

Insights

Recruiting Physician Champions for Improvement Projects



Having a physician champion on board can be an important

benefit for clinically-based improvement teams. The physician champion plays a crucial role when it comes time to make the case for other physicians to support an improvement idea. They also understand the ins and outs of the processes already in place.

Wondering where to start when finding a physician champion? Here are three tips for successful recruitment:

1. Find someone who has a passion for the topic of your improvement work.

It may be easier to ask someone with an outgoing personality or someone you know well to be your physician champion; however, you'll likely create more work for yourself on the back end. Instead, seek out someone whose personal passion closely aligns with the improvement topic. If they're already invested in the work, you won't need to push them to participate.

For example, if your improvement team wants to make sure all children coming into a clinic receive a [healthy weight plan](#), find a physician who is specifically passionate about addressing obesity.

2. Be honest and realistic about the time commitment.

Doctors are busy and have limited time. It's crucial for the improvement team to think about how the physician champion should participate and where he or she can best add value. Be upfront about the time commitments to avoid future frustrations for the physician champion and the rest of the improvement team.

And, remember to also be realistic in your expectations.

"Make sure the time commitment isn't going to push doctors away. Think one to two hours a week," says Christopher Magryta, MD, a pediatrician at Salisbury Pediatric Associates in Salisbury, NC, and who was a physician champion on Rowan Regional Medical Center's [Best Fed Beginnings](#) team. "I did feel guilty when I couldn't do something for the project, like visiting another center to see what they were doing. It's important to remember there is no dedicated time to do these projects. It's outside the norm of regular practice and family time. I participate because I'm passionate, but it's on my own time."

3. Find an affable and open-minded recruiter.

No one wants to work with someone they don't like. Make sure the person recruiting the physician champion is likeable and excited about the project. Recruiters should be willing to listen openly so the physician can comfortably voice any concerns, and they should be knowledgeable about the work, so they can address whatever questions arise.

Following these three steps helps ensure that you will have an engaged physician champion who will drive your improvement work forward.

Magryta, who worked to help hospitals improve their maternity care practices and obtain Baby-Friendly designation, says becoming a physician champion was easy for him. "I wanted to be there, I wanted to help out. I knew going in that the downstream effects were profoundly life-changing for these children. I saw that as a reason why my time was well spent."

Interested in getting the most out of your improvement project? Take our free e-course, [Quality Improvement 101](#) and learn how to leverage quality improvement fundamentals to drive change and improve health outcomes.