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EAHM Collaborate to Develop International Leadership and Management Competencies

Building on the WHO strategic objective to develop managerial competencies, the International Hospital Federation (IHF) proposed an international approach to developing core leadership and managerial competencies for healthcare managers, in partnership with the following organisations:

- Pan American Health Organisation (PAHO)
- American College of Healthcare Executives (ACHE)
- European Association of Hospital Managers (EAHM)
- Jamaica Association of Health Service Executives (JAHSE)
- Taiwan College of Healthcare Executives
- Canadian College of Health Leaders
- Australasian College of Health Service Management
- Management Sciences for Health (MSH)
- National Health System Leadership programme (NHS/IHM)

A two-day workshop took place on 29- 30 January 2013 in PAHO headquarters in Washington D.C with 14 delegates from the above organisations participating. Ms. Lucy Nugent, member of the EAHM Scientific Subcommittee and Honorary Secretary of the Health Management Institute Ireland attended on behalf of the European association.

The objectives agreed were:

1. To develop a charter outlining purpose and intent of collaborative group.
2. To reach minimal agreement on the core competencies necessary for health service executives/managers.
3. To develop a framework – including stages of development (from novice to expert) to assess “practice in the real world”.
4. Assessment process – how and by whom should competencies be assessed.
5. What should the respective role of each association be?

A review of a selection of competency tools currently in use was undertaken and discussion took place regarding the ACHE, MSH, Canadian LEADS and the Australian LEADS (adapted from the Canadian framework) and NHS frameworks. Agreement was reached on the core competencies in the following priority:

1. Leadership;
2. Professional and Social Responsibility;
3. Knowledge of Health and the Healthcare Environment;
4. Communications and Relationship Management; and
5. Business Skills and Knowledge.

While it recognised that base training/education on core competencies is essential to develop “knowledge ability” and skill, there needs to be a period of experiential learning before assessment takes place e.g. ACHE requires a manager to be working for at least two years before being assessed. The issue of validation of any tool requires further consideration, as any existing evaluation of tools appears to be largely empirical. There may be a need to define and potentially expand the competency framework for each country but a core subset would be agreed with possible mutual recognition.

Discussions took place on whether these competencies could be WHO approved but this takes a considerable length of time (2-5 years) so it was agreed to establish an IHF chapter (i.e. a thematic group working on its own issue or agenda) under which this collaborative work can progress (IHF has a memorandum of understanding with WHO and is well placed to subsequently progress with WHO).

Next steps

The next steps in this collaborative process include:

- Web based project site (using Basecamp software) to be established for online discussion and uploading of draft documents and reference material (essential to manage the logistics of geographical spread of participants).
- Terms of Reference for Chapter to be drafted and circulated.
- MSH/PAHO to identify organisations/ associations to represent Africa.
- Subgroups established to work on principles/charter, competency document, Oslo conference session (90 minute programme slot)

- available to give examples of competency frameworks and get feedback on consultation document).
- Next meeting agreed to take place at the IHF conference in Oslo June 2013.

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