Book: *Managing the Healthcare Professional*

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First-line supervisors to department heads will fine McConnell's work an excellent practical guide in leading and managing a diverse group of health care professionals within their organizations. It is well-written and provides a compendium of useful leadership and management information. Health care organization human resource professionals will especially find McConnell's work insightful as he discusses a wide range of topics from current Federal labor legislation, unionization and credentialing.

It can easily be argued that this book is just another management text that addresses "uniform personal policies" and the "uniqueness" of various professional groups. He does add another dimension which examines the individual "employee's professionalism" as part of a larger organization consisting of diverse health care professionals.

All things have a beginning and McConnell lays out his foundation with a discussion of "profession" as it relates to the healthcare field followed by a historical summary of the development of the healthcare profession. These first two chapters provide the reader with an overview on 27 professions from Physician, Pharmacist, and Physician's Assistant to Surgical Technician. His description also includes a summary of educational as well as academic, certification, registration, and licensure requirements for each professional health care field.

One facet of the book addresses professional mobility regarding vertical and horizontal career paths among clinicians and technicians. He addresses the challenges and opportunities associated with health care occupations noting that "the more narrowly defined and specialized an occupation becomes, the more difficult it becomes to move out of that occupation" within an organization. A good example is Hospital Pharmacy, a highly specialized field. Usually, a Pharmacist is hired into a health care organization directly from college and if he remains in that organization for a length of time may only aspire to become the Head of Pharmacy depending upon a vacancy based on the incumbent seeking employment elsewhere or retirement. In instances where health care professionals cannot be rewarded with upward mobility, McConnell describes other methods of maintaining employee motivation such as "parallel path progression" where organizations "recognize continued good performance" by additional pay and benefits equivalent to those holding management positions.

Another facet is the issue of Unionization. The author provides a detailed discussion on current state of union activity within the health care industry as well as employee/employer concerns regarding unionization. He also provides clear guidelines as what management can or cannot do in the event their employees are engaged in union organizing efforts. This chapter alone provides a wealth of information for those not fully informed on this topic as well as the "decertification", - that is the process for removing a union from the work place.

The final chapter of the book consists of case studies from actual work situations in health care organization. The purpose of these studies is to capstone each leadership and management issue addressed in the book.

Managing the Health Care Professional is more than an excellent "how to" guide. It provides insightful information on how all health care professionals can lead and manage in a dynamic market place. McConnell's work should be required reading in all health care related academic programs.