**The Role and Impact of Healthcare Administrators in Facilitating Change Management Related to Technology**

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**Introduction**

The healthcare facilities have been greatly impacted by the digital and information technologies that include the telemedicine, electronic health records, analytics, and data security among others. Most scholars suggest a multi-stakeholder perspective as the best approach in understanding how the multiple players such as the hospital, its staff, pharmacies, government, regulatory bodies and patients can create an ecosystem that facilitates implementation of a new technology (Kraus et al., 2021). The health care organization leaders are required to be on the forefront to effectively address the change by implementing the different Information Technologies (IT) that can help them reduce waste and increase their profits. The hospital administrators can no longer rely on their traditional role of administration only. They have to adopt the change management strategies that can direct the organization towards IT related changes that can contribute towards attainment of the quality patient care (Lewis et al., 2016). The paper therefore discusses the role and impacts that the healthcare administrators can play for effective change management in the context of technological change.

**Healthcare Administrators as Change Champions**

The literature highlights the utilization of the clinical champions who can be any employees in in health care as facilitators of change and in helping overcome the organizational barriers. The frontline clinicians are presented as the best employees in health facilities in advocating, influencing and implementing change (Wood et al., 2020). This paper however argues that the healthcare administrators can be the best clinical champions that can help a health facility attain its objective of implementing new technologies. This is based on the definition of the clinical champions as any individual in an organization who has the responsibility to advocate for change, act as a motivator, and use their expertise and position in facilitating the new changes (Cranley et al., 2017). It is therefore noticeable that the role that healthcare administrators play especially as being in charge of operations and management makes them champions of change especially when it comes to technological adoptions. For example, the healthcare administrator could play the role of creating awareness through education of other employees, legitimize a particular technology or even help build relationships with the stakeholders. The role of the change champion is to influence others and enable buy-in from other stakeholders and such role is best suited for the health care administrator.

Effective change management entails the act of unfreezing the old behaviors, introducing new behaviors and re-freezing them (Suchman et al., 2011). In the current healthcare work set-up, change is unpredictable as the organization works to meet the rapidly changing environment. The health administrators working as change champions must realize that change is demanding and overwhelming and they have to be ready to challenge the precedent and persevere against the well-established norms, habits and behaviors (Steele Gray et al., 2015). A change champions therefore must take a stance, be clear about what is important, know the values that matters, be pro-active in advancing the plans, and not react to every invitation for change. Leadership skills are essential for the healthcare administrator acting as a change champion, and he/she has to build effective teams, develop new organizational structures and have a shared vision that would require employees and other professionals to authentically make their input. The healthcare administrators as change champions must realize that changes gradually happens and during that time, anxiety and fear are likely to take over both the implementers and the employees. Burnes (2017) accepts trial and error strategy as useful in adopting new technology in the medical set up as it plays a role in lessening the anxieties and the gradual introduction helps other employees to slowly adopt the new changes.A change champion that has clear vision and who monitors the direction of the change will be in the best position to measure the outcomes of the change, modify the change when necessary and keep solving the emerging issues that develops as a result of change.

**Healthcare Administrators as shapers of Collaborative Culture**

Although compassion and collaboration are always emphasized as the key factors to clinical or medical success, most health facilities do not succeed in those dimensions. According to Suchman et al. (2011) a health care facility should be guided by relationship-centered administration whereby the workplace environment creates a room for engagement with and among staff, patients and family. The level of relationship between the health facility workers determines different elements of the organizational performance, quality and safety. The administrators should therefore strive to create a collaborative workplace culture that takes care needs of the employees and patients. Suchman et al. (2011) even affirms that the capacity of the employees to master new technologies depends on the team relationships that have been created. The behind the scene work such as the resource allocation, strategic planning, performance measurements, staff recruitment and development ought to be conducted in a relational way and in a manner that is engaging. Developing a relationship center administration requires great skills in self-awareness, great reflection skills and better listening and communication skills. Creating an organizational culture that fosters respect, accountability and collaboration should be a key role of every administrator as it lays down the foundation for the key changes to happen.

**Healthcare Administrators as a Support System**

The medical professionals are presented as the best team that comes with the most ideal solutions for the patient care but they are the poorest when it comes to implementing such solutions (Igoe, 2023). The medical professionals may lack the necessary skills and time to implement the solutions. The health administrators need to step in and support the professionals such as organizing an ongoing training. Ball et al. (2016) acknowledges that the healthcare technology is changing at a rapid pace thus redefining how patients interact with the physicians. The ever changing technologies and new developments demand that the employees including the doctors to be well-informed of the new changes and even be trained on how to best implement the changes that they find necessary for the health facilities. The ongoing training also helps shape the work environment and employees feel ready to accept the new changes. The Kotters eight step process of leading change is a key strategy of implementing change and should form part of the training manual for the healthcare administrators (Pollack & Pollack, 2014). The eight steps towards an effective change management involves creating a sense of urgency, forming a guiding coalition, creating vision, rallying and effective communication, removing barriers and empowering others, executing and celebrating short terms wins, don’t letting up and implementing a further cultural and institutional change. The person in charge of training should be keen on the processes and relationships and ensure that the team members work together as a unit even after training.

**Challenges of implementing Healthcare Technology**

**Limited Roles of Healthcare Administrators**

Implementation of a comprehensive technology is one of the biggest challenging that health care facility face due to several risks and barriers that impede the process. Change in the context of the information technologies remains to be a necessity due to its several benefits that includes reducing organizational costs, improve quality, increased efficiency and effectiveness and increased patient satisfaction (Kho et al., 2020). Few organizations have managed to successfully implement a technology and there are more failure stories than success stories. According to Berg (2001), most of the failures of the technology implementation are as a result of the myth that technology is best implemented by the Information technology (IT) team. The implementation of the technology such as the information system is a sociotechnical change meaning that is a process of organization development thus the health care administrators should play a crucial role. The healthcare administrators have to be part of the project group that may entail other stakeholders such as the IT department, representatives from the future users, medical practitioners and the healthcare top level management. For example, if a healthcare facility is planning to implement an electronic patient record system, the healthcare administrators as organization developers should identify the key stakeholders that will form part of the project group.

Even as the administrators leads the change process, they need to work closely with the IT professionals, demonstrate better communication and acknowledge the essence of power structures that may inhibit interpersonal relationships (Kanter, 2008). Empowering both the health administrators and IT professional can create a collaborative work environment whereby each party plays their role with minimal conflicts. The whole process should be negotiated; therefore a systematic planning should be in place to ensure that the technology works best in reality and that all needs of the potential users are taken into consideration. It is therefore important for the healthcare administrators to acquire data collection skills such as interviewing or observation to ensure that interdependences are recognized and that the project is fine-tuned to match the context of the organization. Although the literature identifies the importance of involving users in the implementation process to avoid resistance of technology, Berg (2001) warns that they should not be too many. Including the voices of many users may make the project to loose direction as each team may desire that their needs be put into consideration into the new system. A balanced act whereby each department is well represented can avoid the issue of the too many voices and ensure that the technology is robust enough to meet the need of each stakeholder.

**The politics of Power in Healthcare**

The healthcare facility is organized in such a way that the organization recognizes the power of its highly skilled employees who are allowed to make decisions in a professional way. Milella et al. (2021) specifically pinpoints that there exists tension particularly between the physician and medical administrators. The physicians work within particular standards and professional norms that may be outside the organizational structures. Their high level of autonomy due to their experience and long years of training creates a power imbalance between them and the administrators. In such a context, the physicians lead the day to day decision making process (Dickinson et al., 2016) which may hamper the ability of the other professionals such as the healthcare administrators to lead an implementation of a new technology. Most of the times, the administration managers are not involved in the physician clinical decisions therefore the administrator may lack knowledge on the specific needs of the patients even if a technology was to be implemented. Administration employees working in such environment have to negotiate and be consistent with the organization culture and avoid imposing the working standards, rules or programs (Milella et al., 2021). The widespread tendency of the physicians making key decisions is based towards the challenge of the top down model coupled with high level of bureaucracy. The bottom-up model does not however make any things better due to the rigidity that it creates and the resistance towards change by the key personnel such as the physicians (Dickinson et al., 2016). In an organization that has high level of autonomy, it is prudent for the healthcare administrators to work jointly with the physicians when suggesting any change, have well-defined problem and action to implement the changes so that they may receive a buy-in from the physicians.

**Conclusion**

In today’s highly competitive and dynamic environment, healthcare facilities have to adapt to the new changes brought up by technologies. As it stands, implementing the new technologies remains a challenge due to high incidences of failure rates towards adopting new technologies. Traditionally, the implementation of the technological changes in healthcare facilities has been in the domain of the IT experts, doctors and nurses. The healthcare administrators have been identified as the potential personnel that can spearhead successful implementation of new technologies in healthcare organizations. The healthcare administrators can play the role of the change champions, create an atmosphere of collaborative culture through building relationships with other key players and offer support to other employees such as training doctors and other professionals on change management. Even as the healthcare administrators lead change in the organization, they need to understand and navigate their shortcomings such as limited roles and the organizational challenges such as the power imbalance that exist between them and other employees such as physicians.

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