

# Designing an AMC Affiliations Network to Drive High-Value Healthcare Partnerships

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MUSC Health

## » PROJECT OVERVIEW

MUSC Health is the clinical enterprise of the Medical University of South Carolina [MUSC]. As the state's only comprehensive AMC, MUSC Health leverages its 4 hospital campuses and 100+ ambulatory locations – including a nationally recognized children's hospital, NCI-designated cancer center, Level 1 trauma center, National Center of Excellence in Telehealth, and South Carolina's only solid organ transplant center – to deliver the widest range of specialty care in the state.

To further its mission – changing what's possible in health care across South Carolina – MUSC Health developed an outreach program to establish affiliations with other provider organizations in the community. Each affiliation had unique legal constructs, goals and outcomes.

While well intentioned, most affiliations did not deliver desired result, citing issues related to lack of clarity around the operationalization of the relationship, or in some cases, MUSC Health's inability to deliver upon envisioned services. As such, when MUSC Health hired a new Chief of Affiliations and Network Development [CAND] in 2019, the system was presented with an opportunity to conduct an 'Affiliations Program' reset.



## » THE SOLUTION

In partnership with the new CAND, KCG facilitated the planning, redesign, and execution of the Affiliations Program reset. The project spanned nearly 18 months and encompassed four [4] unique workstreams, delineated below:

- PROGRAM ASSESSMENT:** KCG conducted internal and external assessments to gather qualitative and quantitative data regarding the current state of MUSC Health's Affiliations program. Internally, KCG met with key system leaders to gain historic program perspectives, as well as to assess service offering capabilities and capacities. Externally, KCG conducted confidential interviews with current affiliated partners to gather unfiltered, real-world observations about the value of the affiliation, and performed strategic market assessments to clarify both the broad-based competitive landscape and demand for specific service line support.
- EXECUTIVE VISION & STRATEGY:** Leveraging findings of the Program Assessment, KCG and the Affiliations Team worked with a select group of senior health system leaders to define an Executive Vision and Strategy for MUSC Health's Affiliations Program reset. Once finalized, KCG collaborated with the Affiliations Team to build out key programmatic principals & design elements, target clinical service offerings, Affiliate requirements and responsibilities, and success measures.
- SERVICE OFFERING DESIGN:** With the Vision and Strategy defined, MUSC Health selected six [6] initial clinical focus areas that aligned with market demand, Affiliates' clinical capacities, and MUSC Health's capabilities. KCG worked with MUSC Health to develop comprehensive service offerings for each clinical area, as well as to outline partnership structure options, services and resources within, and associated fees. This information was organized and consolidated into an MUSC Health-branded marketing deliverable to be shared with potential Affiliate partners.
- MESSAGING CASCADE:** Throughout the lifecycle of the project, KCG partnered with MUSC Health leaders to drive transparent, strategic communications with both internal and external stakeholders. Specifically, KCG facilitated the messaging of the new Executive Vision and Strategy at an internal senior leadership retreat, as well as two [2] external retreats, where MUSC Health invited current & potential Affiliates to learn about the 'refresh', share their insights, and strengthen state-wide relationships.

## » THE IMPACT

*"KCG was a pivotal partner in assessing and articulating the baseline state of MUSC's Affiliations Program, as well as helping me to understand the unique needs of our community partners and MUSC's internal structure and capabilities. They then facilitated our team's consensus on a clear vision & long-term strategy for the Program. This work has proven foundational for the Program and has enabled us to grow and improve our relationships with Affiliate partners."*

**Matthew Severance**  
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