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AAHFN Leadership Message

Strategic plan: Vision for our future



Every two years, just before the Annual Meeting in June, the AAHFN Board and Association Headquarters (AH) staff gather for an all day strategic planning meeting. AAHFN's strategic plan is a succinct document that provides the vision and direction by describing specific strategies to reach established goals and objectives based on the current environment. Prior to this meeting, current and past board members, committee chairs, long term AAHFN members and key industry partners are asked to complete a 16 item survey. The survey data provides information to build the new strategic plan. Examples of survey questions include: How do you define success? What are our strengths and weaknesses? What is the most important benefit? What are the top issues facing the organization? What should be our top priorities for the next year, 3 years, 5 years? In addition, AH staff provided us with current evidence based reading material such as the article titled: The End of Membership As We Know It: Building the Fortune-Flipping, Must-Have Association of the Next Century.

The strategic planning process was facilitated by AAHFN's CEO Karyn Lockshine, and supported by AH staff including a representative with strategic planning expertise from the AH's national headquarters. One of the main themes in the literature provided which greatly informed our process was the importance of recognizing the uniqueness and needs of multigenerational membership comprising of Baby Boomers, Generation X, Y (Millennials) and Zs. Early in the day we analyzed the survey results pulling out key themes and ideas to serve as building blocks to our new strategic plan such things as: Robust financial portfolio, marketing a premier organization for HF nurses and expansion of easily accessible resources. After lunch, we jumped into a SWOT analysis identifying AAHFN's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Building on the data reviewed and discussion thus far we began to prioritize goals and strategies and as you can imagine ensued lively conversation.

We all agreed on AAHFN's Mission Statement: The American Association of Heart Failure Nurses unites professionals, patients and caregivers in the support and advancement of heart failure practice, education and research, thus promoting optimal patient outcomes. As

well as the Vision Statement: To be the foremost nursing association across the heart failure continuum. We narrowed ideas that align with our mission down to the top 5 initiatives: 1 - Expand financial reserves and allocate resources to organizational priorities 2 - Grow, retain, engage and develop membership 3 - Develop additional multimodal and diverse educational offerings 4 - Strengthen national recognition and partnership opportunities 5 - Cultivate nursing research and translation into practice. For the remainder of the day we determined specific strategies, action items and accountabilities for each initiative. Strategic priorities are defined as "Rocks", which are the actionable activities for accountable board members. For example, Beth Davidson and Ann Laramee were assigned the strategic initiative: grow, retain, engage and develop membership with specific action item to develop a retention and membership plan. As another example, board members Craig Thomas, Sita Price, Linda Wick, Lisa Rathman, Cindy Bither and Kim Nelson were tasked with strategic initiative number 3 with action items for creating alternative educational formats, additional access to pharmacology credits and more advanced practice nurse programs, all considering the diverse generational membership. Another example is how we cultivate nursing research and translation into practice, Kelly Stamp, Carolyn Reily and Marilyn Pasun will create a plan to build relationships between nurse scientists and clinicians.

Successes realized thus far: development of a mentorship program, live webinars targeting requested topics such as palliative care and heart transplantation, micro volunteer opportunities and adoption of a patient/family website portal for support and education.

Our strategic plan is a living document that helps align our priorities so we can all work together to meet specific goals. This ultimately will help AAHFN flourish as a vibrant, valued and relevant professional organization. There are many opportunities for you as a member to help make the strategic plan successful. Feel free to contact any board member and view our most current strategic plan at: https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.aahfn.org/resource/resmgr/docs/about/strategic_planning_2018-2020.pdf.

Ann Laramee is a Nurse Practitioner in Cardiology and Palliative Medicine at the University of Vermont Medical Center. She has managed patients with heart failure for over 25 years. Areas of expertise and research interests are HF management, palliative care, evidence based practice, and health literacy with numerous publications and national presentations in each area. Ann is a charter member of AAHFN and has served on the AAHFN Membership committee, the Annual Meeting Committee serving as chair for the 2016 Annual meeting and is currently serving as a director on the Board.

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