



# Who Is The Physician Champion?



## The Physician Champion in Performance Improvement

### The Unique Role of a Physician Champion:

A physician will bring a unique perspective to a quality initiative that no one else can. With all of the changes in healthcare and the push toward pay-for-performance at every corner, it is imperative to engage physicians in quality projects.

Physician Champions take on a leadership role on your performance improvement team. They should be in active practice, respected among other clinicians, enthusiastic and willing to participate in change or innovation as needed to improve the care and outcomes of patients. Champions should also be willing to speak up in support of a quality initiative and lead through example. Not every physician is willing to accept the role of Physician Champion nor does every physician possess the unique characteristics to fulfill the important responsibilities to champion a cause. The information listed below is provided to help Performance Improvement Leaders identify the perfect physician they would like to approach to work with them team and to outline some of the talking points to discuss with a potential Physician Champion regarding expectations and responsibilities of the role.

### Traits of a Physician Champion:

The Physician Champion is someone who is:

- Open to change or innovation to improve patient care and outcomes,
- Enthusiastic and able take initiative,
- Respected by peers and has integrity,
- Competent in practice and a role model,
- A team player,
- Easily approachable and communicates well with peers,
- Able to express opinions in a positive, influential manner,
- Creative and thinks “outside the box” for ways to overcome challenges.

## Common Responsibilities of a Physician Champion:

Responsibilities may vary depending upon the project and the level at which the physician is willing/able to participate. Some of the most common expectations for the Physician Champion would be to:

- Serve as a change driver and liaison for the performance improvement initiative, administration and other clinicians.
- Mentor other clinicians and help facilitate support of the project.
- Make a case for the change and lead by example thru incorporation of project changes into practice.
- Advocate for resources to support the project.
- Communicate with other clinicians regarding practice deviations related to the changes and ways to improve.
- Take responsibility for communicating data to physicians and other leaders while advocating for and identifying opportunities for improvement,
- Participate with the performance improvement team areas such as:
  - o assisting with data analysis and interpretation.
  - o communicating with clinicians.
  - o presenting the project PI data and outcomes to clinicians.
  - o reviewing new documents/information.
  - o overcoming project challenges.
  - o providing feedback regarding implementation ideas.
  - o offering ideas for implementation of a project, etc.
- Represent the physician's voice on the performance improvement team.

Physicians are typically very interested in ideas that improve the care and outcomes of their patients. However, barriers to success, such as heavy workload and lack of training in performance improvement just to name a couple cannot be ignored.

Tips for setting up the Physician Champion for success:

- Select a physician who is interested or passionate in the project or the needed change.
- Be sensitive to their workload by being prepared and providing information to them comprehensively and concisely.
- Compensate monetarily if possible.
- Organize meetings around their schedule when possible.
- Be straightforward and clear with expectations regarding the role of Physician Champion in the project, to prevent confusion.
- Foster Team and Leadership support.
- Encourage/facilitate networking among Physician Champions from other facilities.
- Ensure the Physician Champion is involved in important decision-making opportunities for the project.