Creating a culture to help meet the challenges of health care reform

The first and largest pediatric hospital in Southern California, Children’s Hospital Los Angeles (CHLA) regularly earns top honors for the care it delivers to more than 104,000 children and their families each year. It is one of only 13 children’s hospitals to be designated a “Top Hospital” for 2013 by The Leapfrog Group, and is designated as a Magnet Hospital by the American Nurses Credentialing Center – an honor held by only five percent of hospitals nationwide. So, with such an impressive track record, why has the hospital been working on reshaping its culture? Then CEO Rich sought to create an inspiring purpose to guide the academic medical center and build on the strong culture foundation for its people to thrive and navigate changes in the health care landscape.

Goals of the culture shaping

Cordova engaged Senn Delaney to guide a culture-shaping program to add several areas. There was a need to change cultural ways of working together across disciplines and with other health care providers to provide a broader, community-based, and collaborative system for delivering the community-based patient-centered care needed today. There was a need to shift how people work together so that results could be maximized in such areas as delivering value through best quality, service and cost; maximizing effectiveness of service lines; improving acute care and positioning the hospital and culture for the future.

Cordova knew that by purposefully shifting the CHLA culture, the executive team would be better able to fulfill its mission, vision and strategies. “We had the opportunity really to broaden the scope of services that we provided in the past. We also had a number of things we had to change in the way we delivered care in this new facility. So, we embarked on the journey with Senn Delaney to transform the culture,” he said.

Results of the culture shaping

According to Cordova, the culture change has been a success and helped in several ways. “The culture shaping has really transformed the way we do business. The survey results we get back from our employees are constantly improving.” He added: “One of the major initiatives that we’ve embarked on is our automated medical record on the outpatient side. It tremendously affects the way our clinicians treat our patients, and the processes and the flow of work all had to be redesigned. What the culture transformation work did was it gave us the opportunity to be aligned, to have an easier way of getting alignment quicker, and get to the work that has to be done so that we can execute effectively.”

Cordova noted that the hospital also had to shift to a more community-centric approach to care, and that meant changing how it works with community medical providers to better serve patient needs in terms of inpatient, outpatient, home health, prevention and wellness programs. “For the first time, we’re talking to community pediatricians. They are not specialists, and they are working in the communities independently. What we’ve found is that through the work that we’ve been doing with our transformation and our culture, they’re beginning to see us differently. Their access to our specialists is different. Not only have we changed the culture, but we’ve changed our service mentality.”