



ALEJANDRO ALFONSO DIAZ, 2010 MEXICO

CEO, The American British Cowdray Medical Center, I.A.P.

The first challenge Díaz faced as an Eisenhower Fellow was appointing an acting CEO of the ABC Medical Center while on his program in the U.S. With the president of the Board of Trustees, Díaz decided that his absence would be an opportunity to show trust and respect to all of his direct reports. They encountered some challenges from board members who were against this decision, but Díaz was absolutely sure that each one of the vice presidents and directors throughout the organization were capable of managing their responsibilities and working together as a team. The result of this decision is that, today, the ABC Medical Center has a stronger leadership team.



Díaz had a great opportunity to think about the challenges ABC faced from a new and fresh perspective, thanks to the numerous meetings he had with healthcare leaders in the U.S. These encounters gave him the chance to understand and reflect on how ABC could import and customize acquired knowledge. Some interviews that gave important insight into critical topics were Díaz's discussions with Dr. Steven M. Altschuler, CEO of the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia and William Oetgen M.D., Clinical Professor of Medicine at Georgetown University Medical Center. In these meetings they addressed corporate governance, and how it is often difficult to distinguish the difference between the responsibilities of board members from those of the executives in charge of a hospital's operation, as well as the critical attributes a board member has to fulfill to become a good board member, and how it is sometimes necessary to exclude the important donors from the boards, and so on.

The experience that had the strongest impact on Díaz was his visit with Dr. Richard Kunkle, a senior coach at the Kennametal Center for Operational Excellence (KCOE) and professor at Saint Vincent College. Dr. Kunkle is a USA Eisenhower Fellow from 1994 and an expert in Toyota Production Systems (TPS). He toured Díaz around several hospitals in the Pittsburgh area, which was the first time Díaz had the chance to visit a community hospital's facilities in the U.S. Of the visit, Díaz noted, "I could find that even though they were somehow limited in resources, through the implementation of TPS methodology, those hospitals are able to deliver care with world-class standards." After months of conversations and visits from the ABC team, Díaz hired the services of KCOE. Today, the ABC Medical Center, with Dr. Kunkle and his team, are implementing the TPS methodology with pronounced results because its values are founded in empowering people through trust and respect among everyone who is working at the organization.

"The EF Program has given me a broad perspective about healthcare in the U.S., mainly due to the visits made to community hospitals, where I observed how they were able to go through cultural change processes. Another constant was people's (ability) to talk about the problems and mistakes as the first step to finding a solution. They are not afraid to recognize errors because in doing so, they will be on their way to solving them. I can say that the Eisenhower Fellowship program has influenced my professional style and also that of hundreds of people that work at ABC Medical Center."

Leaders bettering the world around them.