

## Open School

### Video Activity: What Traits Do Health Care Leaders Need Today?

(<http://www.ihl.org/education/IHIOpenSchool/resources/Pages/Activities/GaryKaplan-WhatTraitsDoHealthCareLeadersNeedToday.aspx>)

*Gary Kaplan, MD, FACP, FACMPE, FACPE; Chairman and CEO, Virginia Mason Health System*

#### Facilitator Instructions

- Review the learning objectives and description with your group.
- Watch the [video](#) together (3 min 48 sec).
- As a group, discuss your reactions to the video, using the discussion questions as a guide.

#### Learning Objectives

At the end of this activity, you will be able to:

- Identify several traits that can help a leader succeed.
- Explain the benefits of connecting with staff on the front line of an organization.
- Discuss how transparency can help to lead to health care improvements.

#### Description

Dr. Gary Kaplan has been the CEO and Chairman of the Virginia Mason Health System since 2000. He's also been the Chair of the Board at IHI since 2012. Said another way, Dr. Kaplan knows leadership.

What traits does he believe are critical in today's leaders? Among them, he says, "We are about coaching, facilitating, and tearing down the barriers to our front-line staff being able to do their very best work." Find out what other behaviors Dr. Kaplan promotes in this IHI Open School video short.

#### Related IHI Open School Online Courses

- [L 101: Becoming a Leader in Health Care](#)
- [PS 105: Communicating with Patients after Adverse Events](#)

## **Key Topics**

Leadership; Engage Front-Line Staff in Improvement; Governance and Boards; Connect Leaders to the Front Line; Transparency; Workforce Satisfaction and Retention

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**Facilitator**, show [the video on this page](#). For your group's discussion after the video, feel free to adjust these questions and/or add your own.

## **Discussion Questions**

1. Which of the traits Dr. Kaplan mentioned do you feel is the most important? Why?
2. Can you come up with at least two benefits of a leader visiting front-line staff where they work?
3. Dr. Kaplan says, "We have to be willing to tell the truth." Why can transparency be challenging for leaders?
4. Think of a leader you admire. Does he or she exhibit the traits Dr. Kaplan identified in the video? What other traits does he or she have?
5. How can you improve as a leader?