundations of High Reliability Organizations and accomplishments of other organizations in defining and promoting excellence. Brainstorming sessions helped define the elements and behaviors believed by our medical staff to represent the highest standards of care and safety. From these sources, a **Medical Staff Code of Conduct and Excellence** was created by the Committee and widely introduced to the organization. The team also developed a written process for gathering, reviewing and acting on reports from staff, documenting either superior performance or concerns in the domains covered by the Code of Conduct and Excellence. A searchable database with active directory security was built by our analytic team to support reporting to the Quality Committee, Medical Executive Committee and Board of Directors. The data is also incorporated into our Medical Staff **Ongoing Professional Practice Evaluations (OPPE)** in the core competencies of Professionalism, Communication, Systems-Based Practice and Practice-Based Learning.

## Committee Outputs

Our committee believes that setting expectations promotes excellence. Many references were used, most of which discussed disruptive behavior. We chose to couch our work in a more positive framework in our Code of Conduct and Excellence.

### Domains of Excellence from our Medical Staff Code of Conduct and Excellence

#### Professionalism

- Our behavior will be professional at all times. We will:**
- Act with integrity
  - Treat patients, families, colleagues, and staff with respect and dignity at all times, even during times of disagreement
  - Demonstrate empathy, always remembering that patients are frightened and vulnerable and that staff may be intimidated
  - Display citizenship, including promoting wellness in ourselves and others

#### Quality & Safety

- We will maintain the highest standards of clinical quality and safety in our practice. We will:**
- Be up to date on medical knowledge and clinical skills
  - Demonstrate compliance with current standards of care
  - Support our colleagues in incorporating best practice guidelines into clinical practice at Mather Hospital
  - Encourage continuous improvement in ourselves and others
  - Accept input from all members of the healthcare team which includes patients, families, nursing, ancillary staff and colleagues to ensure safe and reliable care

#### Communication

- We will always communicate with clarity and respect. We will:**
- Be consistent with information
  - Use language that is understandable by recipient
  - Be mindful of risk of intimidation which may be entirely unintentional. Communication style and position or titles are contributory factors that we must be aware of.
  - Be an active listener
  - Respond to requests in a timely fashion
  - Be available for follow up
  - Answer pages and calls in a timely fashion
  - Use a proactive approach to establish a shared team understanding of patient care goals

#### Team Work

- We will act as team members. We will:**
- Create a positive atmosphere and foster trust to support a culture of safety
  - Be prepared
  - Provide positive reinforcement

#### Leadership

- We will act as team leaders when appropriate. We will:**
- Develop and support a mutually desired vision
  - Educate staff
  - Set clear expectations
  - Practice self-reflection and self-regulation
  - Provide motivation
  - Be available and receptive to the team
  - Be cognizant of team roles and help out when you can

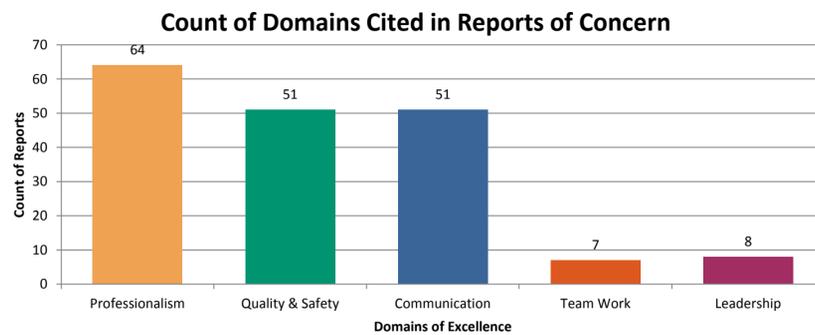
## Keeping Track: What's Been Reviewed?

**237** Reports have been submitted and reviewed since January 1, 2017

**163** Reports were positive

**74** Reports were negative

Most commonly cited domains of concern are communication, professionalism and quality & safety.



## Accomplishments To Date

- Individual physicians with over 5 concern reports have been reviewed by the committee and referred for further remediation beyond counseling. To date, no recurrent incidents and have been reported after this escalated level of review.
- AHRQ survey questions regarding communication openness, teamwork and frequency of events reported have shown improvements.
- Medical Staff members have signed an attestation acknowledging their awareness of the Code of Conduct and Excellence.
- All Committee for Promoting Physician Excellence reports are reviewed during Medical Staff member reappointment and included as elements of the members' OPPE report.

## Next Steps

- Make report submission fully electronic.
- Continue to elevate and revise our Code of Conduct and Excellence to further support the hospital strategic goal of ZERO harm.
- Share our experience with a wider audience regionally and nationally.

## Selected References

- "Managing Disruptive Behavior." *Greeley*. 2015. <http://greeley.com/greeley-resources/managing-disruptive-behavior-balancing-patient-safety-with-the-rights-and-dignity-of-physicians>. Accessed May 22, 2016.
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- Guidebook for Managing Disruptive Physician Behavior*. College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario, April 2008.

## Acknowledgements

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