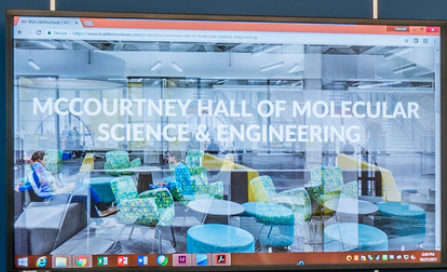


Making a Move

Driving positive culture change
through transition, clinical
operations planning



BSA

MAKING A MOVE

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Transition and clinical operations planning services are vital for healthcare organizations moving to a new facility or making a large change.

With the complex issues involved in such projects, it is beneficial to engage a team whose sole purpose is to focus on supporting the transition, operational functions, and patient care processes. Transition and occupancy planning ensures that staff are prepared to care for patients on day one of the opening of their new facility while enhancing and maintaining the organization's culture.

The transition journey is likely to face obstacles, cultural challenges, and workforce implications. Whenever process or environmental changes are implemented, such as where and how staff communication occurs, cultural shifts can happen. The way staff communicate with each other has a lasting impact on an organization's culture. Well thought out processes and transition planning result in a positive culture of transparency or openness.

Navigating culture changes

Design guiding principles should be clearly defined early and communicated at every stage of the project. In one case, the facility wanted the new culture to reflect their commitment to staff wellness. In response to meeting that mission, the design elements chosen included space for staff to have huddles, support areas, and designated space on campus to do yoga, as well as other wellness initiatives. This incorporated staff wellness needs and life balance into their working environment.

As exciting as it can be for an organization to transition to a new space, it can also be stress inducing to navigate culture change while also performing regular duties. A clearly planned and communicated change management strategy will help ease the transition for workers and leaders alike. Changing location is an unavoidable culture shift but it also presents opportunities to hone best practices and ideal processes in the new space.

Optimizing potential

In many healthcare projects, leaders view transition planning as an optional service. In reality, transition planning is vital to the success of the project.

A prime focus of transition planning is analyzing operational flows and developing future-state flows that will improve efficiencies in the new space. Transition planners can add value by identifying and developing metrics that measure current state and future state outcomes.

Ideally, the transition and clinical operations planning team have already developed future state flows before the project team implements design. This ensures that the final design supports the intended process. It is important to the organization to ensure all stakeholders understand the goals and reasoning behind processes.

ABOVE | Healthcare leaders identify and refine critical flows to ensure new and innovative processes are brought forward to a new space.

BELOW | Evidence supports improved communication with collaborative team areas, where everyone shares unassigned work spaces..



RIGHT | Early development and clear communication of guiding principles at every stage of the project will help ease the transition for workers and leaders, alike.



Ensuring use of best practices, translating intent to vision/goals

Ensuring the use of best practices and translating the intent of evidence-based practice into operational workflows allows all the steps in a process to be visible to the organization. This also assists with cost projections when making decisions regarding process implementation.

On one project, ceiling lifts were incorporated rather than less expensive portable lifts in nearly all the patient rooms in a unit. Although the ceiling lifts had a significantly higher initial cost, there is evidence showing they greatly reduced process steps and employee injury, lowering total lifecycle costs by reducing operational costs that could be incurred by lost productivity or workers' compensation claims.

Minimizing risk

Transition planning is key to minimizing risk. Identification of key department functions, process workflows, paths of travel, patient safety, staff safety, and opportunities to use Lean practices minimizes safety, financial, and operational risks for the project.

For example, current evidence supports improved communication with collaborative team areas, where everyone shares unassigned work spaces, is a design strategy proven to lower risk of medical errors and improve patient outcomes by increasing communication between providers, nurses, and other care team members.

Transition planning leaders evaluate the benefit collaborative team areas may bring to a particular facility during the planning process and help manage the cultural shift that would occur as a result of implementation.

Implementation

Approaching work flows and the future state with fresh eyes and cutting-edge thinking is vital. If staff is reticent or hesitant to embrace change, data-driven examples are valuable to help bring about understanding of the culture change required for success.

Transition and clinical operations planning experts can explain the cost of change orders and cite examples to validate them. After defining the reason change is necessary, it is important to explain how that change can successfully be implemented while supporting staff to demonstrate how to execute new protocols.

Recruitment and Retention

Communication through transition planning was also key in the case of a facility with a high staff turnover rate. It's optimal to open a new hospital with engaged staff, and the best tactic can be to take measures including a robust recruitment and communication plan to improve the morale and retention of existing staff.

In one scenario, the transition team took a holistic approach working with staff who were struggling to adjust to the transition and the additional work involved with the move. This struggle became a potential delay to the opening of the hospital. The planners also identified increasing turnover within staff and turned those concerns into actionable items they could present to the

steering committee, emphasizing how problematic the high turnover rate was to the success and schedule of the project. Leadership took hold of the insight and were quick to respond with a short term as well as a long-term solutions.

Recruitment and retention are not typically hot-button issues for transition planners, but savvy teams are sensitive to all aspects of operations and put each healthcare entity's unique challenges into perspective to facilitate a successful opening. Experienced transition planners can help advocate for the staff and patients by seeing the big picture, making it easier to identify risks in all facets of the project.

Setting expectations

To successfully implement new processes, it is imperative to set the expectation of what will change and be transparent with staff about desired behaviors going forward.

Generating excitement is a key part of the transition. Building tours, progress updates, and unit team building exercises are a way to engage staff in the new building process.

Significant change necessitates high levels of engagement with community and staff. Transition planning is especially challenging when the environment changes substantially, such as a move from a historic building into a new facility. In these cases, it is vital for both staff and the community to understand details and feel included. Involving all stakeholders provides a consistent message about what change is occurring within the organization and presenting the same message consistently to the community and staff.

Executive teams have many competing demands during a design project, and a transition planning team can relieve the burden by helping them think of things they may otherwise overlook or do not know they need --

such as celebrating the history of the old building while generating excitement about the new.

Creating excitement over a new facility was a challenge during a recent healthcare project where a state psychiatric hospital was moving from a 100-year-old historic building to a new building in a new location. Initially, many staff members were confused about the move, not understanding the totality and permanence of the transition, despite seeing pictures of the new hospital. They assumed some patients and staff would remain in the original building. The transition team worked aggressively on a communication plan and gathered employee input, was able to provide leadership a structure for productive employee forums.

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