



## Expert Insights From **Melissa Cabot, Regional Director of Business Development at Wachusett Healthcare Management**

Keeping several balls in the air might be a challenge for some, but Melissa Cabot, Regional Director of Business Development at Wachusett Healthcare Management, does it every day. For instance, she said, “We’re always reviewing our clinical capabilities. It’s nonstop; we’re always seeing new trends, and we work hard to stay on top of them. We’ve been able to increase our occupancy 15% from last year.”

### **A Day in the Life**

Communication is more important than ever, and Cabot spends much of her time engaging, sharing, connecting, and collaborating. “I interact with our hospital partners on a daily basis. We talk about issues such and how we can work on shared regulatory changes and infection control in the post-pandemic world.” She also talks to her facility teams about issues such as reimbursement, staffing, and the growing acuity of residents. “We’ve seen greater complexity of care and more comorbidities in our residents,” she said. This calls for staff that is trained and skilled to manage more complex residents, and it means effective, prompt communication with residents and families. Cabot said, “We like to have conversations prior to admission so we can introduce ourselves and let them know what their loved one’s stay is going to look like, including things like rehab, activities, and interventions. They often aren’t sure how to navigate long-term care, and we help them understand the process and how we will work with them to help their loved one. We want them to know the type of environment mom or dad is going to be in.”

### **Compelling Culture**

Wachusett’s culture, Cabot said, is something that distinguishes the organization from its competitors. “We’re really focus on what culture looks like in our buildings,” she said, adding that they show staff they are valued with competitive wages, flexible benefits, and recognition and career advancement programs that are customized for each center and its team.

How did Wachusett create a strong, healthy culture? Cabot said, “I think it’s around the collaboration that stems from our CEO, the regional team and leaders in the buildings.” For example, she said that when there are call-outs and one CNA has to work alone on a weekend, the administrator, DON, and other team leaders will pitch in to help and provide support. “We attend to issues like call-outs, and we certainly want to reduce them; but we don’t want our teams to feel like they’re constantly working,” she said. Then collaboration of the entire team, she suggested, makes everyone feel like they are in this together and don’t have to face their challenges alone.

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## Expert Insights From Melissa Cabot, Continued

### Taking Occupancy Onward

Having a great team is essential to building occupancy. At Wachusett, team leaders are “in constant communication to make sure our facilities are providing the best possible level of care. We do everything we can to set them up for success.” For instance, they communicate with the DONs about the types of patients coming into their buildings, what types of care and services they will need, and any special equipment or support they will need. “Whether this means education or training or special medical equipment, we have all that lined up ahead of time,” she said.

Engaged staff is only one contributor to increasing occupancy. Cabot said, “We’ve worked hard on building relationships with our hospital partners; and

we communicate our clinical capabilities and keep them informed about any updates to these. We’ve been pretty progressive and supportive in these relationships,” she said, observing that they share patient success stories and work with hospital teams to navigate payor challenges and care plan for complex patients. “At the same time, our directors of case management communicate directly with the hospital case managers and discharge planners.”

All this communication, planning, trend tracking enables Cabot and her team to be proactive, responsive, and agile. They work every day to keep all the balls in the air without missing or dropping any opportunities, solutions, or innovations.



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