



New Ways of Working in Hospitals

**A step-by-step guide to work and role design changes
to improve patient care delivery
and use hospital staff skills and time more effectively**

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**American Hospital
Association**

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Introduction



Building and keeping a thriving health care workforce is one of the central challenges facing hospitals. As part of its efforts to help its members develop new work models and work environments that enable hospital staff to meet the needs of patients in a safe and satisfying manner, the American Hospital Association (AHA) worked collaboratively on several projects with colleagues from the English National Health Service's (NHS) Changing Workforce Programme, and particularly on issues related to work/role design.

This guide describes a workforce change model that was originally developed by the NHS, and then modified for U.S. audiences as part of a collaborative project with the Maryland Hospital Association as well as through learnings about other work design and change management experiences in the U.S.

The central tenets of both the original NHS workforce change model and the New Ways of Working process are the following:

- This is a work design/job design focused change technique.
- The change process starts with identifying a real patient-care service delivery problem, and then analyzes that problem through a systems diagnosis that examines the “who does what” questions.
- The model has a “bottom up and top down” approach wherein multi-disciplinary staff teams identify and work on ideas for change with explicit executive support and enablement.
- Teams are encouraged to take on multiple, small tests of change, building on their learning and successes, rather than starting with large, difficult-to-manage changes.
- This is a collaborative change process that utilizes multi-disciplinary peer group learning and support to achieve outcomes.
- The process uses human resource techniques to impact quality and productivity, such as job design, job descriptions, and recruitment, making these easy and essential to use.

How to Use This Guide

“New Ways of Working in Hospitals” describes 10 successive steps for making substantive patient care delivery improvements by focusing on work and role changes.

The format of the book and accompanying resources is deceptively simple; “New Ways of Working in Hospitals” is a complex undertaking. Each step entails substantial time, creativity and persistence, and involves working in groups, across disciplines and among various departments to create a demanding, challenging process of change. Accomplishing all 10 steps will take some months of commitment and continuous, focused activity.

For each step, you are provided with:

- A description of what you want to achieve at this step: the outcome
- A set of actions to take and questions to answer to achieve the outcome
- A rich set of tools, checklists, resources and examples to help you at every step along the way

To gain a broad overview of this change process, begin by reading through all 10 steps in this guide, and then review the Resources Table of Contents.

Then, when you are ready to begin, take one step at a time. Thoroughly read through that step’s objective, actions, and questions, as well as the accompanying resources. Each action, question, or resource is a separate task that must be accomplished in that step. Make sure you have thoroughly achieved the objective on which you are focused before moving on to the next step.

Once you start, it is important that you make sure you have allocated adequate time for regular (probably weekly) work on this project, so that you can maintain the momentum for creating change. You will then be positioned to achieve positive, sustainable results.



STEPS

- 1 Identify the key challenge, frame the project, and select the team
- 2 Set the objective
- 3 Diagnose the current problem
- 4 Generate possible solutions
- 5 Incrementally test solutions, focusing on work/role changes
- 6 Describe revisions to the role(s) and uses of time
- 7 Determine related system changes
- 8 Develop a business case
- 9 Make it happen
- 10 Review and sustain

Step 1

IDENTIFY THE KEY CHALLENGE, FRAME THE PROJECT, AND SELECT THE TEAM

+ ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TO HELP YOU

- Project Team Profiles

OUTCOME of This Step

Identification of a broad patient care-related challenge where service delivery might be improved through the breakdown of traditional professional barriers between staff and services, and the introduction of new ways of working. A unit or service delivery area that will be the focus of the change process is then selected, along with an initial project team that includes:

- Executive champion
- Team leader
- 3-4 core team members from the project setting who represent various disciplines/jobs and who are key to further defining and solving this challenge

HOW to Do It

To achieve changes from this work requires more than just good ideas. It requires commitment from clinical and support staff as well as encouragement and facilitation from the executive level. The aim is to create a core team who can achieve change through examination of how to use people's skills. This team then creates an "internal cascade" by achieving changes that they share with others.

TAKE THESE ACTIONS:

- The executive champion identifies broad patient care-related challenges that might be solved by examining and changing how staff work and what they do.
- The executive champion considers which units or service areas are functioning generally well, but could use some improvement in an identified challenge arena.

ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS:

- Who are the individuals from the selected unit/service area that best match the criteria of project leader and core team members (see Project Team Profiles)?

Step 2

SET THE OBJECTIVE

+ ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TO HELP YOU

- Thought Trigger Card
- Tips for Setting Aims

OUTCOME of This Step

A statement about improvements to patient care delivery that are expected to be achieved as a result of any changes made in this project.

EXAMPLES:

- Reduce wait time for telemetry tests.
- Improve patient flow and throughput in the ER.
- Achieve more efficient scheduling in the OR.

HOW to Do It

The next step is to identify the patient care delivery service issues that could be improved. Make the problem specific and small enough to be manageable. If the improvement works, you can build on it elsewhere in the hospital. In this step, it is important to frame the issue in terms of patient care delivery service change – not role change.

TAKE THESE ACTIONS:

- Review patient and staff complaints.
- Review quality-related assessments for problem areas.
- Review patient and staff surveys for problem areas.
- Ask staff and physicians what they think could be improved to enhance patient care delivery (use the Thought Trigger Card).
- Gather the team together to consider the information gathered in the activities above.

ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS:

- What works well within the service and what does not work well?
Example: waiting times, bottlenecks
- What would be different if you had already made the improvement you want to make?
Example: Patients will not wait as long for tests.
- What is the quantified target you want to achieve?
Example: Patients will not wait longer than 2 hours.

Step 3

DIAGNOSE THE CURRENT PROBLEM

+ ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TO HELP YOU

- Problem Mapping Tool: The “Why” and “Who” Analysis
- Problem Mapping Example: Waiting Time at The Purple Tomato Restaurant

OUTCOME of This Step

Development of an explicit list of the causes of the patient service problem you are trying to solve.

HOW to Do It

Just as in a medical situation, look for the cause of the symptoms, not just the symptoms of the problem itself. Look for the causes in order to achieve an effective outcome. Then focus the causes on the “people” components.

TAKE THESE ACTIONS:

- Evaluate processes – how does each patient progress through the system/unit/service – and produce a typical patient flow chart(s).
- Evaluate use of resources – what aspects of staff, finance, equipment, and space are contributing to the problem.
- Evaluate behavior – which staff, physician, patient, and family behaviors are affecting the problem.
- List the key causes of the symptoms you are trying to cure/resolve.

ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS:

Use the Problem Mapping Tool to help your team consider the following:

- What is preventing the achievement of the objective in Step 2?
- What are the symptoms of the problem?
- What are the causes of the symptoms?
- What are the “people” implications of the causes – are workers' skills and time used to the best effect?

Step 4

GENERATE POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

+ ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TO HELP YOU

- Time Spent Journal Tool and Example
- Role Redesign – Four Ways to Reconsider Who Does What/ Examples
- Communications Worksheet

OUTCOME of This Step

A more detailed understanding of how the work is currently being done and by whom, as well as the selection of up to three potential work/role design solutions that might achieve the patient care delivery improvement objective.

HOW to Do It

Having a detailed understanding of how the work is currently being done and by whom will enable you to identify bottlenecks, problems, and duplications, as well as provide baselines against which you can measure the progress or success of future changes. At this step, you need to bring in a larger, multidisciplinary team of stakeholders invested in solving the problem. It is now time to expand the core team to any others who have an interest in brainstorming solutions. In this step, involve as many relevant people as you can to get the best ideas and reduce resistance. Use your creative energies to consider potential role redesign solutions to the problem you are trying to solve.

TAKE THESE ACTIONS:

- Identify all departments, services, and individuals who might have an opinion on the problem/solutions.
 - Request the expanded team to use the Time Spent Journal to record how physicians and staff use their work time.
 - Record sample patient pathways experiences, and note how roles and the way work is done contribute to bottlenecks.
 - Once you have documented the current state of things, invite your expanded team of stakeholders to a brainstorming session to evaluate the information you have collected.
- » Consider who does what – and whether people could take on tasks that others currently do.
 - » Evaluate whether there are needed tasks that no one is currently doing.
 - » Assess whether some tasks could be reassigned or clustered into different combinations.
 - » Think about whether the work could be done at other times.
- Use the resource “Role Redesign – Four Ways to Reconsider Who Does What” to help guide your brainstorming.
 - Make a list of up to three potential and practical work/role design solutions.

Step 4

GENERATE POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS *continued*

ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS:

- In thinking about the patient care delivery problem we want to solve, how exactly are work processes, workloads, and roles contributing to and/or improving the problem?
 - Which issues are key contributors to preventing achievement of the outcome?
 - How can we do things differently?
 - How can we work together more effectively – do we know what each other does, how we can help each other?
- What are the potential changes in the way people work, roles, or work processes that we would like to experiment with changing?
 - How would we know if we have effected a positive or negative change?
 - How can we begin to communicate about the change(s) we are considering?

Step 5

INCREMENTALLY TEST SOLUTIONS, FOCUSING ON WORK/ROLE CHANGES

+ ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TO HELP YOU

- Testing Changes (Institute for Healthcare Improvement)
- PDSA Worksheet for Testing Change (Institute for Healthcare Improvement)
- The Clinician's Black Bag of Quality Improvement Tools (Dartmouth University)
- Tips for Effective Measures (Institute for Healthcare Improvement)

OUTCOME of This Step

Possible solutions that are worked through in discussion with a broad group of stakeholders, and tested in small progressive steps in the workplace. The focus is on work and/or role changes – not systems changes.

HOW to Do It

Take focused, planned action in small steps...not big chunks! It is important to consider the potential concerns and fears of other staff and those involved, and ways to overcome those concerns in the incremental testing stages. Engage affected staff as much as possible in the process. ALWAYS carefully evaluate patient safety implications throughout.

TAKE THESE ACTIONS:

- Break the potential changes down into small steps in order to test them.
- Start to test one small bit of the change.
- In your team, review using your baseline and changed measures, and revise and then test again. When it works, build in the next bit of the change. If it does not work, analyze why, and then refine or abandon it.

ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS:

- Can we break the changes down into small steps in order to test them?
- What change would we expect to see from each small test?
- Did we get the improvement we wanted, or show potential for that improvement?
- If not, how could the change be better achieved?

Step 6

DESCRIBE REVISIONS TO THE ROLE(S) AND USES OF TIME

+ ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TO HELP YOU

- Job Description Checklist (ASHHRA)
- The Job Description: A Blueprint for Success (ASHHRA)
- Finding the Right Person Worksheet

OUTCOME of This Step

Draft revised job descriptions that detail the reassignment of tasks to achieve the desired improvement in service.

HOW to Do It

This next step will help you convert ideas that you have tested for a new or modified role(s) into feasible working reality. It will help you think through the practicalities of officially designing, implementing, and sustaining the new or amended role(s).

TAKE THESE ACTIONS:

- Go to the human resources department and get a copy of a standard job description format to fill in.
- Describe the following for each role that is changing:
 - » Title
 - » What the job does – purpose, detailed tasks (primary, occasional and secondary duties), standards, responsibilities, accountabilities, key outcomes to be achieved by jobholder
 - » Particulars – status, salary, benefits, physical and social environment, conditions of employment, job circumstances
- Be clear about boundaries and how the role works with and impacts other roles. Consider ways to sustain coverage during absences of key players.
- Assess whether the new role holder requires a mentor.
- Be clear about supervision of the role and jobholder to ensure patient safety.

- Consider the new/amended role within existing organizational career structures and opportunities for career enhancement.
- Gather your team members together to discuss the following:
 - » What kind of people and skills do you need for the role(s)?
 - » Where will you recruit them from and how will you attract people to the role(s)?
 - » What training do current and new staff need to fulfill these new ways of working?

ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS:

- Who does what in the new order?
- How will the patient pathway be different?
- Who does this affect – have we thought about the impact on other staff and other parts of the system?
- How will a typical day look?
- What will a typical week look like for this new/amended role?

Step 7

DETERMINE RELATED SYSTEM CHANGES

+ ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TO HELP YOU

- Checking the Systems Issues – Key Questions
- Challenges to the New Role(s)

OUTCOME of This Step

Clarity about the system tools and work protocols necessary to support the new or modified role(s).

HOW to Do It

Roles operate within the context of complex, interrelated systems. In this step, you will consider the practicalities of how the new or amended role(s) impact current processes, protocols, systems, and patient interfaces. You will also identify equipment, space, and resources needed to support the new/modified role(s).

TAKE THESE ACTIONS:

- Be ruthlessly practical and go through each minute of a typical day for the new/amended role(s), identifying changes needed in protocols, processes, equipment to support the new role; space issues, IT support, patient information, and infrastructure implications.
- Consider the impact of the new/amended role(s) from the patient's perspective.

ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS:

- Where is the jobholder physically located?
- In order to do the job, are there requirements for:
 - » Equipment
 - » Resources
 - » Furniture
 - » Supplies
 - » Technology
- Are there processes or protocols that need to be modified to accommodate the new/amended role(s)? Which other departments/staff are affected by these modified processes/protocols?
- How will we ensure that patients are supportive of the new/amended role(s)?
- How will patients be educated about the new/amended role(s)?
- Once the new/amended role(s) are in practice, how can we solicit patient opinions about how the role(s) are working?

Step 8

DEVELOP A BUSINESS CASE

+ ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TO HELP YOU

- Making a Business Case – Key Elements

OUTCOME of This Step

A business plan that describes the intended role and system changes, the steps to be taken, the associated costs, and the benefits to be achieved.

HOW to Do It

Developing a business case allows you to formally communicate and demonstrate the value your proposed changes will bring to the organization as a whole. This is a key step in obtaining the widespread organizational support (including financing) and momentum needed to fully implement and sustain your change.

TAKE THESE ACTIONS:

- Determine the accepted format and protocol for business plans in your organization.
- Create a business plan, making sure to consider the following:
 - » The effect of the change on patient care (directly or indirectly)
 - » How that effect translates into improved patient outcomes
 - » How the plan shows value for the money
 - » Be realistic about set-up costs
 - » How long it will take to repay any investment/set-up costs
 - » Be realistic about ongoing costs
 - » If ongoing costs are higher than current running costs, what is the evidence that this solution brings other benefits

- » Why these benefits are worth having
- » Staff, physician, and patients' response to this proposal
- » Where you will get staff to fulfill these roles in the future
- » Whether savings elsewhere may help fund your change
- » How this role fits into future planned developments
- Make sure that everyone who needs to support this change understands the plan and has input into its development.

ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS:

- Do we have a convincing business plan that makes the case for this change?
- Who should review/approve the business plan?
- Who should present the business plan?

Step 9

MAKE IT HAPPEN

+ ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TO HELP YOU

- **Overcoming Resistance to Change Worksheet**
- **Barriers to Change – Success Factors for Change (PwC/MORI)**
- **Transforming Organizations: Why Firms Fail (Kotter)**
- **Factors Influencing Change Worksheet**

OUTCOME of This Step

Full implementation of the new or modified role(s). To ensure sustainability, the politics of resistance to change are thoroughly considered and managed.

HOW to Do It

It is time to move forward to fully implement the new or amended role(s) by recruiting the appropriate person(s) and finishing the systems, relational and protocol changes you previously identified to support the role(s). In addition, there are a number of change management issues that should be thoroughly considered and worked through in order to ensure that the change is supported for the long term.

TAKE THESE ACTIONS:

- Make sure implementation time is protected.
- Use the documents, resources, and insights gained in Steps 6-8 to permanently recruit the new/modified jobholder(s).
- Set up a structured on-boarding process to ensure appropriate orientation to the new role and ensure that the person(s) are working effectively.
- Evaluate and document how each new/modified role has solved the original patient care problem.
- Again, make sure that safe practice issues are evaluated.
- Continue to get backing from leadership for the changes you are implementing.

ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS:

- Have we thoroughly implemented all the changes that were identified to support the new role(s) in Steps 6-8?
- What pace of change is manageable?
- Have we considered all aspects of successful change management and actively taken the steps to minimize resistance to change and maximize support for change?
- What other actions would help to make this change sustainable?

Step 10

REVIEW AND SUSTAIN

+ ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TO HELP YOU

- **Recipe for Success: Factors for Sustainability**
- **Building the Capacity for Change: A Pathway to Success**

OUTCOME of This Step

Continued achievement of the intended service improvement with changes regularly reviewed for revision and sustainability.

HOW to Do It

This step is ongoing and is undertaken on a regular basis to ensure that the new or amended role is working well and contributes to the intended service improvement.

TAKE THESE ACTIONS:

- Continue to monitor the relevant data on outcomes of the new/modified role(s).
- Continue to review the impact of the role(s) in achieving the intended service delivery change.
- Give the roleholder(s) a chance to comment on how well the role is working – and review the job description regularly.
- Seek staff, physician, and patient opinions on the changes.
- Use communication techniques (see Communications Worksheet).
- Ensure the role(s) can evolve over time as change and need dictate.

ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS:

- Do the measures continue to show progress?
- Are the changes embedded in the system?
- What would you do differently in the future?
- Have you shared your success throughout the organization?
- Who else in the organization could adopt your approach?
- Have you recognized success?