



# Preparing the Clinic Leaders of Tomorrow

*The Clinic Leadership Institute Emerging Leaders Program*

## INTRODUCTION

California's community clinics require strong, committed leaders who can navigate their organizations through an increasingly complex healthcare system and meet the needs of their diverse patient populations. Clinics are facing considerable pressure to adapt to changes brought on by the passage of healthcare reform, the shift toward more integrated and patient-centered care, the profusion of health information technology and the restriction of state and local resources. In this environment, clinic executives require an ever-growing set of skills to lead effective and efficient organizations.

While the need for strong clinic leaders is clear, many current executives are approaching retirement or contemplating other steps in their professional lives, and the majority of these leaders have not yet identified someone to take their place.<sup>1</sup> To address this imminent leadership gap, Blue Shield of California Foundation (the Foundation) partnered with the Center for the Health Professions at the University of California, San Francisco to design and implement the Clinic Leadership Institute Emerging Leaders program (the program).<sup>2</sup> The intensive, 18-month program prepares emerging leaders to move

into executive positions within five to eight years in order to sustain a strong and vibrant community clinics field in California.<sup>3</sup> Since its launch in 2008, the program has trained approximately 125 emerging leaders over five cohorts.

## KEY PROGRAM IMPACTS

Participants have **stronger knowledge, skills and confidence** in areas that are vital to strong clinic leadership (e.g., broader organizational perspective, managing people and projects).

Participants have experienced **professional growth and improvement** since beginning the program. For example,

- 64% advanced to a more senior role or position
- 56% had significant growth in job responsibilities
- 49% received a salary increase of 10% or more
- 48% report much greater job satisfaction

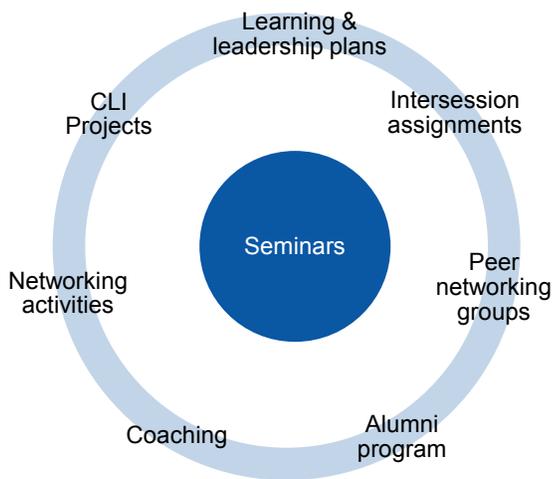
Participants' **clinics are stronger** (e.g., greater capacity and effectiveness, enhanced access to resources and information, increased awareness of and attention to leadership development needs).

The clinics field has a **growing cadre of capable leaders and an enhanced network** of program participants, their colleagues and their organizations.

## THE EMERGING LEADERS PROGRAM

The program incorporates a combination of didactic instruction and experiential learning activities. While the in-person, multi-day seminars are at the heart of the program, participants are also offered a continuum of complementary supports. The alumni program helps participants deepen and apply learnings through in-person meetings, webinars and other supports.

### Program Components



## PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

The program focuses on leaders who tend to be in a more formative stage of their careers and personal lives (e.g., having young families, varying levels of formal education and employment experience). Though these attributes can pose certain challenges and risks for a leadership program, such as less time to commit to leadership development or hesitancy to take on more demanding jobs, program staff and the **leaders' colleagues** see great potential for these individuals as they progress along their career paths.

Program staff undertake a rigorous selection process each year to identify a cohort of approximately 25 individuals who are positioned to successfully lead clinics in the future.

## WHO ARE THE PARTICIPANTS?

The program participants are a diverse group representing a range of perspectives, experiences and organizations. For example, participants:

- Range in age from 27 to 59 years old
- Are primarily female (88%)
- Are racially and ethnically diverse (58% non-white)
- Have varying levels of formal education (e.g., 44% hold graduate degrees; 20% have a high school degree or less)
- Hold an average of 11 years of experience in the clinics field
- Represent urban and rural clinics of various types and sizes throughout California

## CAREER GROWTH & ADVANCEMENT

The program's complementary components enable participants to enhance their knowledge, skills and confidence in areas that are vital to strong clinic leadership and closely aligned with the program curriculum.<sup>4</sup>

**Knowledge Gains:** Participants develop a deeper understanding of issues including the role that clinics play in a dynamic healthcare system, the differences between management and leadership, the range of responsibilities involved in running a clinic, and current topics related to healthcare policy and the economic environment.

**Enhanced Leadership Skills:** Participants improve their leadership skills in many areas, particularly:

- Developing a broader organizational perspective;
- Planning and overseeing projects;
- Managing relationships and conflicts;
- Using time effectively;
- Understanding clinic finances; and
- Making data-driven decisions.

**Increased Confidence:** Confidence is an important developmental step for overall leadership and growth, and it also serves as the glue to help leadership knowledge and skills "stick." The

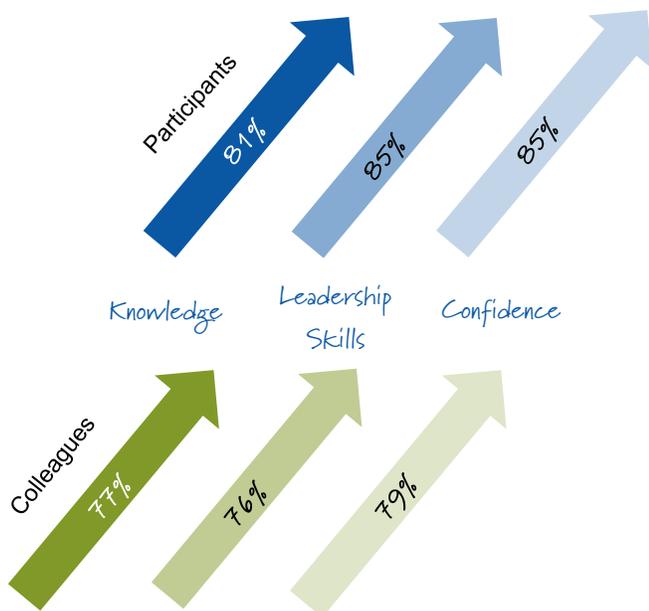
experience in the program **has elevated participants'** perceptions of themselves as competent leaders. For example, participants experience greater empowerment and self-efficacy to take on roles outside of their comfort zone (e.g., dealing with conflict among staff, speaking in public).

***“The program provided the encouragement, structure and experience to help me be a successful and confident leader.”***

—Participant

In addition to participants' own perspectives on their enhanced leadership, their colleagues—generally CEOs, direct supervisors and/or peers on the senior leadership team—echo the same marked improvements. The vast majority of participants and colleagues report that the program has made a significant contribution to these participant improvements in knowledge, leadership skills and confidence.

### Respondents Reporting a Significant Program Contribution to Participant Improvements<sup>5</sup>



A large portion of participants report career and professional growth (e.g., position, responsibilities, salary, job satisfaction), with most participants and their colleagues crediting the program with a substantial role in this professional advancement. Participants commonly experience this growth while still attending the program and continue to advance professionally after graduating.

### Participants' Professional Impacts Since Beginning the Program<sup>6</sup>



About two-thirds of participants have advanced into more senior roles or positions, which is the primary goal of the program. This includes participants moving into executive leadership roles (e.g., CEO, COO) much sooner than the program's expected five-to-eight year timeframe as well as those steadily advancing along the career ladder toward executive positions.

Almost all participants have taken on new job responsibilities. This is in large part due to the enhanced knowledge, confidence and skills they develop in the program. For example, participants report leading new clinic programs or sites, participating in organizational-wide strategic planning for the first time and representing their clinic in regional or statewide venues.

About half of participants have received a merit-based salary increase of 10% or more since beginning the program. Furthermore, some participants report receiving other types of compensation for their increased responsibilities,

including paid trainings, additional paid time off and one-time bonuses.

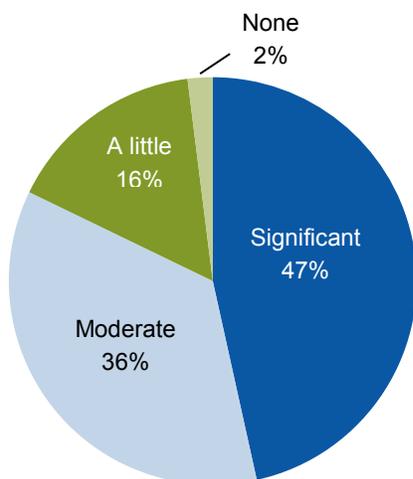
In addition, almost half of participants report that they are much more satisfied with their jobs, which is often a result of their professional advancement as well as having more autonomy in decision making.

## BENEFITS FOR THE ORGANIZATION

The program was designed to have impacts beyond individual leaders, and these intentions have been realized, with participants and their colleagues citing three main ways that clinics have benefited since the program began. First, organizations demonstrate greater capacity, effectiveness and efficiency (e.g., enhanced staff competencies and satisfaction, more integrated health services, improved patient billing). Second, organizations gain access to best practices, information, support and resources (e.g., templates for data dashboards, policies for electronic health record implementation). Lastly, current executives become more aware of the need to develop emerging leaders and are better able to prepare for leadership transitions (e.g., identifying professional development opportunities, thinking about succession planning).

Although colleagues realize that many internal and external factors contribute to organizational improvements, almost half say that the program has made a significant contribution.

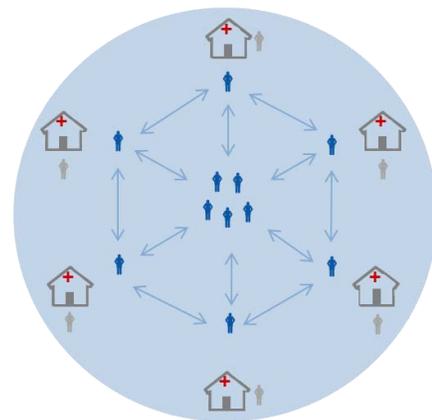
### Colleagues' Ratings of the Program's Contribution to Organizational Improvements



The program contributes to organizational improvements primarily through the following means.

- Participants are more capable leaders whose stronger day-to-day contributions benefit clinics in tangible and intangible ways (e.g., supervising more staff, initiating new clinic projects).
- The CLI Projects provide structured learning opportunities that enable participants to address a relevant organizational need while developing and applying their leadership skills (e.g., securing buy in, managing people and processes, measuring progress).<sup>7</sup>
- The **program's** diverse and growing network connects participants, their colleagues, clinics and other key stakeholders in the healthcare safety net. The network's benefits span organizational and geographical boundaries both during and after the program.

### The Program's Network of Participants, Colleagues & Healthcare Safety Net Organizations



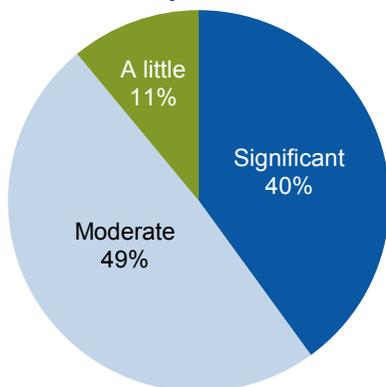
*“The program has given me hope that there is a growing cadre of emerging leaders who will effectively step up [into clinic executive positions] and do a great job.”*

—Stakeholder

## PERSPECTIVES FROM THE CLINICS FIELD

Most of the key stakeholders represented in this evaluation (e.g., clinic CEOs and funders) report that the program has made a moderate or significant contribution to improvements in the California clinics field to date, including the cultivation of emerging leaders in preparation for leadership transitions. This is impressive given the program's relatively short tenure, and additional impacts are expected over time. Stakeholders particularly value the program network, which is building and reinforcing the pathways by which impacts spread from participants to their organizations and ultimately, to the broader field. Most stakeholders report that they are confident in the future leadership of California clinics, in no small part due to the program.

### Stakeholders' Ratings of the Program's Contribution to Improvements in the Field



## IMPLICATIONS

Overall, participants, their colleagues and key stakeholders are highly satisfied and impressed with the Emerging Leaders program. With its multifaceted design and unique focus on a diverse group of emerging clinic leaders, the program is successfully addressing an important need in the clinics field. Based on the evaluation findings, we offer a few considerations for furthering the impact of the program and supporting leadership development in the clinics field.

**Assist emerging leaders with applying their skills and advancing along a leadership trajectory.** To maximize the impacts of leadership investments, continue to implement and support

activities that translate impacts from individuals to organizations and the field (e.g., customized leadership projects, networking). Make sure that ample opportunities exist for emerging leaders to apply their skills and exercise their leadership muscles within the organization. This may include identifying ways for individuals to express their leadership in their current roles when more senior positions are not immediately available (e.g., leading strategic planning efforts, representing the clinic at field-level meetings, starting new organizational projects).

**Bolster leadership at multiple levels of the organization to help clinics navigate the complexities and demands of healthcare.** Ensure that leadership programs throughout the clinics field are well aligned and designed to meet clinics' leadership needs. Facilitate the participation of a wide range of leaders, both tenured and emerging, in leadership programs or supports.<sup>8</sup>

**Support the planning and implementation of executive leadership transitions.** Continue to provide leadership transition support through leadership programs, executive coaching and mentoring relationships between tenured and emerging leaders. Also, facilitate smooth leadership transitions by promoting transparency and embracing change management practices.

**Hold a field view of emerging leader recruitment, development and retention to ensure a strong pool of trained clinic leaders.** Focus on the retention of trained leaders in their organizations, but also talk about and encourage a more expansive view of clinic leadership that recognizes the mobility of emerging leaders as an asset to the larger clinics field and healthcare safety net.

Now, more than ever, the rapidly evolving community clinics field in California calls out for savvy and agile clinic leaders. The Emerging Leaders program is responding to the call, and is making remarkable progress in preparing the clinic leaders of tomorrow. Still, work remains to ensure that a strong and vibrant clinics field fulfills the needs of underserved patients and communities well into the future.

## ABOUT THE PROGRAM EVALUATION

BTW *informing change* (BTW) has conducted a mixed-method, longitudinal study focusing on the impacts of the program since its inception. BTW collected data from diverse respondents—including participants, colleagues (e.g., CEOs, direct supervisors, peers) and stakeholders in the clinics field—at multiple points in time (e.g., immediately after graduation, on an annual follow-up basis). This brief report summarizes the robust set of evaluation findings from 2008–2011, representing the first three program cohorts.<sup>9</sup>

This report was produced in May 2012 by Kim Ammann Howard, Regina Sheridan and Kris Helé at BTW *informing change*. For more information about BTW or the evaluation, contact Kim Ammann Howard at [kahoward@btw.informingchange.com](mailto:kahoward@btw.informingchange.com). For more information about Clinic Leadership Institute, contact Susan Baade at [sbaade@thecenter.ucsf.edu](mailto:sbaade@thecenter.ucsf.edu).

Prepared for:

clinic  
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institute

A Project of Blue Shield  
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blue of california  
foundation

- <sup>1</sup> Ammann Howard, K., Dube, S.L., & Tirona, M.M. (2009). Mission critical: The state of CEO leadership in California Community Clinics. Retrieved from <http://btw.informingchange.com/uploads/2009/11/Mission-Critical-The-State-of-CEO-Leadership-in-California-Community-Clinics.pdf>
- <sup>2</sup> The Emerging Leaders program is part of a broader suite of Clinic Leadership Institute (CLI) programs focused on strengthening leadership in the clinics field.
- <sup>3</sup> Throughout this report, the terms clinic and clinics field encompass a range of clinic types, including regional or statewide clinic consortia in California.
- <sup>4</sup> The program curriculum focuses on six key areas **to enhance participants'** leadership effectiveness: leadership and decision making; organizational values and behaviors; strategic thinking and action; business acumen and financial

management; relationship management and diversity; and organizational improvement and data-driven decision making.

- <sup>5</sup> Respondents rated the extent to which the **program contributed to participants' improvements in knowledge, leadership skills and confidence using the following scale: “not at all,” “a little,” “a moderate amount” and “a significant amount.”**
- <sup>6</sup> The findings in this graphic represent the percent of participants who report these changes at any time since beginning the program.
- <sup>7</sup> For more information and to download a report that focuses exclusively on the CLI Projects, please visit **BTW's** Web site, [www.btw.informingchange.com](http://www.btw.informingchange.com).
- <sup>8</sup> Other programs applicable to clinic staff include: **the Foundation's Executive Excellence Program; the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation's Integrated Nurse Leadership Program; UCSF's Institute for Physician Leadership; and the California HealthCare Foundation's Encore Fellows in California Community Clinics program.**
- <sup>9</sup> The evaluation surveys include one for recent graduates (73 respondents, 92% response rate); selected colleagues (165 respondents, 84% response rate); alumni (52 respondents, 90% response rate); and key stakeholders (56 respondents, 54% response rate). In addition, the findings are based on over 143 interviews and 5 focus groups. The graphs throughout this report are based on survey data representing most or all of the survey respondents (a few chose not to respond to particular questions).