



from Are you an Owner or a Renter?

Physicians are doers. Physicians focus on one-to-one interactions and value autonomy. Physicians do not particularly enjoy meetings and politics, especially when the outcome adds extra burden to their practice. A physician's identity is classically tied to one's profession, not an organization. Physicians pay attention to immediate problems at hand, one patient at a time. Cost of care is a secondary consideration for many.

Hospital administrators are managers, planners, and designers. They focus on group interactions and value system-based procedures. Meetings and politics are what they do. They are organizational advocates and identify with their organization. Administrators deal with immediate problems but pay more attention to long term organizational goals. Cost of care is a primary consideration.

It is up to physician leaders to bridge this gap and promote hospital-physician alignment. Physician leaders are those select physicians with the interest and skills to be part of something bigger. Valued skills include effective negotiation with fellow physicians, administration, and others parties, with the goal being the common good of the community, organization, and individual patients. When recognized, physician leaders can and should be trained to be effective leaders and managers, as well as strategic partners. Physicians make a difference in the lives of others by definition. Physician leaders make this difference on a much larger scale. They must be given the appropriate opportunity to lead, and receive support from the organization and their fellow physician leaders.

Physician leaders share with hospital administrators common mission, vision, and values, and the sense of ownership of the organization, leading the way to shared decision making. Physician leaders are **owners**, not **renters**.

Our healthcare system is going through a period of unprecedented change. As society has become less tolerant to expense and more attentive to quality and safety, shared leadership between physicians and administrators becomes essential. Are you interested in leadership training? Contact your hospital administrators or WV SMA for available venues.

^[1] Adapted in part from: Integrated Leadership for Hospitals and Health Systems: Principles for Success American Hospital Association and American Medical Association, 2015 https://www.ama-assn.org/sites/default/files/media-browser/public/about-ama/ama-aha-integrated-leadership-principles_0.pdf

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