



# Modern Healthcare Q&A

*With Adam Perlman, MD, MPH, FACP*

*Associate Vice President, Duke Health & Wellness*

*Executive Director, Duke Integrative Medicine*

## **Q Why do we need integrative healthcare leaders?**

Our current disease-driven approach to care has not only resulted in escalating costs, it has created a fragmented health system that is both episodic and impersonal. We could fix many of the challenges of our current system by focusing on prevention and health promotion, and by addressing the real causes of illness instead of just treating symptoms. Integrative Healthcare can help. With proven models in place, it can be defined as an approach to care that puts patients at the center and addresses the full range of physical, emotional, mental, social, spiritual and environmental influences that affect their health.

However, creating a culture of health and wellbeing requires more than good clinical skills. We need healthcare leaders who understand the immense value of conventional medicine as well as the promise of integrative care and who can create collaborative environments in which the best of both can be realized. We need leaders who are able to bring about broad scale change within healthcare by thinking strategically and inspiring others to peak performance. The *Leadership Program in Integrative Healthcare* is designed to develop just such leaders.

## **Q Why is it so important to take this course?**

Integrative Healthcare can lead to improved outcomes and quality of care, lower costs, and increased patient engagement, activation, and satisfaction. But to be able to implement an integrative approach requires highly developed leadership skills, business acumen, an understanding of what it takes to be a change agent, knowledge of the whole healthcare system and how it operates, and a deep commitment to a new vision for healthcare.

## **Q Will this course teach methods for better patient engagement?**

Yes. Over the past three decades, Integrative Healthcare practitioners have developed proven methods for engaging patients in their own care. From patient education to health coaching to relationship development to shared decision-making to teaching patients stress reduction skills such as mindfulness, Integrative Healthcare focuses on creating a true partnership between the patient and the provider. Leaders taking this course will learn how to implement these strategies within their clinic, hospital or healthcare system.

## **Q Describe how an integrative model helps improve quality?**

Many chronic diseases are linked to behavioral or environmental risk factors. Evidence is accumulating that some of these conditions can be mitigated and even avoided altogether if people make better choices about eating nutritious food, adopting healthy habits (non-smoking, etc.), building healthy relationships, living and working in less toxic environments, engaging in stress reduction, staying fit and being purposefully engaged in life. This is what Integrative Healthcare has been addressing and does so well.

## **Q Does this approach to care delivery reduce costs?**

Prevention and health promotion, which are the foundation of Integrative Healthcare, are the key.

Currently, the majority of our healthcare dollars are spent after a person is in crisis, when it costs the most to intervene and when the possibilities for full recovery are the slimmest. In 2008, \$2.1 trillion dollars were spent on medical care to treat diseases after they had already occurred. Data presented at the IOM Summit "Integrative Medicine and the Health of the Nation" revealed that five chronic conditions — diabetes, heart disease, asthma, high blood pressure and depression — account for more than half of all US health care expenditures. Because many of these conditions can be prevented in the first place, mitigated or even reversed through the use of comprehensive lifestyle change programs, the IOM Summit faculty pointed out that the financial savings to the healthcare system would be substantial.

## **Q Do you have examples of where this model of care is being used?**

The curriculum includes integrative strategies used in twenty different clinics, hospitals and health systems, including the military.

## **Q What is the program cost and how does a person find out more?**

The program, which begins in 2015, costs \$25,000. Financial assistance is available. The deadline for applying for the first cohort is October 31, 2014. More information is available at

[www.integrativehealthleaders.org](http://www.integrativehealthleaders.org).