



Why Every Healthcare Leader Needs a Peer Advisory Group

A practical guide to better decisions, stronger leadership, and trusted peer perspective



Healthcare IT leaders are expected to modernize infrastructure, manage cyber risk, support clinicians, navigate budget pressure, and evaluate AI at the same time. The role is more strategic than ever, but it can also be isolating.

Spark Peer Teams are built for that reality. They give hospital and health system IT leaders a confidential, highly curated environment to pressure-test decisions, learn from peers facing similar constraints, and move faster with more confidence.

“It’s great to know we’re not alone in these challenges, and that by sharing experiences we can keep moving healthcare IT forward together.”

Dr. Roy
CMIO
Nathan Littauer Hospital
Peer Team Member

Why outside perspective matters now

Stanford research found that nearly two-thirds of CXOs do not receive outside leadership advice, even though almost all are receptive to it. That gap matters because major decisions are rarely improved by internal echo chambers alone.

In healthcare, the stakes are even higher. A 2024 WittKieffer survey reported that 84% of healthcare CIOs now sit on the executive leadership team, 53% assumed their role within the last three years, and top priorities include security, major system implementations, talent development, and financial discipline. In other words: the role is expanding while the pressure is intensifying.

At the same time, burnout is real across healthcare leadership. ACHE reported that one-third of healthcare leaders surveyed had burnout scores in the high range. Leaders need a place where they can think clearly, speak candidly, and get smarter with others who understand the weight of the job.



What Spark Peer Teams Are

Spark Peer Teams are small, professionally facilitated groups of healthcare IT leaders matched by operational similarity, leadership level, and real-world challenges. Members are typically directors through C-level leaders from hospitals, health systems, and specialty care organizations.

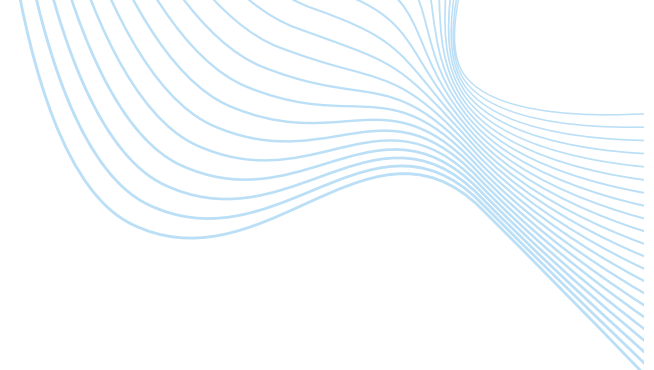
The goal is not networking for networking's sake.

The goal is better judgment.

Each team is designed to help members:

- Work through strategic and operational decisions
- Learn from peers managing similar complexity
- Share practical lessons on cybersecurity, staffing, AI, governance, and transformation
- Build trusted relationships that continue beyond a single meeting
- Stay accountable to the priorities they say matter most





Four Reasons Peer Teams Work

1

Relevant peers, not random contacts

Healthcare leaders do not need more loose connections. They need peers who understand budget cycles, EHR realities, governance friction, security exposure, and the politics of change.

Spark matches members based on factors like organization type, size, budget, and current challenges so conversations are immediately useful.

2

Confidentiality creates candor

The best conversations happen when leaders can be honest about what is not working yet. Spark Peer Teams are built around trust and confidentiality so members can discuss sensitive issues without turning the room into a sales environment.

3

Structure improves outcomes

Unstructured networking can be energizing, but it rarely drives action. Spark Peer Teams use facilitation and focused discussion to help members clarify issues, compare approaches, and leave with next steps.

4

Accountability turns insight into progress

The value is not just hearing good ideas. It is committing to action and returning with lessons learned. That rhythm helps leaders move from reflection to execution.



What Healthcare Leaders Gain

- Reduce decision isolation
- Validate or challenge assumptions before high-stakes moves
- Learn faster from peers' wins and mistakes
- Build stronger executive judgment
- Expand trusted relationships across the healthcare IT community

For leaders navigating AI adoption, cybersecurity exposure, staffing strain, or major implementations, that kind of peer intelligence is a strategic advantage.

“The intentionally small size allows for deep dives into real challenges and opportunities in healthcare IT.”

J. Campbell
CIO
Commonwealth of Mass.
Peer Team Member





Why Spark is Different

Spark Health Group was built around a simple idea: community should connect to help, not to sell. That matters in healthcare, where many leaders are exhausted by transactional vendor experiences.

Spark Peer Teams are designed to create real conversations, practical insight, and long-term trust among healthcare leaders who value honesty, relevance, and authentic exchange.



“This is a great forum for sharing. We are all better together. We can share lessons learned and discuss current challenges.”

Faisal Yamin
Deputy CISO
Penn Medicine
Peer Team Member



Is Spark Right for You?



It may be a fit if you are:

- A healthcare IT leader who wants candid perspective from peers
- Carrying complex decisions without enough trusted outside input
- Looking for a more meaningful alternative to traditional networking
- Interested in year-round relationships, not one-off event conversations
- The strongest leaders are not the ones who go it alone. They are the ones who know when to bring in the right room.



Our Peer Team Leadership



Andy Baker

Founder, CEO

Andy Baker is a multi-company entrepreneur and CEO of Spark Health Group, where he leads a relationship-driven business connecting healthcare IT leaders and solution partners through peer teams, retreats, webinars, and advisory initiatives. Throughout his career, he has built and led multiple companies with a focus on growth, strategic relationships, and community-centered engagement. Baker earned his BS in Business Administration from the Lundquist College of Business at the University of Oregon.



Scott Rester

Lead Moderator

Scott Rester is VP and CIO at LifePoint Health, where he leads IT across more than 80 acute care hospitals in 29 states and oversees a complex application portfolio including Epic, Cerner, Meditech, MedHost, and Allscripts. He previously held senior IT leadership roles at LifePoint, RCCH HealthCare, and Capella Healthcare, and also advised major health systems on large-scale clinical, revenue cycle, and ambulatory transformation. He earned his BS and MBA from Samford University, serves in national healthcare IT leadership circles, and is one of the few executives to hold CHIME's CHCIO designation.



The Spark Community

Virtual Peer Teams

- Monthly meetings with peers
- 90 minutes with fellow leaders
- Carefully curated teams
- Confidential environment



Annual Retreat

- In-person peer discussions
- Travel costs covered for invited providers
- Fall 2026 - Ritz-Carlton, Denver - October 4-6

[Join Now at SparkHLTH.com](https://SparkHLTH.com)



Contact Information



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Sources consulted

- Stanford Graduate School of Business: CXO isolation and outside leadership advice
- WittKieffer: 2024 healthcare CIO leadership survey
- American College of Healthcare Executives: burnout among healthcare leaders