

IT Governance in Hospitals and Health Systems

Roger Kropf, PhD
and
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CRC Press
Taylor & Francis Group
6000 Broken Sound Parkway NW, Suite 300
Boca Raton, FL 33487-2742

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Dedication

To Marcia and Claudia

Acknowledgments

We want to thank the people who took time out of their busy lives to help us develop case studies for the book:

- Cathy Bruno, Chief Information Officer, Eastern Maine Healthcare Systems, Brewer, Maine
- Jim Burton, Senior Vice President and Chief Information Officer, East Jefferson General Hospital, Metairie, Louisiana
- Deborah Gash, Vice President and Chief Information Officer, Saint Luke's Health System, Kansas City, Missouri

We also want to thank the managers and clinicians at those three organizations for agreeing to be interviewed and sharing their thoughts and experiences on the IT governance process.

And we would like to thank the chief information officers who agreed to be interviewed and gave us valuable insights into the governance process:

- David L. Miller, Vice Chancellor and Chief Information Officer, University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, Little Rock, Arkansas
- Lynn H. Vogel, PhD, Vice President and Chief Information Officer, The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, Texas
- Eric Yablonka, Vice President and Chief Information Officer, University of Chicago Medical Center, Chicago, Illinois



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Foreword

By Joseph R. Swedish, President and CEO, Trinity Health

At Trinity Health, experience has taught us the tremendous value of and need for strong IT governance, having integrated the 20 markets in our national 10-state system into one clinical, financial and operational IT platform over the last 12 years. In *IT Governance in Hospitals and Health Systems*, Roger Kropf and Guy Scalzi take a straightforward and pragmatic approach to IT governance that will benefit many healthcare providers—particularly independent hospitals and smaller regional systems. Many in healthcare will be able to glean useful insights and apply the lessons learned through the examples cited in the book.

When Trinity Health set out in 1999 to create a single nationwide IT platform, our goal was to leverage an integrated system of information management to radically transform care delivery, increase patient safety and improve financial performance. We now know that clear focus is critical when developing an IT system, and a governance committee unquestionably provides the needed direction given the disruptive nature of workflow and the upheaval to the decision process.

As the authors make clear, an IT governance structure must prioritize projects, allocate funding and determine accountability that is often counter to the status quo. There are many other roles that IT governance plays, such as evaluating the performance of logistical support and developing policies for IT security and social media.

Health systems and hospitals should carefully consider the role that IT governance administers and include those elements in a committee charter to ensure authority, purpose of work and continuity. Clarity of expectations and accountability is essential to assure that the committee's work is valued guidance and, if necessary, mandates performance. Through our IT journey at Trinity Health, we discovered that to get the best return on our investment, the governance committee had to be flexible so that it could change course when wrong decisions were made, that not everyone would be happy with the change and that ultimately organizations have to “break glass” to transform the culture. As we have learned, culture transformation is often the elephant in the room and effective controls can tame the behaviors that frequently compromise the go-lives' ability to function as designed.

Roger and Guy have brought forward models for accelerated performance as organizations seek to transform the most complex aspect of their decision-making infrastructure. Indeed, it is my belief that how an organization operates its information management systems is directly correlated to how the organization makes decisions. It is abundantly clear when the ingredients offered to create an efficient and effective governance authority are imbedded in the process, the complex becomes manageable.



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