



I. An Overview

The Quality Revolution

Alegent Health's quest to become a world-class leader began with its bold and visionary strategic plan unveiled in April 2005. It is with this plan – the Quality Revolution – that Alegent Health will impact the quality of healthcare, set ourselves apart as a leader and reach new levels of service for our patients, their families and our community.

The Quality Revolution seeks to impact the quality of healthcare, both within the organization and throughout the healthcare industry. The new strategic plan embraces far-reaching, visionary changes in the way we think and perform when it comes to quality at Alegent Health. Ultimately, these changes will produce revolutionary improvements in our already-high quality and ensure world-class care for our patients and the communities we serve.

Developed by a diverse group of stakeholders in a comprehensive and inclusive process, the plan reaffirms our longstanding Mission to provide high-quality care for the body, mind and spirit of every person.

At the heart of the plan is a Vision statement that raises the bar to a challenging but attainable height: *Achieve world-class leadership in compassionate, faith-based health services that measurably enriches the lives of families we serve through an exceptional commitment to quality.*

That Vision statement is supported by four new strategic priorities – Relationships, Quality, Innovation and Stewardship – and specific objectives that will move the organization toward our Vision. Within these objectives are important and forward-looking themes of clinical service leadership, physician collaboration, development of the next generation of healthcare delivery, enhancing the value we bring to our communities, engaging our community in the design and delivery of healthcare and creating a world-class culture.

The first step would be to tackle some of the Quality Revolution's higher impact objectives – clinical service leadership, quality, engaging the community, physician collaboration – through a revolutionary accelerated decision making process that we would come to know as *RightTrack*.

A Passion for Innovation

At Alegent Health, our exceptional reputation for quality and community service results in large part from our drive to innovate. With a focus on teamwork, we collaborate to develop solutions that ensure superior patient outcomes, as well as more efficient delivery of care. Ultimately, we believe our emphasis on innovating quality solutions will reinforce Alegent Health's leadership in the industry, as it helps us fulfill our Mission. Over the last year, our pursuit of innovation and search for solutions to critical challenges facing the healthcare industry has centered around two major initiatives: accelerated decision making to enhance our leadership in targeted clinical service areas and an Alegent Health model for consumer-driven healthcare.

Our Purpose

One of the first highly visible signs of Alegent Health's strategic plan, the Quality Revolution, has been our use of accelerated decision making in achieving clinical service leadership.

Alegent Health's accelerated decision making process, the *Right Track*, helps engage stakeholders, encourage collaboration and establish road maps for achieving our Vision for world-class quality and leadership.

Alegent Health stands alone among not-for-profit healthcare providers in adopting this technique – a method that has proven successful for leaders in America's most innovative companies.

Recognized for its ability to produce unique, innovative and visionary ideas, accelerated decision making brings together stakeholders in a space constructed expressly for the purpose of dialogue, decision making and planning. It provides participants with expert facilitation and immediate access to key information. It captures all discussions real-time with transcription and illustration. For two to three days, stakeholders immerse themselves in the topics at hand, engage in a curriculum of innovative thinking and consensus building and emerge with a shared vision and horizon plans for achieving the overall Alegent Health Vision.

"Right Track brings the right people together at the right time in the right place to make the right decisions."

- Ted Schwab, Chief Innovation Officer, Alegent Health

Our Approach

In the summer of 2005, Alegent Health launched its *Right Track* process with a series of accelerated decision making sessions for the specific clinical focus areas of behavioral health, cardiovascular, neuroscience, oncology, orthopaedics, and women's and children's. Reflecting our belief that an inclusive process will produce the most beneficial outcomes, physicians, nurses, management, administration, our community partners and patients were all involved in finding the *right track* for achieving clinical service leadership.

II. How Alegent Health Got on the *Right Track*

On the West Coast, in a valley that runs between San Jose and San Francisco, Calif., there's an environment and a culture that fosters tremendous innovation and significant breakthroughs in technology, consumer products, services and business design.

There, companies like Hewlett Packard, Apple, Intel and Ideo, lead the world with new ideas. Which led us to ask the following questions - *How do they do it? How do they innovate good, new ideas quickly enough to stay on the leading and cutting edge of their markets?*

What we found is that each of these companies use a process known as **Accelerated Decision Making**. The process produces sound decisions, rapidly, through facilitated dialogue and collaboration, immediate access to research, real-time knowledge capture, action planning and consensus building. To find out more about this process, the Alegent Health Executive Leadership Council, as well as a group of leaders in the Innovation Division, spent several days in Silicon Valley observing, learning and modeling this new methodology.

True to our character as a leader in our increasingly complex field, Alegent Health set out to become one of the first healthcare providers in the nation to put this highly innovative and collaborative method to work in not-for-profit healthcare. In fact, accelerated decision making became one of the first milestones in implementing our strategic plan when it was used in the summer of 2005 to develop strategic plans in a number of our clinical service areas.

Accelerated decision making is innovative and proven. The model comes from companies leading the world in new ideas. They have virtually perfected it as a tool to keep on the cutting edge of innovative, quality products and services.

This is the Quality Revolution in action – the pursuit of an innovative decision making model, the pioneering of that model for use in healthcare, the use of this model to identify recommendations that will fuel our clinical service leadership and in doing so our pursuit of world-class leadership through quality and innovation.

We believe accelerated decision making can help shape the future of healthcare in our community and will help shape the future of our organization and all we serve.

- Wayne A. Sensor, CEO, Alegent Health

III. The Process

With experienced facilitators guiding the process, *Right Track* brings together groups of people who have a stake in the issue and provides them all the resources and background information they need to dialogue, build consensus, establish a shared vision and make decisions about recommendations for pursuing their vision.

Alegent Health's first *Right Track* sessions were held in June and July of 2005, with each focusing on one of six clinical service areas: behavioral health, cardiovascular, neuroscience, oncology, orthopaedics, and women's and children's. Each session was conducted over two and one-half days and included 35 to 70 participants, including physicians, Alegent Health employees, patients, community leaders and outside experts. Each group created a set of recommendations for the service area that looks five to 10 years into the future.

The process produces sound recommendations rapidly through facilitated dialogue, immediate access to data and research, real-time knowledge capture, consensus building and action planning. Recommendations emerging from the process are either easily implemented, or if they require substantial organizational resources, have been given to the Executive Leadership Council and the Alegent Health Board of Directors for final approval and decision-making.

On the last day of each session, participants were given a "yearbook" of their time together – a book which captured the essence of their work through photographs, white board photos and transcribed dialogue from the sessions.

The accelerated decision making process has helped to produce remarkably visionary horizon plans for specific service lines and key initiatives. The process will help us realize our full potential in terms of community impact, world-class leadership and consistency with our Mission of healing the mind, body and spirit of everyone we serve.

Looking ahead, Alegent Health has scheduled other Quality Revolution topics for *Right Track* decision making and we are exploring the benefit the approach might have for community decision making.

A. The Facility

One way to describe the *Right Track* Facility is as a sort of "Montessori for adults." The facility is designed to be inviting, open and flexible, to get people out of the traditional meeting mindset and engage them creatively.

Because such a large, flexible space did not exist on any of Alegent Health's current campuses, and renting a space was not only cost prohibitive, but also less adaptable, a new facility was found to house the *Right Track* sessions.

The 7,500 square-foot *Right Track* facility that Alegent Health created consists primarily of a large open space that is flexible and adaptable to serve a variety of functions. The facility's size makes it the ideal space for large group meetings and its moveable furnishings makes it easily adaptable for breaking into small groups.

The space includes a creative area with toys and books for participants to use when they need a creative boost. Data pertaining to the topic at hand is made available in the space for participants to reference. A function deemed the “cage” consists of support staff whose role is to process and/or research information (transcripts, digital photos, video and support materials) quickly during sessions. The white board walls are ideal for group brainstorming. A graphic facilitator synthesizes keywords, phrases and themes from the sessions into visual images and captions. A café and patio area is available for participants to take a break or to grab something to eat. Of course, as the *Right Track* process continues to evolve, so will this facility.

B. The Facilitators

- **Joel Fadem** – Mr. Fadem is a Principal at Joel A. Fadem & Associates, an organization design and change management firm in Marina del Rey, California. Since 1975, he has also held faculty and research appointments at UCLA's Anderson Graduate School of Management and the Institute of Industrial Relations. During that period, he consulted with Fortune 500 companies on organizational innovation, high performance work systems and new technology implementation. Current and recent clients have included the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, the San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit District, the Los Angeles Department of Health Services, Tropicana-Pepsi, Hewlett Packard, General Mills, Nabisco, Coca Cola, Lever USA, Sony, Telecom Italia and Korea's LG Group.
- **Stu Winby** – Mr. Winby is a Principal at Joel A. Fadem & Associates. Based in Silicon Valley, he has an international reputation working with executives and senior teams in the areas of strategic innovation, organization and change. Current and recent projects have included Yahoo, Cisco, Procter & Gamble, Kimberly-Clark, the US Navy, Motorola, Analog Devices, Microsoft, Mead-Westvaco, and the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power. He has served in a number of related senior positions, including leading Hewlett-Packard's Strategy and Change Services group for 10 years.
- **Michael Kaufman** – Joining Joel A. Fadem & Associates on the Alegent Health assignment, Mr. Kaufman is based in Santa Fe, New Mexico. He is a co-founder of InnovationLabs, a firm specializing in creating paths to innovation in organizations. He is an internationally recognized facilitator, consultant and experiential educator, focusing on accelerated strategy formulation, problem solving and transformation in organizations. Current clients include Bell Canada, The Federation of State Medical Boards, NASA, Smith & Nephew, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the National FFA Organization and the Nebraska Department of Education.

C. A Typical Session

Sessions begin in early morning with continental breakfast. Immediately, attendees are invited to the whiteboards for their first activity – for example, mapping the forces impacting healthcare (last 30 years through next 30 years).

Day one begins with the entire group convening for an introduction and discussion. Participants are then continually alternating between small group work and reconvening as a large group to report on their work.

Music is used throughout the session as cue to move participants between their small groups and the large group theater.

The “cage” function eliminates the need for participants to take notes. In addition to the graphic facilitator capturing thoughts, data, etc., the “cage” staff transcribes the large group discussions, photographs all the work on the white boards and the groups working together, and publishes it as a book that is distributed at the end of the session.

There are no breaks. This is a dynamic process in which participants keep working throughout and step into the kitchen or other facilities as needed.

The final day of each session begins with a conference review. Small groups reconvene to complete unfinished work, review, and prepare a meeting summary and point of view. The session closes with sharing and discussion of the summary conclusions and meeting insights with members of the Executive Leadership Council.

Summary of the Initial Alegent Health *Right Track* Process:

The Challenge:

- Through the lens of the Quality Revolution, create six bold new horizon plans for clinical service leadership in just seven weeks.

The Process:

- Create the *Right Track* facility and bring hundreds of stakeholders together for six decision accelerators in rapid succession by mid-summer.

The Results:

- Visionary Plans (Horizon plan for each service line through 2015)
- New Relationships and “Social Capital”
- Rekindled Trust

IV. Results, Roadmaps and Relationships

Alegent Health concluded our first *Right Track* series on clinical service leadership with a closing conference in July 2005.

After six weeks of accelerated decision making sessions, hundreds of impactful ideas and a number of significant recommendations emerged. An aggressive 30/60/90-day plan was developed and accountabilities assigned to advance some of the highest priority ideas. The six *Right Track* sessions also produced recommendations that will require critical and far-reaching decisions. As subgroups from some of the *Right Track* sessions continue to meet, additional clarity is being created around several significant recommendations. Progress is then communicated to all participants.

The six horizon plans recommend some revolutionary concepts that pave the way for clinical service leadership by Alegent Health in 2015. "These roadmaps tell an incredible story of courageous thinking, innovative ideas, an exceptional commitment to quality and an overwhelming devotion to our patients, their families and the communities we serve," said Ted Schwab, Alegent Health's chief innovation officer.

A. Horizon Plans

The following are the visions and summaries of key recommendations for each of Alegent Health's six clinical service areas:

Behavioral

The Behavioral Health Right Track participants found a common vision: Inspired by our Mission of healing the body, mind and spirit of every individual, Alegent Health, in partnership with others, will ensure the full array of mental health services across the life span. Driven by our passion to sustain and improve health through wellness, education and prevention, we will improve the overall health status of our community with leading clinical practice and quality outcomes. We will be valued because of the way in which our services are integrated across the touch points of people's lives, promoting ease of access and seamless care.

- Establish collaborative partnerships with community groups, academic institutions, government entities, internal groups and others in order to take a proactive role in developing a world-class system and model that involves solutions for the mind, body and spirit of individuals, families and work teams in our community.
- Keeping the interests of patients and physicians at the forefront, develop a plan to create a Neuroscience Center that launches Alegent Health to the national and international forefront for treatment, diagnostics, prevention and research.
- Acquire cutting-edge technology and medicines to establish Alegent Health as a national leader in behavior health wellness and prevention.
- Create the framework where quality will drive all operational and strategic decisions, allowing Alegent Health to be recognized nationally in quality outcomes and service excellence.

Cardiovascular

The Cardiovascular Right Track participants found a common vision around establishing a world-class cardiovascular program for our community that emphasizes prevention, ensures quality outcomes, utilizes emerging technology, and assures an exceptional patient experience. Alegent Health will reach this vision through an empowered, cohesive, physician-driven cardiovascular leadership council.

- Acquire the necessary technology to establish Alegent Health as the leader in the region in cardiovascular imaging and intervention, and use that technology at multiple sites to allow earlier diagnosis and intervention.
- Keeping the interests of patients and physicians at the forefront, develop a plan to create a consolidated cardiac and vascular Center of Excellence that participates in research, establishes national and global partnerships, and achieves world-class standards in quality and prevention.
- Explore partnerships and primary care growth as a way to expand program offerings and outreach activities to serve more patients in the region.
- Become internationally known as a leader in motivating people to adopt healthy lifestyles by engaging the community and pioneering community-based wellness and prevention programs.
- By 2015, create the framework where quality will drive all operational and strategic decisions, allowing Alegent Health to consistently perform in the top 10 percent nationally in quality outcomes and service excellence.
- Deliver compassionate, patient-centered, informed, and individualized care and service, achieving employee, physician, and patient satisfaction at the highest levels.

Neuroscience

The Neuroscience Right Track participants found a common vision around standardizing processes and consolidating physician groups to achieve excellent patient outcomes and physician satisfaction and to control costs. In order to achieve this vision, Neuroscience will offer Neurology services at each Alegent Health metro area campus, with specialization to be available at yet-to-be defined locations.

- By 2015, create a world-class team of partners providing world-class care, becoming the Neuroscience program from which others in the country model their programs.
- Develop evidence-based practices that produce outcomes in the top decile in the nation in spine, stroke, neuro-oncology and neuro-degenerative disease.
- Organize and optimize our resources to create an integrated health delivery model for Alegent Health Neuroscience that brings all campuses and providers together for the benefit of our patients, overseen by a governance board comprised of engaged physicians and administrators.

- Implement a population-based health management program, emphasizing education, wellness and preventative care.
- Create a unified set of clinical measures to transparently share within Alegent Health and with the communities we serve.

Oncology

The Oncology Right Track participants found a common vision around the themes of creating a world-class customer experience, providing consistently high-quality clinical care, enhancing and strengthening communication, and leveraging technology to improve outcomes.

- Create a single “front door” for our patients, eliminating the complexity in their move from prevention to diagnosis into treatment, and provide education and support to empower them through to their recovery. Ensure the human touch remains strong in all interactions with patients.
- Develop common clinical quality measures, begin measuring and impacting outcomes, and then move to transparency with the public. Enhance quality by focusing on increasing the number of Oncology Certified Nurses who care for our patients.
- Enhance communication among all physicians who are part of a patient's care, making use of electronic medical records to facilitate the process. Create a stronger focus on multi-specialty care plans for all cancer patients.
- Leverage technology in key areas to enhance clinical outcomes, and begin the shift from treating disease to screening for early detection, or preventing the occurrence of cancer altogether.
- Build strong partnerships with business, government, other not-for-profits and the education community to better connect with our community and the patients we serve.
- The group had a valuable discussion about developing a new model of care, which would centralize some functions while retaining others in a distributed manner. It was recommended that a smaller group would do further work around the concept within a 60-day timeframe and report their recommendations to the Executive Leadership Council.

Orthopaedics

The Orthopaedics Right Track participants found a common vision around the importance of a consistent, extraordinary patient experience, and recognized that to accomplish this Alegent Health needs strong governance by physicians who are focused on quality clinical care, an exceptional workforce and a commitment to the promotion of healthy lifestyles throughout the community.

- By 2015, become a nationally recognized Orthopaedic Center of Excellence, with at least five sub-specialty programs that are “world-class.”

- Drive the quality of Orthopaedic care at Alegent Health by a system-wide team, engaged physicians and Alegent Health management. This group would establish appropriate standards to be applied across all Alegent Health sites, and ensure that best practices are shared throughout the entire organization.
- Establish a comprehensive sports medicine program as part of a broad wellness program that proactively reaches into the community to impact the health and well-being of all.
- Create an Orthopaedics Governance Council to foster a unified vision for Orthopaedics.
- Create cohesive partnerships between Alegent Health and the Orthopaedics community to deliver world-class care for our patients.
- Immediately begin a system-wide discussion among joint replacement physicians regarding the use of hip and knee implants, creating a model in partnership with Alegent Health to offer high quality, yet cost-effective care for our patients.

Women's & Children's

The Women's & Children's Right Track participants found a common vision around establishing and providing a continuum of world-class care through all life cycles by developing key standards for delivering quality of care, standardizing well-child care across the system and developing collaborative partnerships for solving community health problems.

To achieve this vision, Women's & Children's will build on existing partnerships, as well as identify new partners, provide greater access to care and services for patients and physicians, improve its organizational infrastructure and leverage Alegent Health resources and strengths.

- Continue to centralize specialized services while maintaining decentralized obstetrics care at all sites. Develop common quality standards for obstetrics (clinical and consumer-based) against which all Alegent Health obstetrics programs will be measured.
- Create a strong continuum of care across women's' lifecycles. Look for opportunities to collaborate with other service lines to develop specialized services for women with specific diseases and at all stages of life.
- Develop a system-wide model for child/adolescent healthcare that focuses on preventive health, acute and chronic disease management and community-based research initiatives. Build on the strengths of Boys Town Pediatrics and Alegent Health Clinic in pediatric care.
- Serve as the leader in addressing and solving community health issues by developing key partnerships and a community service report card to measure and report progress to the community. Establish parish/school health network at key Alegent Health clinics that will benefit at-risk audiences.
- Create a Patient Assistance Program (PAP) that would help physicians connect their patients to community resources in social services, behavioral health or other services.

Following the close of this first *RightTrack* series on clinical service leadership, the Executive Leadership Council began its own *RightTrack* process for considering these horizon plans and distilling them into both action plans and recommendations for the Alegen Health Board of Directors.

From the dialoguing, brainstorming, straight talk and tough decisions of *RightTrack*, emerged new relationships and the spirit of trust they need to thrive. “We built new bonds between the board and physicians, physicians and staff, and physician to physician. A newfound trust has taken root,” said Alegen Health Board Chair Larry Beckman, who served as a participant in the *Right Track* session on Cardiovascular Services.

“One of the unexpected consequences of this whole process has been the social capital. It’s been amazing to see the relationships that have been formed and the new ideas that have popped up,” said Marie Knedler, vice president and chief operating officer, Alegen Health Mercy Hospital.

As *Right Track* participants and Alegen Health leadership look ahead, they emphasize their commitment to sustaining the relationships and trust seeded in the first *Right Track* series. “We’re ready to move forward together,” said Wayne Sensor, CEO of Alegen Health. “*Right Track* has given us a new model for collaboration and co-creation – one that will help to transform our organization and impact the quality of healthcare.”

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