



# Getting Your Head Together

**T**he importance of physician and operational executive leadership in the healthcare industry is receiving increased recognition. The healthcare industry is under mounting pressure to rapidly change its model of care to improve patient outcomes, reduce the total

cost of care with increasing provider-side risk, and meet the challenges of the available workforce and systemic burnout. Rapidly evolving (almost hypnotically attractive) but largely unproven innovation, technological advances, and new artificial intelligence (AI) opportunities complicate the landscape.

It has become more critical than ever for healthcare organizations to have strong leaders who can navigate these changes effectively. In light of the increasing emphasis on value-based care and population health management, the role of physician and senior medical administrator leaders has become even more significant. These leaders are responsible for the development and implementation of effective strategies to improve patient outcomes, reduce costs, and enhance the overall efficiency of healthcare delivery systems.

To rise to these challenges, physician and operational executive leaders must possess not only the clinical expertise required to understand complex medical issues, but

*Privia Health shows that effective physician leadership can be built to last*

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also the management skills needed to guide and inspire talent in providing high-quality, patient-centered care. Moreover, healthcare leaders must ensure that their teams stay informed of industry trends such as the growing use of telemedicine, AI, and data analytics. Healthcare organizations that keep up with medical industry trends will be better equipped to harness the potential of innovative technologies to improve patient care and reduce the burden on healthcare professionals through the thoughtful automation of tasks.

A healthcare leader's commitment to fostering a culture of collaboration, communication, and continuous learning within their organization is essential for creating an effective, supportive, and inclusive environment in which healthcare professionals can work together to overcome challenges and achieve common goals. Of course, a medical leader's ability to balance the demands of clinical practice and administrative responsibilities, while also supporting and inspiring teams

of medical professionals, is no easy ask. To achieve these goals, most organizations require leadership development in modern methods of management to equip their leaders with the necessary tools for success.

## Privia Health's Proven Path to Success

Privia Health is one healthcare organization that has made tremendous strides. With nearly 1,000 employees and more than 3,700 physician and provider partners caring for patients in more than 970 locations across the U.S., Privia is transforming healthcare for thousands of Americans through better leadership, translating to superior care.

In 2022, Privia partnered with the Center for Human Capital Innovation (CHCI) to design and launch its Clinical Leadership Program (CLP). The CLP is designed to provide the skills, resources, and education to Privia's clinical leaders and the next generation of clinical leaders to effectively lead and empower providers to transform and improve healthcare.

Over the course of 12 months, 24 physician leaders took part in five two-day, in-person workshops, followed by a capstone session. In the months between sessions, Privia organized group calls to give participants an opportunity to discuss how they were applying what they learned outside of the structured in-person sessions. Despite intense professional demands on the participants, Privia experienced an overall participation rate greater than 96%, indicating high engagement with the content and physician confidence in its value. Indeed, over the course of the year, as well as in the post-program evaluation, all 24 participants agreed that they were engaged in the content of all modules. The CLP in-person sessions covered:

- 1. Understanding resilience and tenacity** to keep performing even in the face of adversity. Participants learned how to develop "grit" in themselves and in their teams. Comparing their responses before and after the module, all 24 participants agreed or strongly agreed that they could help others develop grit.
- 2. Assessing engagement and inspiring others** when engagement is lacking. Participants learned how to assess team engagement as an important early warning sign and also to determine when teams are not putting their best effort into the job. Of all participants, 23 felt better equipped to assess their team's engagement.
- 3. Learning how to communicate effectively to get better results.** Participants discussed how to incorporate emotional intelligence, frame communications well, and achieve desired results with coaching. A total of 16 participants felt better equipped to use emotional intelligence in communication.
- 4. Building accountability and being driven by desired outcomes.** Leaders discussed the importance of granting autonomy and the sense of empowerment that follows. All

24 participants felt better equipped to use relationships to build accountability in their teams for better outcomes.

- 5. Using a strategic mindset.** Participants discussed the leader's responsibility to think strategically about the future of their operations and to apply that thinking specifically to the healthcare environment. All participants felt better equipped to use strategic thinking tools and processes to handle emerging healthcare scenarios.



Throughout the program, Privia incorporated a variety of styles to engage participants and make the content memorable. These styles included peer-to-peer discussions; live demonstrations for coaching; videos; case studies and scenarios; numerous group exercises; and multiple types of after-hours reading and viewing materials for participants.

Importantly, the in-person sessions went beyond imparting knowledge; Privia fostered personal relationships among participants. Participants took advantage of this unique opportunity to connect on a personal level across all six markets represented in the program, further enhancing the overall learning experience.

In addition, the fundamental structure of the Privia model, built upon the triad of private practice, health system, and payer partnerships, accentuates the critical role of intermarket connectivity. The effective engagement and interaction of these diverse markets is not merely a byproduct of the program, but a key feature in developing a scalable, sustainable model of care. This interconnectedness is central to Privia's vision, and the program effectively imbued its participants with this ethos.

In evaluating the effectiveness of the program, Privia used the Kirkpatrick 4-Level Learning Assessment methodology.<sup>1</sup> Beyond assessing participant satisfaction with the program (Level 1) and learning gains (Level 2), Privia evaluated the application of on-the-job learning.

Participants said the following about their learning:

- ▶ "I will have conversations with persons I report to, and who report to me about engagement and implement plans to improve it."
- ▶ "I will engage subordinate by subordinate, one at a time, and figure out where they are and how I can get them a little more engaged."
- ▶ "I am trying to put myself in others' shoes to help be a more effective leader."
- ▶ "I really felt this brought a lot of what we had been doing into clarity. I'm feeling more comfortable with the group and with the abilities and skills that I bring to this group."
- ▶ "(The CLP) was more impactful in many ways than my MBA was."

Among Privia's main aims for the CLP was to ensure that participants would apply what they learned. Based on the post-CLP evaluation, that is precisely what happened: 91% of participants said the CLP has already impacted their individual performance, 97% have experienced positive impacts on their professional relationships, and 96% have seen improvement in their leadership overall.

Privia has discovered that full measurement of Kirkpatrick Level 3 (impact of on-the-job learning) can be challenging

because of the time it takes for certain situations to arise in which participants can use some of their learning in a natural setting. However, without exception, participants said they felt confident they would be able to apply learning from the entire CLP when needed. Indeed, as evidenced in the testimonials, several participants have already used their learning to address on-the-job situations and achieve improved outcomes. These gains translate into real results in their practice. As time goes by, Privia expects its physician leaders will have more opportunity to apply their learning.

Ultimately, Privia intends to measure Kirkpatrick Level 4 outcomes, which assess the impact of learning on business results. These results include improved profits and patient satisfaction. However, it normally takes several months or even more than a year for improvements such as these to be measurable. In this case, 11 CLP participants have already been able to measure increased patient satisfaction since beginning the program, and six have seen an increased Net Promoter Score (NPS). Moreover, 21 of 24 participants have experienced increased revenue at their practice, with eight seeing revenue increase by 10% or greater. Of course, not all business gains can be attributed solely to the CLP, but Privia is confident that the program has more than paid for itself already.

## The Needs of an Ever-Evolving Industry

The importance of physician and senior medical administrator leadership in the ever-evolving healthcare industry cannot be overstated.

By investing in leadership development and fostering a culture of employee engagement and collaboration, healthcare organizations can navigate complex challenges, capitalize on innovative technologies, and ultimately deliver better care for patients. Organizations like Privia Health are leading the way in transforming healthcare by investing in leadership development programs that equip medical professionals with the tools and skills necessary for success.

The overwhelmingly positive outcomes of Privia Health's CLP demonstrate the value of such initiatives in enhancing individual performance, professional relationships, and leadership abilities. Privia Health's success underscores the crucial role that effective leadership plays in transforming healthcare for the better, ensuring a brighter future for patients, providers, and the industry as a whole. [GRJ](#)

## Reference

1. Ardent Learning. 2020. What is the Kirkpatrick Model? Learn the 4 Levels of Evaluation. Ardent Learning. Available at [ardentlearning.com/blog/what-is-the-kirkpatrick-model](https://ardentlearning.com/blog/what-is-the-kirkpatrick-model).

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