



Mission Critical: Cultivating Dynamic Emergency Department Leaders

The coronavirus crisis has disrupted health systems in virtually every area, but perhaps nowhere more so than Emergency Departments. As the front door to a hospital, EDs across the country faced the brunt of patients during wave after wave of COVID-19, and healthcare professionals were struggling. AMN Leadership Solutions and its B.E. Smith division play a major role placing Emergency Department leaders, and this Practice Perspective highlights challenges and changes needed to adapt successfully.

WHAT'S CHANGING

Demand for leadership in Emergency Services is incredibly high. Placements in Emergency Services by B.E. Smith increased by more than 40% from 2020 to 2021 and is on track to exceed 2021 placements again this year.

FUELING THE DEMAND

Emergency Services has grown to the second largest in-demand specialty for permanent placements at B.E. Smith, just behind perioperative services. It is also one of the most requested interim specialties, as organizations seek both immediate and long-term solutions. Attributing to this rise in demand is fatigue and burnout from many factors, including increased patient volumes, the risks of treating patients with COVID-19, frequent changes in guidance.

and policies on things like PPE, staffing shortages that create longer work days/higher workloads, as well as the fear of bringing the virus home to their loved ones. Additionally, there is the draw of more lucrative assignments elsewhere and as well as the desire by some to leave the frontline for a safer role.

28%
EXECUTIVES

indicated that they feel like they have to leave their current organization in order to advance.

72%
EXECUTIVES

executives would consider leaving their organization for the right opportunity, i.e., "passive candidate".

AMN Healthcare 2021 Healthcare Trends Survey Report

Concerning findings from the **2021 Healthcare Trends Survey Report** showed that across healthcare, executives rated provider burnout as potentially the most disruptive force hospitals and health systems face in the next three years. In fact, more than one-third of executives surveyed are considering leaving during the next year.

BUILDING BENCH STRENGTH

There is a significant need for leadership experience in EDs. Noted in the same Trends Survey, filling executive vacancies with quality candidates is extremely or very challenging for 46% of respondents and moderately challenging for 36%.

Healthcare professionals by and large are not looking to make lateral moves, unless the opportunity is at a larger or more prestigious institution, if the compensation is significantly higher, or if there is the promise of career building opportunities. With this last point in mind, organizations can differentiate themselves by offering formal and informal mentorship programs for candidates to show their commitment to that individual's growth.

As organizations are seeking candidates with a demonstrated history in building bench strength, as well as experience in succession planning, recruiting, and retention, they must also focus on building these skills with their existing teams. Emphasis should be placed on preparing internal team members for incremental role changes, such as nurse manager to assistant director.

As there is a notable skill gap between the manager and director level, it is imperative that succession planning be a priority, and the development of internal teams accelerates.

Emphasis should be put on skill building and providing opportunities to gain experience, such as taking on additional responsibilities or projects both inside of their department as well as outside to gain exposure to other teams and increase their institutional knowledge.

Offering transparent career pathing and growth opportunities are strong incentives to keep talent at their current employer.



The four attributes model a desire for leading in difficult times through vision/strategy, agility, integrity and communication skills.

TRANSPARENCY IN THE HIRING PROCESS

For organizations to cultivate reputations of being places for leaders to thrive, there must be transparency in the hiring process and in the partnership with a recruiting firm. Freely sharing the challenges of the organization up front will give candidates a clear picture of the role they are considering.

Organizations that try to limit what they share in fear of losing a candidate may only be prolonging the loss once they are in the role and see the full picture that was obscured. Most leaders want a challenge, but to be successful and engaged, a leader must understand the environment and know they can trust the organization.

At the other end of the spectrum, organizations should be bold about sharing their vision for the future

and proud of what they have to offer candidates in terms of culture, opportunities, and their impact within their community. Candidates want to know they are part of an organization that is building a future where they will be able to make a difference.

THE PASSION TO LEAD

The best leaders are passionate about people and have a strong interest in growing the skills of their team members. Emergency Services leaders are not driven by a paycheck. For ED leaders, their profession is a calling, and they are devoted to developing the next generation of leaders.

At AMN Healthcare and B.E. Smith we are consciously recruiting leaders who have the desire to build future leaders. This should be a fundamental component of any organization's hiring criteria.

CONCLUSION

The pandemic has underscored the critical need in Emergency Departments for leadership development and succession planning as well as attracting leaders who have a passion for developing others and are creative problem solvers who can think beyond traditional solutions to today's challenges and competitive landscape.

To learn more visit www.besmith.com
or contact us at leadershipsolutions@amnhealthcare.com.