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Effective governance: the roles and responsibilities of board members

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Running a health care organization is a team sport. It is very important that all members of the team—whether on the medical staff, in management, or on the board—understand the role of governance and what constitutes effective governance. Many misunderstandings about the roles of boards exist. Many people think that board members are paid, for example, which is not true.

Don L. Arnwine

My interest in the subject of governance began when I became chief executive officer (CEO) of an organization that was to establish a major health care and medical educational program in West Virginia. Five organizations merged to create the new organization; 5 boards also merged to create 1 board of 56 members. Two years after the merger, we created a governance committee to study the subject, and that's when my interest in governance began. While CEO of the Voluntary Hospitals of America, which grew from 30 to 850 hospitals during my tenure, I had the opportunity to visit with many boards. More recently, I have given 15

