Collaborative Leadership: A Tale of Two CITIs (Clinical IT Innovators)

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Context
Structure and process are critical elements for successful leadership, and for a successful Enterprise implementation of an EHR. Neither was in place for the Epic Go Live at Maine Medical Center, the flagship hospital of MaineHealth, the largest integrated health care delivery system in Northern New England. To address this issue, two new system level leadership positions were created, the Chief Medical Information Officer (CMIO) and Chief Nursing Information Officer (CNIO). The CMIO and CNIO partnered to develop and implement an effective clinical IT governance model, build and strengthen relationships with key operational leaders, and bridged siloed clinical applications to create a high performing team.

Aim
Create a highly engaged and collaborative community of internal staff and external stakeholders through the development and communication of a clear purpose and shared vision for the future, building and strengthening relationships at all levels across IT and MaineHealth’s member organizations, implementing structures and processes to support effective decision making and creating linkages across siloed clinical and business applications.

Strategy For Change
Governance structures implemented included the MaineHealth Nurse and Physician Leadership Committees, Ambulatory and Inpatient Optimization Committees and a Steering Committee for Clinical Informatics, all chaired by operational leaders or active end-users in the system. Physician, administrative and nursing leadership in IT met weekly as a Clinical IT Leadership team to share information, communicate needs and issues and to strategize on how best to reduce barriers to projects and optimization efforts. Collaboration was fostered amongst managers and analysts from across Ambulatory, Home Health, Inpatient and Business applications ensuring the establishment of clear communication processes and a strong sense of community.

Outcomes
• Higher level of stakeholder trust and engagement
• Increased number of clinical standards adopted
• Series of successful implementations
• More satisfied, collaborative IT workforce
• Improved Employee Engagement Scores
• Member organizations more “System” minded
• Increased Sr. leadership and provider engagement

Lessons Learned:
• Change is hard
• Engaged stakeholders make a big difference in outcomes
• Relationships are critical to success
• Requires relationships at all levels – internal and external to IS
• Clear process and structure for bringing people together to make decisions are key
• You can’t communicate enough
• Project Portfolio Management important to help communicate to stakeholders and manage expectations
• You are never done – it is a journey, not a destination!