



What's Your Transition Plan?

*Integrated Oncology Consulting Solutions
And Cancer Care Center Planning*

What's Your Transition Plan?

By Steve Black, MBA

A key manager on your cancer team just gave you 30 days' notice because she got a new job and is leaving the organization. The best case scenario is that you have someone who you've been grooming for a promotion and is able to step into the position. The worst case scenario is that you have lots of great worker bees, but no one who is ready or able to be a leader. You get the approval to post the position and begin recruiting immediately, but it typically takes six to twelve months to recruit key leadership positions. To keep operations working smoothly, provide leadership for the team and allow time to recruit the best person for the position, you'll need a transition plan.

To shore up the success of your plan, consider bringing in an interim manager. A qualified professional can quickly step into the position, handle day-to-day operations issues and provide leadership for front line staff. He or she can act as a bridge between the employee who is leaving and his permanent replacement. And having an interim manager in place can give you an opportunity to assess the position's duties and responsibilities and determine whether anything needs to be changed or discussed during the recruitment process.

An interim manager can also provide project management for critical events, such as moving into new space or the tri-annual visit from The Joint Commission (TJC). You might need this experienced healthcare leader only until your move is done or the TJC site visit is completed. He or she can lead your special event, move or site visit and once it's accomplished, your expense is gone.

Many programs today follow a staffing model that stresses being lean and efficient. This model makes sense when all of the positions on your team are filled, but having even one key vacancy can have a profound effect on the quality of care that you provide for your patients. Bringing in an interim person not only fills the gap quickly, it gives you time to recruit the best person for the open position. But your interim hire is more than just a band-aid for your program: he or she can provide perspective on your program that's not influenced by relationships or allegiances with physicians or other clinical staff, allowing you to make objective decisions about changes to current processes. Your interim help can also act as a conduit between the employee leaving and the one coming on board, providing a program overview and helping with task coverage as your hire goes through orientation and gets up to speed.

Our on-site interim managers are backed by a team of oncology professionals that includes nurses, radiation therapists, administrators and financial analysts who support them. If a question arises about best practices or what has worked in similar situations for other programs, we have the experience and knowledge to provide answers for your program. When we place an interim manager at an organization, our fees include the oversight of a senior leader who visits your facility periodically to ensure that he or she is meeting expectations. This senior leader is also available to meet with your organization's leadership to discuss how your cancer program impacts your entire organization. We know that cancer program patients use services in many of an organization's departments other than those at the cancer center. The ability to look at the service line perspective and see the downstream effect of the services patients use will help the leaders in the C-suite appropriately prioritize investments for the cancer program.

Outsourcing is part of the new healthcare landscape. In today's environment, change is inevitable and you need resources to quickly respond to those changes. A key person suddenly leaving your organization can certainly affect your ability to provide patient services and staff leadership. In times of transition The Oncology Group can respond quickly, placing interim personnel who can bridge your gap in staffing and allow you the time to find the perfect hire. To learn more about how we can help your oncology program, please give us a call at 512.583.8815 or email us at info@theoncologygroup.com.