

Gunn: Employee Engagement Drives Performance Improvement

By KershawHealth CEO Terry Gunn

C-I contributing columnist

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During the past year, the administration and board of trustees of KershawHealth have made a concerted effort to ensure our employee team both understands and embraces the hospital's role in our community. We celebrated those relationships with the YouAreVital and What Matters Most marketing campaigns, with town hall meetings and other internal initiatives. It's had an impact I recognize every day in our team members who are energized and excited by what we are accomplishing and about our future.

Measuring change in an organization is always challenging. One of the ways we've been able to measure the impact of our efforts is by deploying the Gallup Q12 survey. Gallup has developed a proven 12-question survey which efficiently measures how employees feel about a variety of topics including expectations, recognition, relationships, quality and purpose. We conducted an initial survey last spring, and completed a follow-up survey in January. The survey is a powerful way to understand how our employees feel about KershawHealth and how we can help develop a strong team that will consistently deliver high-quality care.

The results have been nothing short of stunning. Our scores have gone up in virtually every category, and the percentage of employees who identify themselves as "engaged" has nearly doubled. What that means is that KershawHealth scored better than *two-thirds* of the organizations surveyed. That would be a wonderful record at any time. But this survey was taken in the midst of significant change; a time which could easily make employees feel uncertain. But I'm so proud of our employee team. In spite of challenges and uncertainty, the vast majority told us in the survey that they feel they have an opportunity to do their best every day, that they know what is expected of them, that their supervisor or someone at work cares about them, and that they and their coworkers are committed to quality. This is employee engagement at its best.

These are the team members who always go the extra mile. It's the housekeeper who stops to help someone find their way in the hospital, even when they're going home after a long shift. The nurse who makes certain a 9-year-old gets to say goodbye to his dying grandfather. Or the unit secretary who collects clothing for a co-worker whose home burned.

Engaged employees like these are how we at KershawHealth measure success. Our engaged, employee team is a foundation that allows us to deliver exceptional care and keep a laser focus on quality. In today's world, that leads to success. It means a stronger hospital for our community and a reputation for excellence that leads more people in the community to

choose KershawHealth for their healthcare. It becomes a cycle that continually builds up both our hospital and our community.

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