

Physician Succession Planning: A Rural Perspective



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Defining: Succession Planning

- Succession planning: is a process whereby an organization ensures that employees are recruited and developed to fill each key role within the company. Through your succession planning process, you recruit superior employees, develop their knowledge, skills, and abilities, and prepare them for advancement or promotion into ever more challenging roles.

- Source: About.com, Human Resources, accessed Nov 24, 2011

Defining: Rural

- Rural: a community with a population of less than 30,000 and greater than 30 minutes away in travel time from a community with a population of more than 30,000
- That would be me...

- Source: Rural and Northern Framework Panel, OHA, 2011



What we look like...

- Hospital:
- 1 F/T General Surgeon
- 1 F/T GP Anaesthetist
- 1 P/T GP Anaesthetist/FP/ER
- 1 P/T Internal Medicine
- FHT:
- 9 Family Physicians, 5 sites
- ER:
- 4 F/T; 3 P/T; + lots of locums



Shameless promotional slide...



And another...



Rural reality:

- No surprise: Most rural communities have a lack of successors waiting in the wings
- True for many professional positions outside of docs



The Future looks bright?

- What will your hospital look like in 5 years?
- In 10 years?
- Succession planning into the unknown...
- Consider shorter timeframe goals adding in the 'wish list'
- Duty to educate your funding partners and community



Always a crisis?



- Our 'roots': why physician recruiters were needed in the first place
- Planning for the future? I'm still recruiting for the past!
- Increased med school enrolment and IMGs have contributed to recent success
- Some communities can take a breath
- YOU get to 'plan' (imagine that?)

How do I plan?



- Not much info out there specific to docs!
- Review the 'hallway conversations'
- Start a discussion with your Recruitment Committee and hospital CEO
- Reference your hospital PHR Plan
- Consider a Strategic Planning workshop, especially if you've never held one!
- Access the 'big guns': HFO CPCs, ROMP (or equivalent body)

Plan...continued...

- Work with hospital departments when planning for specialists
- Be realistic: consider an Impact Analysis
- Consider thinking 'outside the box' to solve succession problems
- Review what has worked/hasn't worked
- Source med students, residents and locums

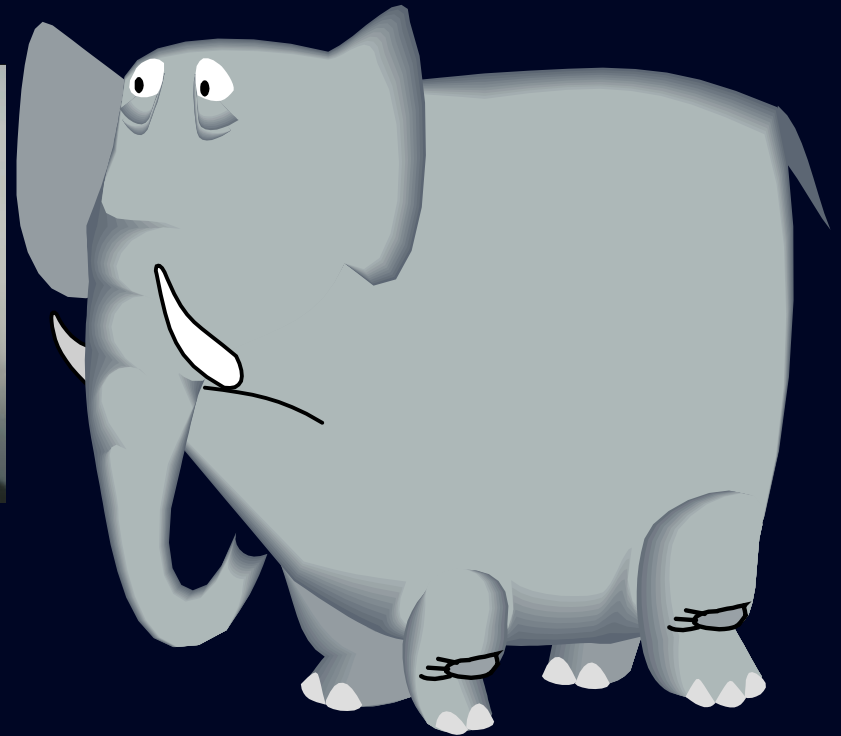
First things first...

- Creating 'buy-in' from existing docs:
- “Are you saying I’m old??”
- “Am I being squeezed out??”
- “Everyone will find out!”
- “I’m still here!”
- Putting the ‘hallway conversations’ in context



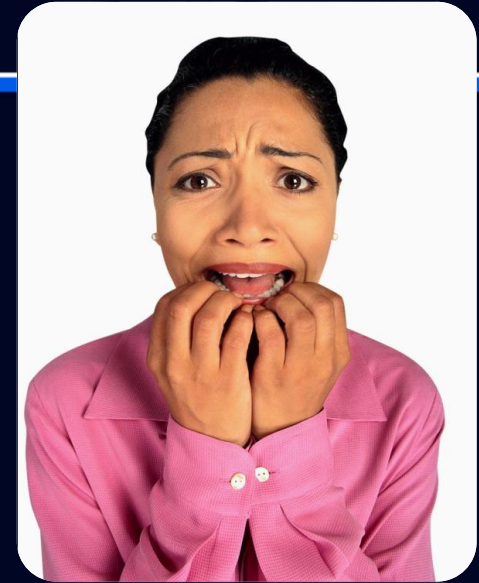
Surprise!

- Succession planning seemed to be:



What was the problem?

- Small town confidentiality concerns
- Hesitant to put plans in writing
- Perceived 'push'
- Fear of the word 'succession'
- = A Ha! Succession planning had never been discussed with docs before!



It's not just an 'age thing'...

- Reasons to have a Plan include docs who:
 - >Have contracts up for renewal
 - >Have a health crisis
 - >Have a family crisis looming
 - >Have kids finishing high school
 - >Die unexpectedly
- It helps to be thinking:
“What would we do if...”



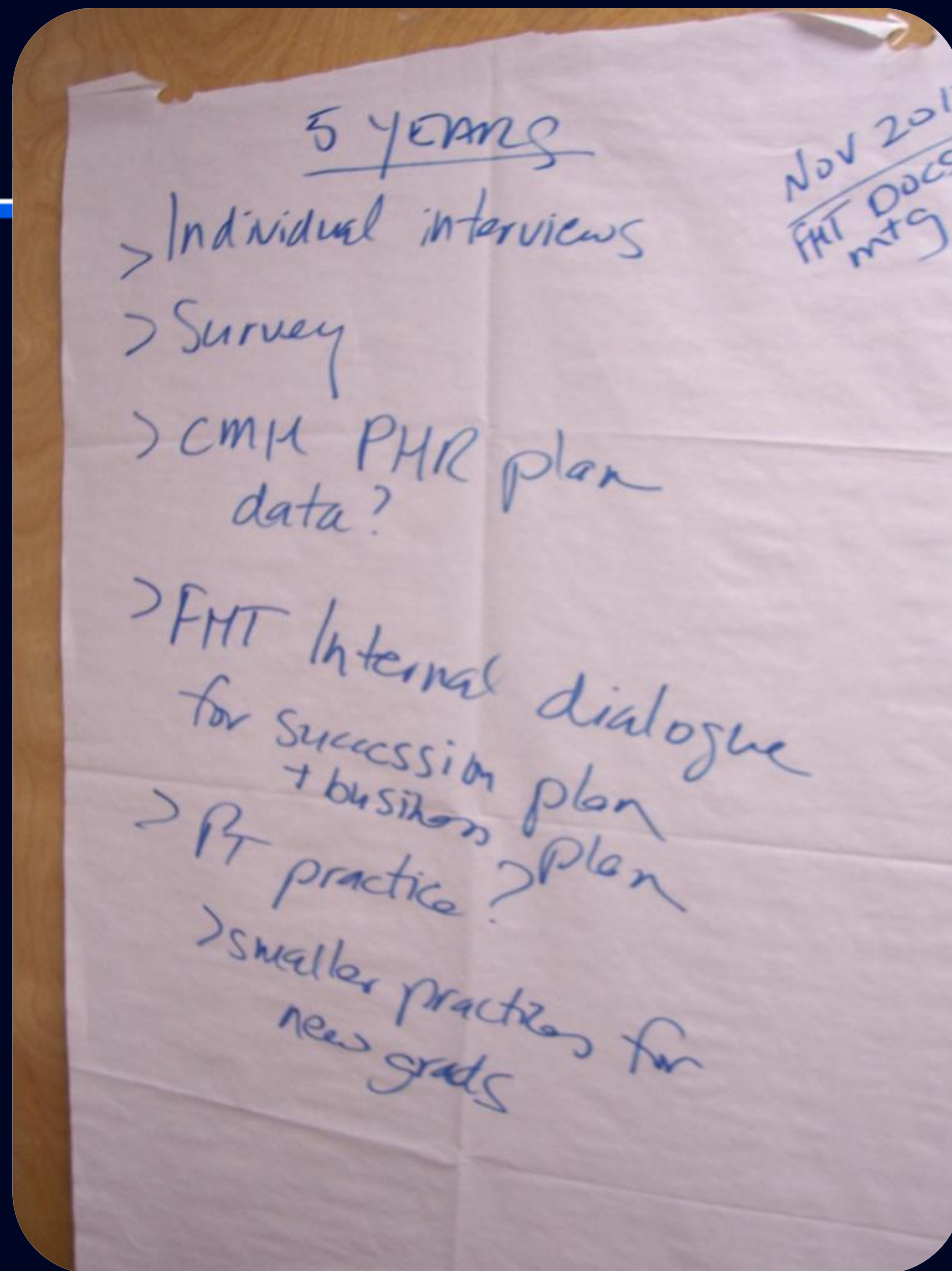
Proceed with care...

- Begin your 'data' collection
- What did I do?
 - Started by scheduling a meeting with entire doc group through FHT Exec Director
 - Developed *short* spiel to outline issue/timing
 - Cross-referenced the hospital's PHR Plan



The Meeting: Shock tactics!





< Actual,
unretouched
photo of the
Flip Chart
from 'The Big
Meeting'!

Down to business...

- Decided on Survey as a group
- Encouraged to build into FHT business plan
- Reassured of confidentiality by reporting data as a whole
- Reassured that data was strictly for decision-making
- Reassured survey answers not binding



Aftermath

- Created dialogue
- Surprising one-on-one post meeting conversations
- Good participation rate
- Some Survey surprises!
- Time for reflection
- Continued reassurance and declaration of value to the community

Beware 'The Super Doc'...

- Do you have one of these on staff?



Barriers

- Very hard to recruit into Super Doc culture
- Have honest conversation with this type of physician
- Ask all physicians to assist in the hiring or transitioning of new docs: creates awareness, ownership and allows for input



It could work...

- Consider using physicians as mentors
- Use data in reporting to funding partners to support your continued efforts

Summary

- Succession planning doesn't have to 'succ', but it does have to 'succ'EED!
- Community may be looking to you for answers
- Not everything will work
- Celebrate successes
- Above all: Get the right fit!

Contact

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