

Chapter 1 Challenge

Brisland Hospital Organizational Culture

In summary: “Autocratic with a Touch of Compassion”

The culture of Brisland Hospital is autocratic. Doctors provide direct guidance to nurses and other support staff. Decision-making is very hierarchical: what the senior managers decide is typically what will occur. However, the doctors are outspoken and will push back against decisions they believe will degrade patient care or diminish their authority with patient care or staff management.

The expectation of all hospital staff is that patient care comes first. That expectation can lead to financial pressures when the care provided will not be fully paid for by insurance companies. Pursuing patients for past due amounts is time-intensive and emotionally trying for the hospital’s administrative staff.

Senior managers exhibit a “silo mentality.” They make decisions in the best interest of their responsibilities within the hospital, rarely conferring with their senior management peers. Dr. Olsen, the COO, will intervene and force the senior leaders to work together only when she believes significant benefits may result, or significant issues will arise from a lack of communication.

In general, hospital staff are cared for reasonably well. They are overworked, due to a deep-seated expectation that compassion be shown to patients. The hospital has a reputation for being friendly with patients and their families. Staff see the more demanding side of the hospital culture. However, in times of need or strife, hospital management will show significant compassion for their staff. Some say that compassion needs to be shown before staff get to the breaking point, but acknowledge it is provided abundantly when significant needs arise.

Brisland Hospital Organizational Structure

Dr. Carla Olsen, as the project sponsor and the hospital’s Chief Operating Officer (COO), has significant authority and influence.

Dr. Olsen is very busy. She manages Physician and Patient Services. Hospital facilities are managed by Nicholas Anderson, the VP of General Services. The purchase and management of the hospital’s technical equipment and staffing are managed by Maria Diaz, the Financial Controller. The VP and Financial Controller are Dr. Olsen’s management peers (see the organization chart for Brisland Hospital).