

# Big-town medicine meets small-town America

Leaders of a financially-fit, three-hospital system in rural Pennsylvania sought a partner to deliver on population health and invest in the troubled local economy. While confident in the out-of-state, investor-owned partner, they knew physician, political, regulatory and union challenges could stymie the deal. They were, after all, the region's economic engine. They needed a smart internal and external communications campaign to ensure a successful transaction.

## THE SOLUTION

We immediately assembled a campaign team of leaders, board members and deal counsel to define goals and roles. Objectives were: Rally the troops around the system's vision for the future, neutralize opposition, complete the transaction and launch the new foundation.

First step in the campaign was to broadly share the board's vision and why partnership was the right path. We took a unique approach to neutralize each possible group of detractors. Two months later, we announced the selected partner, and focused on clearing regulatory hurdles and getting stakeholders comfortable with the partner.

Throughout the process, the merging systems presented a united front with leadership from both organizations attending most engagements. This joint approach provided consistent messaging for employees, physicians, the media and the local community as they scrutinized the new partnership.

We also developed a "pressure valve" of constructive ways for audiences to express concerns and ask questions.

## THE RESULTS

On the partnership announcement day, the communications cascade generated relief, excitement and celebration by internal and external audiences. Leadership dubbed the partnership as an investment of "big-town medicine in small-town America." which led to similar headlines.

Media coverage was balanced and fair. Unions never challenged. The team neatly navigated regulatory requirements to convert from a non-profit, closing within six months of the LOI announcement. The transaction's \$100 million foundation was viewed a stunning benefit for the region.

## TACTICS



Powerful Story



Lockstep Collaboration



Leadership Toolkit



Internal Engagement Campaign



External Grassroots Campaign

## THE TAKEAWAY:

A regional hospital system proactively wanted to partner but was concerned about reaction from physicians, politicians, regulators and labor unions. Our campaign featured a compelling vision and grassroots work to ensure a welcomed transaction.

6

months

from LOI to transaction close

\$500

million

transaction

\$100

million

foundation established