How to Obtain Contact Hours by Reading This Issue

Instructions: 2.3 contact hours will be awarded for this activity. A contact hour is 60 minutes of instruction. This is a Learner-paced Program. Vindico Medical Education does not require submission of the quiz answers. A contact hour certificate will be awarded 4-6 weeks following receipt of your completed Registration Form, including the Evaluation portion. To obtain contact hours:

1. Read the article: “Education in High-Performing Hospitals: Using the Baldrige Framework to Demonstrate Positive Outcomes,” on pages 299-305, carefully noting the tables and other illustrative materials that are provided to enhance your knowledge and understanding of the content.

2. Read each question and record your answers. After completing all questions, compare your answers to those provided within this issue.

3. Type or print your full name and address and your Social Security number in the spaces provided on the Registration Form. Indicate the total time spent on the activity (reading article and completing quiz). Forms and quizzes cannot be processed if this section is incomplete. All participants are required by the accreditation agency to attest to the time spent completing the activity.

4. Forward the completed Registration Form with your check or money order for $15 made payable to JCEN-CNE. Payment must be in U.S. dollars drawn on a U.S. bank. This activity is valid from July 1, 2011, to June 30, 2013.

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Objectives: After studying the article, “Education in High-Performing Hospitals: Using the Baldrige Framework to Demonstrate Positive Outcomes,” in this issue, the participant will:

1. Identify the core concepts of the Baldrige framework.
2. Describe benefits of using the Baldrige criteria.
3. Define aspects of a learning organization.
4. Identify examples of outcome measures seen in high-performing education departments.
5. Explain the Pareto principle.

Author Disclosure Statement

The authors disclose that they have no significant financial interests in any product or class of products discussed directly or indirectly in this activity, including research support.

Commercial Support Statement

All author(s) and planners have agreed that this activity will be free of bias. There is no commercial company support for this activity. There is no non-commercial support for this activity.

Abstract

Hospital education departments can better align with the strategic direction of the organization, effectively prioritize work processes, and focus on what matters most to the organization when the organization adopts an assessment process known as the Baldrige Health Care Criteria for Performance Excellence. This article describes the Baldrige assessment process, a framework of seven criteria based on a set of core values and concepts that encourage organizations to use an integrated systematic approach to improve organizational performance practices and achieve better outcomes. Examples of high-performing health care organizations that have earned a national Baldrige Award are cited, with examples of how the education departments of these high-performing organizations realigned their education plans to become more proactive and outcome-focused.


The education department has an increasingly important role to play in the overall success of an organization. The proactive work of this department flows directly from the vision and strategic goals of the organization and centers on initiatives that foster organizational learning and strategic priorities and lead directly to innovation and continuous growth. Often, however, the work of an education department is more reactive

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than proactive, driven by the day-to-day obsession with mandatory requirements, new hires, and equipment. How can an education department refocus and align with the strategic direction of the organization and better prioritize its work processes?

**BALDRIGE FRAMEWORK**

Many health care organizations have used an assessment process known as the Baldrige Health Care Criteria for Performance Excellence as a tool for strengthening organizational performance by creating a more customer-focused, data-driven approach to organizational learning. The criteria offer a guide for aligning individual department goals with the strategic direction of the organization, a road map that can lead the way to achieving performance excellence (Kaye & Anderson, 1999).

The Baldrige framework is based on a set of core values and concepts that encourage organizations to use an integrated approach to improve organizational performance practices, capabilities, and results. It is based on the management philosophy of Total Quality Management, which has been adopted by the Joint Commission and many successful health care organizations throughout the United States (Borawski & Brennan, 2008; Perrott, 2002). Total Quality Management established a set of practices to ensure that ongoing improvement takes place. Proponents of this management philosophy claim that the principles of Total Quality Management, applied through the organized, integrated system of Continuous Quality Improvement, can be applied to any type of business or organization and can improve the quality of products and services, reduce costs, create more satisfied customers and employees, and improve financial performance (Baldrige National Quality Program, 2010; Perrott, 2002).

The Baldrige Award criteria, the Criteria for Performance Excellence, create a common language for quality measurement and a framework for performance management and improvement (Baldrige National Quality Program, 2010).

**BALDRIGE HEALTH CARE CRITERIA FOR PERFORMANCE EXCELLENCE FRAMEWORK**

The seven criteria shown in Figure 1 are designed to help organizations enhance their competitiveness by focusing on two goals: (1) delivering ever-improving value to customers and (2) improving overall organizational

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**Figure 1. Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence. [From Baldrige National Quality Program. (2010). *Health care criteria for performance excellence* (p. iv). Gaithersburg, MD: National Institute of Standards and Technology.]**
performance. These criteria offer organizations a cost-effective, system-wide self-assessment, learning, and outcomes-driven leadership process.

Health care organizations that have earned a national Baldrige Award include SSM Health Care (2002), based in St. Louis, Missouri; Baptist Hospital, Inc. (2003), a subsidiary of Baptist Health Care that includes two hospitals in Florida; St. Luke’s Hospital of Kansas City, Missouri (2003); Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Hamilton, New Jersey (2004); Bronson Methodist Hospital, Kalamazoo, Michigan (2005); North Mississippi Medical Center, Tupelo, Mississippi (2006); Sharp Health Care, San Diego, California (2007); Mercy Health System, Janesville, Wisconsin; Poudre Valley Health Care, Fort Collins, Colorado (2008); and AtlantiCare, Egg Harbor Township, New Jersey (2009). Baldrige Award winners are listed at www.baldrige.nist.gov/Award_Recipients.htm.

Culture of Learning

In organizations that have earned the Baldrige Award, the education department plays an essential role in creating a culture of learning within the organization. Organizational and personal learning are core values of the Baldrige framework. Learning organizations are places where it is not enough merely to survive; staff must continually learn how to embrace and seek change. Peter Senge (1990) described a learning organization as a place where people learn to see as system thinkers see and develop their own personal mastery, yet work collaboratively to achieve a shared vision. Senge noted that it is no longer sufficient to have a few key people learning for the organization. Organizations that truly excel in the future will be those that discover how to tap people’s commitment and capacity to learn at all levels (Senge, 1990). This philosophy underlies a core value of the Baldrige criteria—organizational and personal learning. Organizational learning is achieved through research and development; evaluation and improvement cycles; work force, patient, and other stakeholder ideas and input; best practice sharing; benchmarking; and evidence-based practice. Personal learning is achieved through education, training, and developmental opportunities that promote individual
Achieving high levels of organizational performance requires a well-executed approach to both organizational and personal learning. The Baldrige criteria state that learning must be embedded in the way the agency operates. This means that learning:

- Is a regular part of daily work.
- Is practiced at the personal, unit, and organizational levels.
- Results in solving problems at their source (“root cause”).
- Is focused on building and sharing knowledge throughout the organization.
- Is driven by opportunities to effect significant, meaningful change.

Education Plan Aligned With Strategic Goals

In high-performing organizations, education is carefully aligned with all aspects of the strategic plan. At Bronson Methodist Hospital, a 2005 winner, development of the education plans is an integral part of the annual strategic management model (Fig. 2). These plans are redeveloped annually in response to determination of the organization’s needs and strategic goals. Bronson Methodist Hospital changed its educational assessments from a single-focus nursing assessment tool to a wide variety of listening and learning devices, such as an employee opinion survey, chief executive officer/chief nursing officer open office hours, and employee councils. This approach allowed the organization to gather more information to support the development of the entire work force. In 2005, Bronson Methodist Hospital used a new intranet-based listening post monitor system that aggregates all employee input from all assessments to provide more actionable information for the growth of the work force development plan during the strategic planning process. These activities allowed the education department to increase the capabilities of the work force in response to the strategic initiatives of the organization (Bronson Methodist Hospital, 2005).

As seen in step 8 (Fig. 2), the Bronson Methodist Hospital education department clearly develops education plans to support the strategic objectives of the organization. These plans are also based on the information collected from the various listening and learning activities of the organization.
For an organization to commit to a culture of organizational and personal learning, senior leadership must make a commitment to support this learning by providing the necessary educational staff and equipment to support this function. In high-performing organizations, the alignment of education and workforce development is an integral part of the strategic planning process.

The staff performance management system shown in Figure 3 shows a basic process for both larger education plans and the achievement of individual and organizational goals.

At Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Hamilton, a 2004 winner, a similar alignment of education and training with the strategic goals is seen in step 2 (Fig. 4). The important lesson from each of these winners is alignment with the strategic planning process of the institution. Annual education plans are developed based on an educational needs assessment that includes input from:

- The strategic plan.
- Required competencies.
- Performance evaluations.
- Regulatory requirements.
- Incident reports.
- Job design processes.
- New technology and programs.
- Current evidence.

All inputs are analyzed, and priorities are determined based on critical organizational needs. Another important lesson is linking the evaluations with the strategic planning process, and the focus of these learning organizations is the strategic plan.

An example of the education and training process from Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Hamilton is shown in Figure 5.

**FOCUS ON WHAT MATTERS MOST: THE 80/20 RULE**

A major dilemma facing hospital education departments is how to deliver the education and training required to support the attainment of strategic objectives while meeting the increasing mandatory education requirements of regulatory agencies. It is clear that a significant amount of education and training is repetitive from year to year. Educators often spend inordinate amounts of time delivering repetitive mandatory programs in traditional classroom settings when their time could be better spent in the redesign and evaluation of these programs.
Educators might consider applying the Pareto principle, or the 80/20 Rule, in the redesign of their work. The 80/20 Rule means that, in any situation, a few elements (20%) are vital and many (80%) are trivial. Education directors know that 20% of their work (the first 10% and the last 10%) consumes 80% of their time and resources, and following this rule, 20% of the education delivered would then consume 80% of the available time (Reh, 2008). The value of this principle is that it reminds educators to focus their creative energies on the 20% that matters most—the elements that are most strongly aligned with the strategic plan.

Many education departments are turning to technology and other creative delivery methods to assist in meeting education and training requirements. The Baldrige winners strike this balance in a variety of ways.

At Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Hamilton, the annual education plan is designed with input from employees and management. An education team analyzes the input and plans the annual curriculum to incorporate organizational learning into a systematic process of goals, objectives, content, and delivery methods. Education and training programs are delivered in a variety of efficient ways designed to meet employees' learning needs, as seen in Figure 6.

NetLearning (Cengage, 2008), a fully automated web-based educational delivery and tracking system, was implemented in 2003. NetLearning allows Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Hamilton to offer online posteducation activities to meet the mandatory requirements of the Joint Commission, Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, and Occupational Safety and Health Administration. This software allows employees to complete training modules at any time, and much of the mandatory compliance education for environmental safety, for example, is provided via NetLearning. The NetLearning used at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Hamilton also provides tracking and documentation of mandatory education. The education department can then concentrate on the 20% of activities that best match the objectives of the organizational strategic plan.

Mercy Health System, a 2007 winner, and Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Hamilton both use the Kirkpatrick model (1994) to evaluate educational effectiveness at the individual and organizational levels. Training effectiveness is measured at the following four levels: (1) participant reaction to the program; (2) learning that has occurred; (3) transfer of the learning to the job; and (4) organizational effect, or the results of the learning. Both hospitals use personal performance appraisals to measure the effectiveness of training on individual performance. For organizational effect, measures that have been selected as part of the strategic plan are used to evaluate the education that has been delivered.

RESULTS: AN EDUCATION SCORECARD

Like the education itself, the outcomes of the educational activities must be aligned with the strategic plan. This is one area in which education departments have all too often fallen short. How do they prove their value to...
the organization? Many organizations quote that they provided 300 hours of professional education in the last fiscal year, but how has the 300 hours affected the organization? What are the evidenced outcomes of this hard work? Education departments often cite an impressive outcome of 100% compliance with Occupational Safety and Health Administration education to prevent injuries. This is impressive, but what is the value added to the organization, other than to say that everyone is aware of this regulation? Bronson Methodist Hospital developed a target of 100% employee participation in a departmental health and safety review. The goal of this education program was to provide employees with the knowledge necessary to decrease the number of reportable injuries per year. Although the organization met the target of having 100% of employees attend the training, a more rigorous outcome (or value added) can be seen in the declining number of reportable injuries (Graph 1).

AtlantiCare, a 2009 winner, evaluated the effectiveness of learning and development at two levels. At the system level, a review of organizational performance via system-wide scorecards, competency reviews, patient and customer satisfaction, and select human resources and quality indicators shows the effectiveness of the education. At the department level, learning effectiveness is monitored through pre- and posttesting, posttraining focus groups, course evaluations, and achievement of goals. It is this system level of evaluation that shows the “value added” of education to the organization.

Much of the work of education departments occurs at the clinical level, and it is time that educators take credit for many of the clinical outcomes that have become so important in the health care industry. For example, with stroke patient protocols, the clinical educator provides the “just in time” training to focus all patient caregivers on the need to follow the established protocol. At St Luke’s Hospital of Kansas City, a 2003 winner, improvement of clinical outcomes was a major objective of the strategic plan. Clinical education was initiated for a number of key initiatives. Graph 2 shows the results of one clinical initiative.

Graph 2 shows that Saint Luke’s Hospital improved the clinical outcome for patients diagnosed with stroke who received plasminogen activator. The results dramatically exceeded their stated benchmark (national best) in this clinical outcome. The worth and success of this clinical education is partially owned by the clinical educators who assisted the staff with the strategic alignment of this outcome and their role in its achievement.

The demonstrated success in terms of clinical outcomes of the education activities of an organization is what saves many education departments from the often cited philosophy that “education is the first to go” in lean

**key points**

**Baldrige Assessment Process**

1. Demonstrating outcomes is often a challenge for education departments.
2. By aligning education with its strategic plan, the organization can focus education on areas of identified importance.
3. The Baldrige Health Care Criteria for Performance Excellence provides a framework for the organization to continually align all activities with the strategic plan and set outcomes for all areas of the organization.

**REFERENCES**