



Greeley
A CHARTIS GROUP COMPANY

**Medical Staff
Bylaws Redesign
Gets Physicians
and Administrators
Rowing in the Same
Direction**

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CLIENT

Fort Madison Community Hospital is an integral part of a community of 12,000 located on the scenic Mississippi River in Southeast Iowa. Their primary market area covers sixteen zip codes crossing two state lines. As a rural hospital, Fort Madison Community Hospital is focused on providing compassionate, quality care utilizing the latest in technological resources.

CASE STUDY

Medical staffs can't align with hospital administration unless their bylaws allow them to do so. Despite medical staff leaders' and administration's best efforts, if it isn't written in the bylaws, it isn't going to happen.

This is precisely the problem that Fort Madison Community Hospital faced for years. The organization's antiquated bylaws were inflated with "pomp and circumstance, but not a lot of specifics," says James Platt, CEO. They didn't allow for a strong working relationship between the medical staff and administration because they didn't put the medical executive committee (MEC) to good use. Rather than the MEC making decisions on behalf of the medical staff, the entire medical staff voted on every change, big or small. "One person could tie up a medical staff meeting forever if he had enough people standing behind him," says Platt.

A Joint Commission citation and a dire need to create a better working relationship prompted the organization to overhaul its bylaws, but it first needed to get buy-in from the medical staff. Some physicians interpreted any desire to change the bylaws as an attack against the medical staff for the benefit of administration rather than a step in the right direction.

To overcome this preconceived notion, Platt and several medical staff leaders attended conferences hosted by The Greeley Company that focused on medical staff leadership and credentialing. Hearing other physicians discuss modern bylaws requirements opened reluctant physicians' minds to future possibilities.

The next step was to hire The Greeley Company to guide the bylaws redesign process. The key was to not frame the bylaws redesign process as something that the medical staff must do to be compliant with Joint Commission standards, but rather as an exercise that would create a flexible document that would allow the medical staff and administration to partner together to achieve high quality patient care. The Greeley Company continues to provide guidance to Fort Madison Community Hospital because the redesign process, as Platt puts it, is a work in progress that requires regular updates due to medical staff governance and regulatory changes. Fort Madison's medical staff thoroughly reviews the bylaws every

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two years, with the MEC leading the charge. In addition, medical staff leaders are strongly encouraged to attend educational seminars, and the hospital picks up the bill.

As a result of the bylaws redesign, many committees that were once run by the medical staff are now hospital committees on which medical staff and administrative leaders participate. The medical staff was also able to cut down on the number of meetings that members were once required to attend. At the same time it revised its medical staff bylaws, Fort Madison also revised its peer review process, which was reflected in the new bylaws. Most importantly, the medical staff and administration developed trust and a team attitude.

“It’s a true partnership between the medical staff and administration now. We have been able to move forward to create the trust and positive interactions that have become vital to any successful organization today,” says Platt.

5 STEPS TO CREATE CONTEMPORARY BYLAWS

Bylaws should not be an archaeological find; they should be a living, breathing document that truly serves the medical staff well. They should memorialize the effective, efficient functioning of the medical staff and be a resource to all medical staff members when there are issues of concern. The following steps will assist you in developing these useful contemporary documents.

- 1 Evaluate the current effectiveness and efficiency of the medical staff
- 2 Compare medical staff services department practices to regulatory and legal standards and best practices
- 3 Work with an expert who can present the full gamut of bylaws and governance options available
- 4 Choose the options that work best for your medical staff, hospital, and community
- 5 Memorialize the chosen governance options into a new bylaws document in language that physicians can understand and apply

The Greeley Company, a division of The Chartis Group, is a leader in healthcare consulting, education and interim staffing solutions, with unmatched experience in the areas of regulatory compliance, accreditation, bylaws and peer review, as well as credentialing and privileging. Greeley's mission is to help healthcare organizations improve efficiency, comply with regulations and standards, achieve practitioner engagement and alignment, and excel in delivering high-quality, cost-effective patient care. For more information, visit greeley.com.