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The Office of Public Health Support brings you the fifth IHS CEO Brief in our email series designed to help you address the challenge of retaining our professional and clinical staff.

This case study shows how a clinical director can retain staff who are offered long-term training by carefully selecting the individuals who will receive such training and by actively working to support them once they return from training. This case focuses on the best practices of leadership and professional development.

In This Issue

[Case Study](#)

[Best Practices in Action](#)

CASE STUDY

Clinical Director

Location: Large Rural Hospital

Background: The hospital developed a new specialty clinic within the physical therapy department. This semimonthly clinic was coordinated by a physical therapist on staff and was enthusiastically attended by visiting surgeons. As the physical therapist's skills developed over time, her interest and dedication to the program also grew. But to undergo further in-depth training in the specialty area, the physical therapist had to leave her service unit for an extended period of time.

Challenge: The clinical director knew that allowing his employee to participate in long-term training created the risk of losing her to another hospital or clinic. It was possible that once the physical therapist strengthened her skills and realized how valuable those skills were, she might choose to pursue an opportunity outside of IHS. Alternatively, the clinical director also knew that during long-term training, his employee's life situation might change, which could also alter her decision about returning after receiving her training.

Solution: After carefully considering the risks involved in allowing the physical therapist to pursue in-depth training, the clinical director asked her about her commitment to the facility and the area. Because she was a Commissioned Corps officer, her connection to IHS and his facility was strong. The clinical director then made an informal, verbal agreement with her and discussed his hope to retain her.

When the physical therapist returned from her extensive training, the clinical director

provided her with the resources she needed to deliver her new clinical service within the facility, including equipment, staff and financial support. He also gave her the opportunity to expand her services into the surrounding community and encouraged her to pursue the continuing medical education credits she needed to maintain her credentials. His efforts paid off as the specialty clinic - under the physical therapist's leadership - developed into a regional service and a model for similar programs in other service units.

Lesson Learned: To ensure that your staff members develop successful careers, you must be willing and able to provide them with the long-term training they require to remain professionally current. Retaining these staff members then depends on your ability to solidify their commitment to your facility and your support in terms of career development and financial compensation.

BEST PRACTICES IN ACTION

Carefully choose which staff members to whom you offer long-term training, and provide support and additional compensation once they return. This leadership will make a positive impact on your retention efforts

Offering individuals a chance for professional development shows your support for their growth and will help them achieve their career goals. If properly managed, the steps you take may also ensure that your staff will stay within the organization once they reach their objectives.

We recognize that you may have successful retention strategies and your own best practices and we value your input. Send your stories or comments. Add a colleague to the mailing list or update us with changes in your email address. Email us at: [IHS CEO Brief](#).



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