



The HealthCare Connection A “Business of Character”

Background: In March 2008, The HealthCare Connection engaged the Character Council of Greater Cincinnati & Northern Kentucky to adopt the “Business of Character” process, designed to help THCC internalize 49 positive character qualities and exemplify high business standards with its employees, clients, constituents and the community.

A culture of character promotes business ethics, excellence, teamwork, and productivity, essential ingredients for providing comprehensive health care to our clients. CEO Dolores Lindsay views the Business of Character process as a natural fit for THCC, “So many of the 49 character qualities relate directly to our core values: Service, Respect, Integrity, Accountability, Innovation, Diversity, and Excellence. We feel that this focus will help bring our core values to life by calling attention to one key character quality each month. By making character a central focus of our organization, we will more fully realize our mission of providing quality, culturally sensitive and accessible health care services to the medically underserved, uninsured and underinsured.”

The Business of Character process was kicked off with presentations to the Board of Directors, providers, and through staff training sessions. We reinforced the initiative through monthly reminders of the quality of the month and in late 2008, established a Character Committee of six dedicated employees.

Current Strategies: In year two of the initiative, THCC continues to work with the Character Council to enhance the culture of the organization, assist in team building, and strengthen the work ethic and level of service to its patients. We will continue with small strides, allowing the initiative to gather momentum and energy. We see this as a long-term focus for THCC as the organization is in a unique position to model good character for the 16,000+ clients it serves, for other community health centers and health care providers, and for the communities in which it operates.

For more information about the Character Council and Business of Character process, visit www.charactercincinnati.org. For the 49 qualities, see www.charactercincinnati.org/qualitieslisting.html.

Objectives:

- Raise the standard within the organization and its employees for good character by providing common language and steps
- Hire new employees based on character as well as skills and therefore enhance the quality of new hires.
- Create connection between THCC employees by providing opportunities for them to reveal their true and highest selves
- Bring out the best in THCC employees by helping them identify and build character strengths
- Assist specific departments in maximizing organizational strengths and targeting opportunities for improvement.
- The HealthCare Connection will become known as the health care organization which leads the way in character.

Anticipated Measurable Outcomes:

- Enhance employee morale and job satisfaction through teamwork and mutual respect for the role that everyone plays in the organization
- Enhance job performance
- Enhance patient satisfaction

How it Works

Step 1: “Success through Integrity” character discovery seminar for new employees

New employees will participate in an introductory workshop designed to build awareness of good character, introduce employees to the 49 qualities, and assist them in identifying core strengths and opportunities for growth.

Step 2: Integrate Character into Human Resource Practices

THCC employees will be recognized at quarterly staff meetings for their character qualities. All employees have the chance to nominate employees who best practice the character quality of the month for special recognition.

Step 3: Reinforce Character Focus

Constant reminders are key for changing culture and behavior:

- All THCC employees receive monthly email reminders promoting one character quality each month.
- Posters for the quality of the month are displayed at the Lincoln Heights, Mt. Healthy and Forest Park locations.
- Staff will participate in brief “Energizing sessions” to refresh and renew the initiative.

Step 4: Incorporate Character into Vision & Image

THCC will become known as a “Business of Character” through its identity and marketing materials and will provide a model as the first local health care provider to adopt this positive focus.