

# Physician Engagement: A Key to Purchasing Excellence in Healthcare Supply Chains

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## ABSTRACT

Improving hospital supply chain performance has become increasingly important as healthcare organizations strive to improve operational efficiency and reduce cost (Chen D Q, et al, 2013). Existing research highlights that internal integration of organizational functions is not only expected to enhance performance but also makes external integration with the supply chain more beneficial (Schoenherr & Swink, 2012). But surprisingly, there is a strong indication that firms and its supply chain managers emphasise more on external collaboration than on collaboration with internal partners and business units (Poirier, 2008). The profound influence of physicians in healthcare organizations is a big challenge in various supply chain initiatives for the firm's managers. There is often some disconnect between those who make the buying decisions (physicians) and those who actually perform the buying activities (purchasing officers) (Stark & Mangione, 2004; Ford & Scanlon, 2007) emphasising the criticality of involving and engaging physicians in purchasing & supply management processes. This paper identifies collaborative mechanisms, termed as 'physician-engagement in purchasing' that would reduce the physician-manager disconnect by fostering the coexistence of competing logics of both actors and thereby allowing health care organizations to redirect physician's autonomy and knowledge towards improved performance of purchasing and supply management. The paper defines physician-engagement in purchasing at two levels, task and organizational and further examines the moderating effects of physician-engagement on the positive relationship between strategic purchasing and performance.

**Key words:** health care supply chain, physician-manager disconnect, physician engagement.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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