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## Top Leadership Teams in Healthcare 2010 Announced By HealthLeaders Media

The winners in the 7th annual HealthLeaders Media Top Leadership Teams in Healthcare Awards program use words like “accountability” and “decisiveness” to describe the values that makes their senior leadership teams succeed. Yet these winning teams also realize they will need to hone those values and others to prepare for the rapidly-shifting challenges ahead in healthcare.

The Top Leadership Teams in Healthcare Awards program, sponsored by GE Healthcare, celebrates the outstanding teamwork that occurs in healthcare organizations each day, shares what makes top leadership teams successful, and encourages other healthcare leaders to learn more from the best practices of top leadership teams. The 2010 honorees include:

- **Novant Health** in Winston-Salem, NC for large hospitals and health systems;
- **Columbus Regional Hospital** in Columbus, IN for community and mid-sized hospitals;
- **UHS Chenango Memorial Hospital** in Norwich, NY for small hospitals;
- **Crystal Run Healthcare** in Middletown, NY for medical group practices; and
- **Network Health** in Medford, MA, for health plans.

Dynamic change is nothing new to these teams. Novant Health restructured its system leadership team into an operations-based, not site-based, matrix to better promote improvement. After a flood closed Columbus Regional Hospital, the leadership team reopened ahead of schedule and kept all employees on salary during the rebuilding.

**Christina Severin**, CEO and president of Network Health, believes the health plan’s experience with the expansion of state-mandated health plan coverage in Massachusetts has prepared her leadership team and entire organization for the next challenges that will come with the expansion of federal health coverage.

“We have the chance to identify what’s happening in healthcare locally and what is likely to happen in healthcare nationally, and to act on our internal strengths and weaknesses,” Severin says. “Through analysis and evaluation, we have methodically prepared ourselves for success in the evolving world of healthcare and have instilled a laser-like focus on being a high-value health plan, as we believe that there won’t be room for any other kind in the healthcare system of the future.”

Crystal Run Healthcare has been one of the fastest growing medical groups in the state, now reaching more than 30 specialties with 170 physicians and 1,200 employees. **Hal Teitelbaum**, MD, MBA, managing partner and CEO, says change is a constant that his leadership team has embraced.

“We are bored-and frustrated-by the status quo,” Teitelbaum says. “We have long understood that the present state can always be improved. Our history is one of expanding services and increasing integration. We are believers in accountable care and have been early adopters of electronic health records and the patient-centered medical home model. Given a new playing field, we feel our team is ready to develop and implement the new rules of the game.”

**Paul Wiles**, CEO of Novant Health, says his leadership team recognizes that change and improvement in the future will be based on value as a measuring stick.

“We are headed in the right direction, yet we have a lot of steps to take to achieve Novant Health’s vision for our patients and communities,” Wiles says. “Most importantly, we are building consensus with all of our leaders and partners that our organization can accomplish what dissimilar companies in other industries have achieved: improving the quality of our product at a more affordable price.”

While the dynamics of the industry may require new strategies, the ties that bind the leadership team will remain constant.

“The most critical quality may be ‘respectful discipline’ which results in individual and organizational accountability to consistently take care of the basics of the business while continuously striving to learn and execute improved ways to be a great place to receive care, a great place to work, and a great place to practice medicine,” says **Drake Lamén**, MD, CEO of UHS Chenango Memorial Hospital. “This needs to stay the same in coming years.”

As with any challenge, the first step in strengthening team relationships is to build trust, says **Jim Bickel**, CEO of Columbus Regional Hospital. “Trust is the key first step, so you need to determine if your team members trust their leader and each other. Your team needs to be genuine and that begins with trust. As part of trust building, team members need to learn about both the strengths and weaknesses of each other. Don’t be afraid to delve into this in a candid yet constructive manner and really get to know each other. The team needs both personal excellence and collective accountability. In a crisis or in the middle of rapid change are not the times to begin to develop trust. It must already be there so that you can effectively lead your organization past challenges to meet your goals.”

Recipients of this year's Top Leadership Teams awards will be honored on October 21 in Dallas, TX.

Winners are judged on the team’s overall leadership culture, its ability to overcome challenges, and its ability to demonstrate successes that result from outstanding leadership teamwork. Only one winner per category receives this national honor each year.

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