

Long-Term Care Survey Alert

PROFESSIONAL RECRUITMENT: In The Market For A Medical Director? Follow This Often Overlooked Path

Check out these common sense tips from a NH exec.

If you're at a loss for where to find the right medical director, the answer may be closer than you think.

"Facilities searching for a new medical director might look at the physicians who currently [care for their residents] and identify the ones who seem truly interested in and challenged by managing chronic care illness," suggests **Sara Sinclair, RN, CNHA, CEO** of the **Sunshine Terrace Foundation** in Logan, UT.

"Some physicians--even those working in long-term care--are more focused on 'curative' modes, Sinclair notes. "And that's an important [focus] in managing acute illness superimposed on chronic illness," she agrees. "But you can't cure chronic illness. And managing it well can actually lead to fewer acute problems."

Seek nursing input: "Ask the nurses which physicians really seem to enjoy their work, have good rapport with residents and families and come to the facility willingly," Sinclair suggests. Then target those people for the position.

Look for this critical attribute: Of course, not every physician who fits that description will want to take on the medical director role, Sinclair says. "The role requires the physician to be willing to confront fellow physicians who don't respond in a timely manner to residents' needs or staffing concerns," she notes.

Distinguish Between Medical Director, Attending Roles

If your facility contracts with an attending physician to perform the medical director role, it must clearly differentiate between those two positions, emphasizes Sinclair. "A medical director may intervene clinically at times when an attending physician can't be reached or if the attending doesn't follow the facility's policies and procedures," she says. "But that role is different from the one performed by an attending physician responsible for an individual patient."

Roll Out the Welcome Wagon

Once you have a medical director on board, make sure the interdisciplinary team welcomes the person and helps him or her feel like a valued part of the facility's mission and QA and other committees, advises Sinclair. Simple gestures can help. "The person should have a space of his own, including a desk, a computer, phone and office supplies, etc.," she adds.