National Center for Healthcare Leadership

Health Leadership Competency Model 3.0

updated, career-spanning
competency model
for health sector leaders

NC~HL
National Center for Healthcare Leadership

Executive Summary

The National Center for Healthcare Leadership (NCHL) is pleased to provide you with a revised and revalidated version of our signature interprofessional Health Leadership Competency Model. This new version 3.0 represents the work and input of hundreds of healthcare leaders who volunteered their time to participate in interviews, focus groups, and survey responses as part of the revision and validation process.

The organizing framework for the model is displayed in Figure 1. The revised model is organized around four "action" domains and three "enabling" domains, which were derived from the current state-of-the-science in leadership development and performance research.

The "action" domains contain competencies relevant to the direct work of leaders on the job. These include *Execution, Relations,* and *Transformation,* which parallel domains from the 2.1 model. *Boundary Spanning* was added to incorporate recent research in applied settings underscoring the critical importance of leaders' management interdepartmental and interorganizational relationships[2].

The "enabling" domains involve core professional knowledge and self-awareness competencies that strengthen the effectiveness of the "action" domains. These include: *Health System Awareness & Business Literacy, Self-Awareness & Self-Development,* and *Values.* These domains represent the leader in the context of their preparation and development to effectively lead in their organization.

Collectively the model includes 28 core competencies, each with accompanying behavioral descriptions at multiple levels of proficiency. The domain structure is designed to provide a user-friendly guide that can help practitioners first set high-level development priorities, and then select specific competencies to focus on to strengthen their capabilities within that domain.

If your organization is interested in learning more about Health Leadership Competency Model 3.0, please contact **info@nchl.org.**

FIGURE 1 | Health Leadership Competency Model 3.0
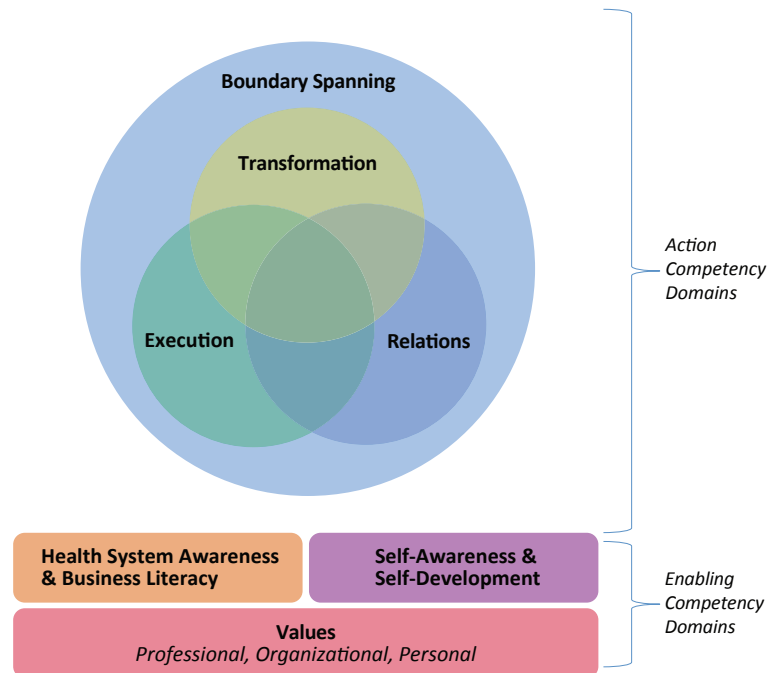
[1]

(1) *Calhoun, Judith, et al, (2008). Development of an Interprofessional Competency Model for Healthcare Leadership.* Journal of Healthcare Management. *53 (6), 375-389.*

(2) *Yukl, Gary. (2012). Effective Leadership Behavior: What We Know and What Questions Need More Attention.* Academy of Management Perspectives. *26 (4), 66-85.*

Introduction

Competency models provide an important cornerstone for designing strategically aligned learning programs. By specifying a "language of performance," they help learners and mentors improve the quality of goal-setting, feedback, and identification of high-value learning activities that can accelerate leadership development. For more than a decade, NCHL has maintained an interprofessional leadership competency model on behalf of the health sector to help support leadership development activities in practice and academic settings of all kinds.

In 2017-2018, NCHL embarked on a substantial revision and revalidation of its core model. With support from faculty and staff of the HSM Leadership Center at Rush University in Chicago, NCHL completed a four-phase process to ensure relevance of the revised model to high-performing leaders today, as well as the changing nature of leadership roles that are anticipated for the decade to come.

The first phase of this process involved a systematic scan of published future scenario assessments for the year 2030, from a breadth of US and international sources from within and outside of healthcare. Trends identified from this scan were then vetted with focus groups of healthcare executives involved in leadership development in a variety of settings.

Next, in-depth behavioral event interviews were conducted with paired-sample leaders representing different organizational and performance levels, and the results were crosswalked with the current NCHL Health Leadership Competency Model 2.1. Current research on leadership development was then reviewed to develop an evidence-based domain framework for the revised model. Finally, the revised model was distributed via electronic survey to a broader sample of health leaders to establish content validity and generalizability.

As competency-based education, training, and professional development have evolved and progressed over the years, their use is critical to help respond to:

- Ever-changing challenges of the 21st century
- Ongoing changes in practice environments and requirements
- Development of standards for best practices
- Interdisciplinary communications and interactions
- Peer and self-assessments of performance
- Communication across institutions, departments, service lines, and community-based partnerships
- Long-term planning for human capital development and management as a key organizational asset
- Career growth across health professions and career stages
- Development of accreditation standards and criteria
- Planning of educational and professional development programs across settings — classrooms, workplace, and distance-based formats

A health leadership model adds significant value to the field of management and clinical practice, and to faculty. While outstanding health leaders have a lot in common with and demonstrate the behaviors of the best leaders of the top-performing organizations worldwide, they do so in an industry and environment that call for a higher level of both competence and professional values, given the specific context in which healthcare is provided, where the "end consumer" is ultimately all people.

Health is a mission- and values-driven industry that is extraordinarily complex and, more than other sector, requires building consensus among independent constituencies, many of whom have broad social and political influence and impact.

Leaders who have an impact must exercise influence and consensus- and coalition-building competencies at higher levels than their counterparts in other sectors. Finally, health leaders are especially challenged to create work climates that motivate high-quality, patient-centered care and retain high-demand talent in a very competitive marketplace.

The NCHL Health Leadership Competency Model 3.0 reflects benchmarking against the best available evidence and thought leadership outside of health, adapted to them to the unique health environment. It provides a standard of leadership excellence, and translates it for improving professional development, organizational performance, health management education, and, ultimately, the health of the population.

About the Health Leadership Competency Model 3.0

The Health Leadership Competency Model 3.0 is comprised of seven domains containing four "action" domains and three "enabling" domains.

The Action Competency Domains describe leaders in the context of doing their work. These include:

- Execution
- Relations
- Transformation
- Boundary Spanning

The Enabling Competency Domains describe preparation and development activities leaders need in order to effectively lead in the context of their preparation and development to effectively lead in their organization. These include:

- Health System Awareness & Business Literacy
- Self-Awareness & Self-Development
- Values

Competencies under each domain are shown in Table 1. The definitions for each domain and the related competencies and competency levels are provided in the following pages.

TABLE 1 | NCHL Competency Domains

ACTION DOMAINS				ENABLING DOMAINS		
BOUNDARY SPANNING	**EXECUTION**	**RELATIONS**	**TRANSFORMATION**	**VALUES**	**HEALTH SYSTEM AWARENESS & BUSINESS LITERACY**	**SELF-AWARENESS & SELF-DEVELOPMENT**
• Community Collaboration • Organizational Awareness • Relationship & Network Development	• Accountability • Achievement Orientation • Analytical Thinking • Communication Skills 1 – Writing • Communication Skills 2 – Speaking & Facilitating • Initiative • Performance Measurement • Process & Quality Improvement • Project Management	• Collaboration • Impact & Influence • Interpersonal Understanding • Talent Development • Team Leadership	• Change Leadership • Information Seeking • Innovation • Strategic Orientation	• Professional & Social Responsibility	• Financial Skills • Human Resource Management • Information Technology Management	• Self-Awareness • Self-Confidence • Well-Being

[3]

TABLE 2 | NCHL Competency Definitions

HEALTH LEADERSHIP COMPETENCY MODEL 3.0

ACTION COMPETENCY DOMAINS

BOUNDARY SPANNING

Optimizing relationships between a leader's span of control and the departments, organizations, communities, and/or broader networks within which it operates.

Community Collaboration - The ability to align one's own and the organization's priorities with the needs and values of the community, including its cultural and ethnocentric values, and to move health forward in line with population-based wellness needs and national health agenda.

Organizational Awareness - The ability to understand and learn the formal and informal decision-making structures and power relationships in an organization or industry (e.g., stakeholders, suppliers). This includes the ability to identify who the real decision makers are and the individuals who can influence them, and to predict how new events will affect individuals and groups within the organization.

Relationship & Network Development - The ability to establish, build, and sustain professional contacts for the purpose of building networks of people with similar goals and that support similar interests.

EXECUTION

Translating vision and strategy into actions supporting optimal organizational performance.

Accountability - The ability to hold people accountable to standards of performance or ensure compliance by effectively and appropriately using the power of one's position or personality, with the long-term good of the organization in mind.

Achievement Orientation - A concern for surpassing standards of excellence. Standards may involve past performance (striving for improvement); objective measures (results orientation); outperforming others (competitiveness); challenging goals, or redefining the nature of the standards themselves (innovation).

Analytical Thinking - Developing a deeper understanding of a situation, issue, or problem by breaking it down or tracing its implications step-by-step. It includes organizing the parts of a situation, issue, or problem systematically; making systematic comparisons of different features or aspects; setting priorities on a rational basis; and identifying time sequences, causal relationships, or if-then relationships.

Communication Skills 1 – Writing - The ability to use written communications in formal and informal situations to convey meaning, build shared understanding, and productively move agendas forward.

Communication Skills 2 – Speaking & Facilitating - The ability to use spoken communications in formal and informal situations to convey meaning, build shared understanding, and productively move agendas forward.

Initiative - Identifying a problem, obstacle, or opportunity and taking action in light of this identification to address current or future problems or opportunities. Initiative emphasizes proactively doing things and not simply thinking about future actions. Levels of proficiency relate to the time scale of focus, moving from addressing current situations to acting on long-term future opportunities or problems.

Performance Measurement - The ability to understand and use statistical and financial metrics and methods to set goals and measure clinical as well as organizational performance; commits to and deploys evidence-based techniques.

Process & Quality Improvement - The ability to analyze and design or improve an organizational process, including incorporating the principles of high reliability, continuous quality improvement, and user-centered design.

Project Management - The ability to plan, execute, and oversee a multi-year, large-scale project involving significant resources, scope, and impact. Examples include the construction of a major building, implementation of a new enterprise-wide information system, or development of a new service line.

RELATIONS

Leading, through example and actions, to create an organizational climate that values employees from all backgrounds, provides a healthy and energizing environment in which to work, and encourages everyone's ongoing development.

Collaboration - The ability to work cooperatively and inclusively with other individuals and/or teams they do not formally lead; working together, as opposed to working separately or competitively.

Impact & Influence - The ability to persuade, convince, influence, or impress others (individuals or groups) in order to get them to go along with or to support one's opinion or position. The "key" is understanding others' interests and motivations, in order to have a specific impact, effect, or impression on them and/or convince them to take a specific course of action.

Interpersonal Understanding - The ability to accurately hear and understand the unspoken or partly expressed thoughts, feelings, and concerns of others, especially those who may represent diverse backgrounds and very different worldviews. Levels of proficiency relate to the increasing complexity and depth of understanding, as well as openness to perspectives very different from one's own.

Talent Development - The ability to build the breadth and depth of the organization's human capability and professionalism, including supporting top-performing people and taking a personal interest in coaching and mentoring high-potential leaders.

Team Leadership - The ability to lead groups of people toward shared visions and goals, from forming a team that possesses balanced capabilities, to setting its mission, values, and norms, and holding team members accountable individually and as a group for results.

TRANSFORMATION

Creating and implementing compelling and inclusive change processes in support of improving health quality, efficiency, and access.

Change Leadership - The ability to energize stakeholders and sustain their commitment to changes in approaches, processes, and strategies.

Information Seeking - An underlying curiosity and desire to know more about things, people, and issues, including the desire for knowledge and staying current with health, organizational, industry, and professional trends and developments. It includes pressing for more precise information; resolving discrepancies by asking a series of questions; and scanning for potential opportunities or information that may be of future use, as well as staying current and seeking best practices for adoption.

Innovation - The ability to approach one's work and the organization in new and breakthrough ways, including applying complex concepts, developing creative new solutions, or adapting previous solutions in promising new ways.

Strategic Orientation - The ability to consider the business, demographic, ethno-cultural, political, and regulatory implications of decisions and develop strategies that continually improve the long-term success and viability of the organization.

ENABLING COMPETENCY DOMAINS

VALUES

Creating and implementing compelling and inclusive change processes in support of improving health quality, efficiency, and access.

Professional & Social Responsibility - The demonstration of ethics, sound professional practices, social accountability, and community stewardship. Acting in ways that are consistent with one's values and what one says is important.

HEALTH SYSTEM AWARENESS & BUSINESS LITERACY

Understanding the health system's current business and operating frameworks as well as the dynamic context within which they operate (e.g., community, competitive, human resources, financial, legal, policy, and environmental).

Financial Skills - The ability to understand and explain financial and accounting information, prepare and manage budgets, and make sound long-term investment decisions.

Human Resource Management - The ability to implement staff development and other management practices that represent contemporary best practices, comply with legal and regulatory requirements, and optimize the performance of the workforce, including performance assessments, alternative compensation and benefit methods, and the alignment of human resource practices and processes to meet the strategic goals of the organization.

Information Technology Management - The ability to see the potential for administrative and clinical technologies to support process and performance improvement. Actively sponsors the continuous seeking of enhanced technological capabilities.

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SELF-AWARENESS & SELF-DEVELOPMENT

Ongoing habits and actions taken to continuously improve self-knowledge, interpersonal effectiveness, and well-being.

Self-Awareness - The ability to have an accurate view of one's own strengths and development needs, including the impact that one has on others. A willingness to address development needs through reflective, self-directed learning, and by trying new approaches.

Self-Confidence - A belief in one's own capability to successfully accomplish their work. This includes confidence in one's ability as expressed in increasingly challenging circumstances, and confidence in one's decisions or opinions.

Well-Being - Establishes habits supporting well-being, and creates a work climate supportive of the total health of oneself and others. This includes role-modeling healthy habits and practices, and monitoring internal and external environments for opportunities to improve health.