Health Organizations: Theory, Behavior, and Development

Edited by
James A. Johnson, PhD
Many thanks to the talented and tireless authors who contributed to this book and to the publisher, Michael Brown, for encouraging me to do it. As always, I remain grateful to my three children, Allen, Adam, and Elizabeth for the inspiration they provide me everyday, simply by being who they are.
CONTENTS

Foreword ........................................... xiii
Preface ............................................ xv
Contributors ..................................... xvii
About the Editor .................................. xxi

PART I ORGANIZATION THEORY AND FOUNDATIONS

Chapter 1 Introduction ............................ 3
James A. Johnson and Peter C. Olden
Studying Organizations ......................... 4
Beyond the Classroom ......................... 8
References .................................. 8

Chapter 2 Anatomy and Physiology of Theory ...... 9
M. Nicholas Coppola
Introduction ..................................... 9
What Is Theory? ................................ 10
Anatomy of Theory ............................. 13
Physiology of Theory ......................... 18
Chapter Summary .............................. 24
Review/Discussion Questions ................. 24
Learning Activities ............................ 25
References .................................. 26

Chapter 3 Classical Theories of Organization ...... 29
Peter C. Olden and Mark L. Diana
Introduction .................................... 29
Scientific Management ....................... 30
Administrative Principles ..................... 33
Bureaucratic Principles ....................... 36
Human Relations ............................. 39
Administrative Behavior ...................... 41
Chapter Summary ............................ 43
Review/Discussion Questions ................. 44
Learning Activities ............................ 44
References .................................. 44
Chapter 4 Modern Theories of Organization

Mark L. Diana and Peter C. Olden

Introduction ........................................ 47
General Systems Theory .......................... 48
Contingency Theory ............................... 50
Transaction Cost Economics ...................... 51
Resource Dependence Theory .................... 53
Institutional Theory ................................ 55
Population Ecology ................................ 57
Chapter Summary .................................. 59
Review/Discussion Questions ..................... 60
Learning Activities ................................ 60
References ......................................... 60

Chapter 5 Complexity and Postmodern Theory

Reuben R. McDaniel, Jr. and Michele E. Jordan

Introduction ........................................ 63
Shared Notions and Common Focus .............. 66
Characteristics of Complex Adaptive Systems .... 69
Managing Healthcare Organizations as
Postmodernist Complex Adaptive Systems ....... 71
Decision Making and Sensemaking ................ 72
What Does This All Mean? ....................... 77
Chapter Summary .................................. 78
Review/Discussion Questions ..................... 78
Learning Activities ................................ 79
References ......................................... 82

PART II ORGANIZATION BEHAVIOR AND DYNAMICS

Chapter 6 Individual Behavior and Motivation

Mary S. O'Shaughnessey

Introduction ........................................ 87
Theories of Motivation ............................ 88
Motivation in the Work Environment .......... 97
Changes in Motivation ............................ 100
Motivation and Learning .......................... 101
Impact of Age and Cultural Factors on
Motivation and Learning ......................... 102
Motivation and Sports ............................ 103
Chapter Summary .................................. 104
Review/Discussion Questions ..................... 104
Learning Activities ................................ 105
Case Study ......................................... 105
References ......................................... 106
# Contents

Chapter Summary ........................................ 185
Review/Discussion Questions .......................... 190
References ............................................ 190

Chapter 11 Leadership and Transformation .......... 193
Gerald R. Ledlow, M. Nicholas Coppola, and Mark A. Cwiek
Introduction ............................................ 193
Prescription One: The Dynamic Culture Leadership Model .... 194
Prescription Two: The Omnibus Leadership Model ........ 201
Conclusion .............................................. 208
Chapter Summary ...................................... 209
Review/Discussion Questions .......................... 209
References ............................................ 210

Chapter 12 Decision Making and Communication .... 213
Gerald R. Ledlow and James Stephens
Introduction ............................................ 214
Decision Making ........................................ 214
Tools of Decision Making .............................. 221
Communication ........................................ 223
Chapter Summary ...................................... 229
Review/Discussion Questions .......................... 230
Case Study ............................................. 230
References ............................................ 231

Chapter 13 Culture Values and Ethics ................ 233
Rupert M. Evans, Sr.
Introduction ............................................ 233
What Is Corporate Culture? ............................ 234
The Healthcare Setting ................................ 234
How Are Culture and Climate Different? ............. 235
What Is the Theory Behind Culture and Climate? ... 236
Values and Beliefs That Support Organizational Goals ... 238
The Ethics and the Social Responsibility of Management ... 245
Chapter Summary ...................................... 250
Review/Discussion Questions .......................... 250
Learning Activities .................................... 251
References ............................................ 252
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter 14</th>
<th>Stakeholder Dynamics</th>
<th>255</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M. Nicholas Coppola, Dawn Erckenbrack, and Gerald R. Ledlow</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stakeholders (Actors) in Healthcare</td>
<td>256</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Utility of Parity of Healthcare in Stakeholder Dynamics</td>
<td>260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The SARFIT Model</td>
<td>267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parity in Policy and Strategy</td>
<td>268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chapter Summary</td>
<td>269</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Review/Discussion Questions</td>
<td>269</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Learning Activities</td>
<td>269</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Case Study: The Dilemma of the Uninsured in the United States</td>
<td>269</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Case Study: Overburdened Emergency Departments Threatened by the Problem of Uninsured</td>
<td>271</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Case Study: Business Feels the Consequences of the Uninsured Problem</td>
<td>273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>References</td>
<td>275</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter 15</th>
<th>Organizational Dysfunction and Pathology</th>
<th>279</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>David R. Graber</td>
<td>279</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>279</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Healthcare Organizational Groups</td>
<td>281</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Complexity and Work Intensity</td>
<td>282</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ambiguous and Conflicting Cultures</td>
<td>283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Healthcare Management and Organizational Dysfunction</td>
<td>285</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chapter Summary</td>
<td>287</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Review/Discussion Questions</td>
<td>287</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>References</td>
<td>288</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PART III</th>
<th>ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT AND CHANGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 16</td>
<td>Transformational Change and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>James Whitlock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Organizational Development: Framework for Change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Creating the Capacity to Change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chapter Summary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Review Questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>References</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Contents

Chapter 17  Team Building and Development  . . . . . . . . . . . . 311
  Jo-Ann Costa
  Introduction  . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 312
  Types of Teams  . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 312
  The Team Advantage  . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 313
  Benefits of Teams  . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 314
  Team Composition  . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 315
  Team Evolution  . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 316
  Stages of Team Development  . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 318
  Building Team Functionality . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 318
  Ongoing Training = Sustainable Knowledge  . . . . 321
  Problem Solving  . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 321
  Continuous Reinforcement: The Value of the
  Team’s Work  . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 322
  Getting Down to Business  . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 322
  Defining Success  . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 324
  Beyond Metrics  . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 324
  Selling the Solution: Management Buy-In  . . . . . 325
  Back on the Everyday Job  . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 326
  Trends  . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 326
  Chapter Summary  . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 329
  Review/Discussion Questions  . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 329
  Learning Activity  . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 329
  References  . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 330

Chapter 18  Physician Leadership and Development  . . . . . . . 331
  Sudha Xirasagar
  Clinical Performance: The Key to
  Healthcare Reform  . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 331
  Why Physician Leadership Is Needed  . . . . . . . . . 333
  Understanding Physician Behavior  . . . . . . . . . . . 333
  From Clinician to Leader—Essential Changes
  in Mindset  . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 336
  Leadership Development Models  . . . . . . . . . . . . . 337
  Chapter Summary  . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 344
  Review/Discussion Questions  . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 344
  References  . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 345

Chapter 19  Governance and Board Development  . . . . . . . . . . 349
  Dennis G. Erwin and Andrew N. Garman
  Introduction  . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 349
  Board Organization  . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 350
  Board Officers  . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 351
  Board Committees  . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 351
  Board Meeting Format  . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 353
# Contents

- The Relationship Between Senior Management and the Board ........................................... 355
  - Fiduciary Duties ........................................... 355
  - Financial Oversight .................................... 356
  - Operating Oversight .................................. 356
  - Strategic Oversight .................................. 358
  - Oversight of Patient Care and Resource Utilization ...................................................... 360
- Changing Board Models ................................................. 361
- Effective Governance: Cultures and Activities ................................................................. 362
- Board Assessment .................................................. 362
- Board Member Education ............................................. 364
- Current Issues and Controversies ......................................................... 366
- Chapter Summary .................................................. 366
- Review/Discussion Questions ..................................................... 367
- Learning Activity ................................................... 367
- References ........................................................... 369

Chapter 20  Organization Development for Terrorism and Natural Disasters ..................... 371

Ahmed Adu-Oppong, Gerald R. Ledlow, Mark A. Cwiek, James A. Johnson, and M. Nicholas Coppola

- Introduction ................................................. 372
- Significance to Healthcare Leaders .................. 372
- The Threat .................................................... 374
- Business Involvement: What Should Be Done .... 383
- A Preparedness Plan ........................................... 385
- Chapter Summary .................................................. 392
- References ........................................................... 392

Chapter 21  Organization Development and the Future ......................................................... 395

James A. Johnson

- Introduction ...................................................... 395
- Development Practice and Philosophy ................. 396
- Development in a Changing World ..................... 397
- Chapter Summary .................................................. 398
- Review/Discussion Questions .................................. 399
- Learning Activities ................................................ 399
- References ........................................................... 399

Index ............................................................................. 401
During the last ten years in my work, I have had the privilege of visiting numerous healthcare organizations; some expansive healthcare organizations with unlimited resources, others, small community hospitals with limited resources; all have endured significant new demands and unexpected challenges.

The world has witnessed unprecedented events that have affected the foundation of health care. The September 11th terrorist attacks and multiple natural disasters, such as Hurricane Katrina, have impacted different healthcare organizations in ways that we never envisioned. With globalization and the push for universal care in many states, there has been a ripple effect throughout society.

Other new requirements have surfaced for healthcare organizations. Much is known about the impact of medical errors on the patient population. As an effort to develop a body of basic rules of engagement to improve the care provided to the patient population and to guarantee safety to the patients, the National Patient Safety Goals have been instituted to address some of the concern. Only the healthcare organizations with well-developed organization structures have succeeded with its implementation. Others, not so well organized, are still struggling with such tasks.

Finally, much is known about the limited human resources (ex. nurses shortage), the aging healthcare infrastructure, and the struggle organizations go through in an attempt to adjust to various regulations imposed by the agencies that govern the industry. Some organizational behaviorist has described misalignment between human resources and capital resources as the factors that have lead to a less than desirable outcome in health care. Those, with sound and sometimes adaptable organizational structures, who have integrated their human and capital resources by aligning all of their resources, have succeeded in the face of the various stressors we have seen.

Healthcare organization theory has often focused on extending the concepts of business organizations applied to the healthcare field. Much of the knowledge about healthcare organization theory has been an extrapolation of the concepts developed to explain how businesses organize. Until now, there has been no integrated view on healthcare organization theory.

This book comes as a much-needed initiative of Dr. James Allen Johnson and a group of scholars and experts in an attempt fill a void existent in health administration education. It provides an integrated view of Organization Theory; Organization Behavior; and Organization Development.
making it one of the first books on the integration of these three critical interconnected domains.

Integrated knowledge and understanding is needed in health care in order to prepare organizations for an uncertain future. This compendium of knowledge will attract significant attention from the healthcare administration and public health academic communities with its potential to enhance the professional development and education of our future leaders.

Lorenzo Gonzalez, MD
The Joint Commission
This book was written to address a significant need in health administration education. While there are many textbooks available for courses in organizational behavior, there are few that address organization theory and even fewer that discuss organization development in any significant way. Many university professors and instructors prefer to have a text that addresses all three domains. Drawing upon the expertise and experience of colleagues in various disciplines from universities, government, and corporations, I have brought these three interconnected domains together in this book. It is comprised of three sections: Part I Organization Theory; Part II Organization Behavior; and Part III Organization Development; each containing key chapters that address foundations, research, and new directions. A summary of these themes follows:

**Organization Theory:** Health organizations are complex human systems that have evolved over time and continue to do so. There have been many theories drawing from the fields of psychology, sociology, economics, political science, anthropology, and, lately, physics in an attempt to explain the phenomenon of organization. Each of the theories has changed as social science and behavioral research offered new findings and perspectives on human behavior in groups and larger aggregates. The classical theories of organization were primarily mechanistic and relied heavily on the knowledge advanced in the industrial age. Modern organization theory takes more of a contingency approach and accounts for human dynamics. Today, emerging theories draw upon new insights from biology and physics where organizations are seen as systems interconnected with the larger environment. Postmodern theory and our increasing understanding of complexity take us even further.

**Organization Behavior and Dynamics:** By virtue of their distinct care mission, health organizations have unique behavioral qualities. This book examines power, influence, conflict, motivation, group dynamics, values, communication, and leadership in the context of care giving. Additionally, organization dysfunction and stakeholder dynamics is addressed. Health organizations are comprised of highly credentialed professionals who function under considerable scrutiny within many prescribed guidelines. The challenge of managing in this environment is great. The bases of any level of effectiveness come from the understanding of individual, group, and organization behavior.
Organization Change and Development: Lastly, health organizations are not static. The one constant seems to be change. Leaders and managers are tasked to facilitate and manage the change that is inevitable in modern organizations. This can be done in a systematic planned way utilizing approaches found in organization development and team building. This section of the book helps the student and practitioner put to use theories of organization and knowledge of organization behavior in ways that foster change in productive and sustainable ways resulting in better outcomes. Team development, board development, physician development, and organization development and learning are all addressed. Likewise, current challenges such as disaster preparedness, globalization, and sustainability are discussed.

As you read the book and engage in the discussions and exercises recommended in each chapter, it is important to remember the significant responsibility you have as a current or future healthcare manager and leader. You will have a responsibility to yourself, co-workers, the organization, and the individuals and communities you serve. Part of this responsibility can be met by committing to life-long learning and continuously seeking to better understand physical and social phenomena. This includes an understanding of organizations as human created systems. As our insightful colleague, Margaret Wheatley once said, “Rather than thinking of organization as an imposed structure, plan, design, or role, it is clear that in life, organization arises from the interactions and needs of individuals who have decided to come together.” It is in this coming together that purpose manifests and then demonstrates the great potential of health organizations in making the world a better place for all.

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Dr. James Allen Johnson, Jr. is a Professor in the Herbert and Grace Dow College of Health Professions at Central Michigan University. He is also a medical social scientist working in international health development. He has published 10 books and over 100 articles on a wide range of healthcare and management issues. His most recent book is Managing Health Education and Promotion: Leadership for the 21st Century published by Jones and Bartlett of Sudbury, MA. Dr. Johnson is the past Editor of the Journal of Healthcare Management published by the American College of Healthcare Executives and was Senior Editor for the Journal of Management Practice. He is the founding editor of the Carolina Health Policy and Management Review and has been a Special Issue Editor for the Journal of Management Development; the Journal of Health and Human Services Administration; the Organizational Ethics Journal; and the Journal of Health Administration Education. Additionally, he is the Senior Editor of the Praeger series, Community Preparedness, and Co-Editor of the Handbook of Health Administration and Policy. Dr. Johnson's work and travels have taken him to 21 different countries including work with the World Health Organization and organization development consultation with numerous hospitals, government agencies, and health organizations. He has chaired and served on many non-profit boards, most recently the National Diabetes Trust Foundation. Dr. Johnson was previously on the faculty of the Medical University of South Carolina where he served as Chair of the Department of Health Administration and Policy for many years and was the founding director of the Doctor of Health Administration Program. He has also lectured at Oxford University in England; Beijing University in China; the University of Colima in Mexico; the University of Dublin in Ireland; and is an Adjunct Professor at Auburn University Montgomery. His PhD is from Florida State University.