

What's Implementation Got to Do With It?

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WHY STUDY
IMPLEMENTATION?

We Have a Few Problems In Healthcare

- Why can't we improve patient safety?
- Why can't we integrate services to do a better job at treating chronic disease?
- Why can't we lower costs without sacrificing quality?
- Why can't we reduce administrative waste?
- Why can't we equitably distribute services?
- Why can't we reduce ER overcrowding?
- Why can't we increase numbers of primary care doctors?
- Why can't we reduce the huge variations in care and costs across regions of the country?
- Why can't we change “the culture of medical practice”?

WHY STUDY IMPLEMENTATION?

It's not that we don't have reasonable solutions to these problems...

...It's that we can't actually implement those solutions in healthcare organizations.

WHY STUDY SYSTEMS?

Learning how to diagnose what makes an organization tick is the only way figure out how to really fix these problems.

Who Knows About Systems?

- Sociologists of Organizational Behavior
- Business Management Researchers
- Industrial Engineers
- Institutional and Behavioral Economists
- Policy Researchers/Political Scientists in Implementation Sciences

GOALS FOR Epi 247

To develop skills in how to:

Diagnose problems in
Healthcare organizations

Find leverage points for
constructive change

ORGANIZATIONAL ANATOMY

KEY PARTS OF AN ORGANIZATION

1. Structure

2. Culture

3. Governance / Power

4. Organizational Environment

STRUCTURE

SOCIAL STRUCTURE= “A Relatively fixed pattern in social life.”

- **Model: multi-divisional forms, networks, ownership**
- **Size: number of people, amount of infrastructure**
- **Hierarchy: centralization, role structure**
- **Complexity: number of sub-units**
- **Interdependency: feedback between sub-units, built-in redundancies, checks and balances**

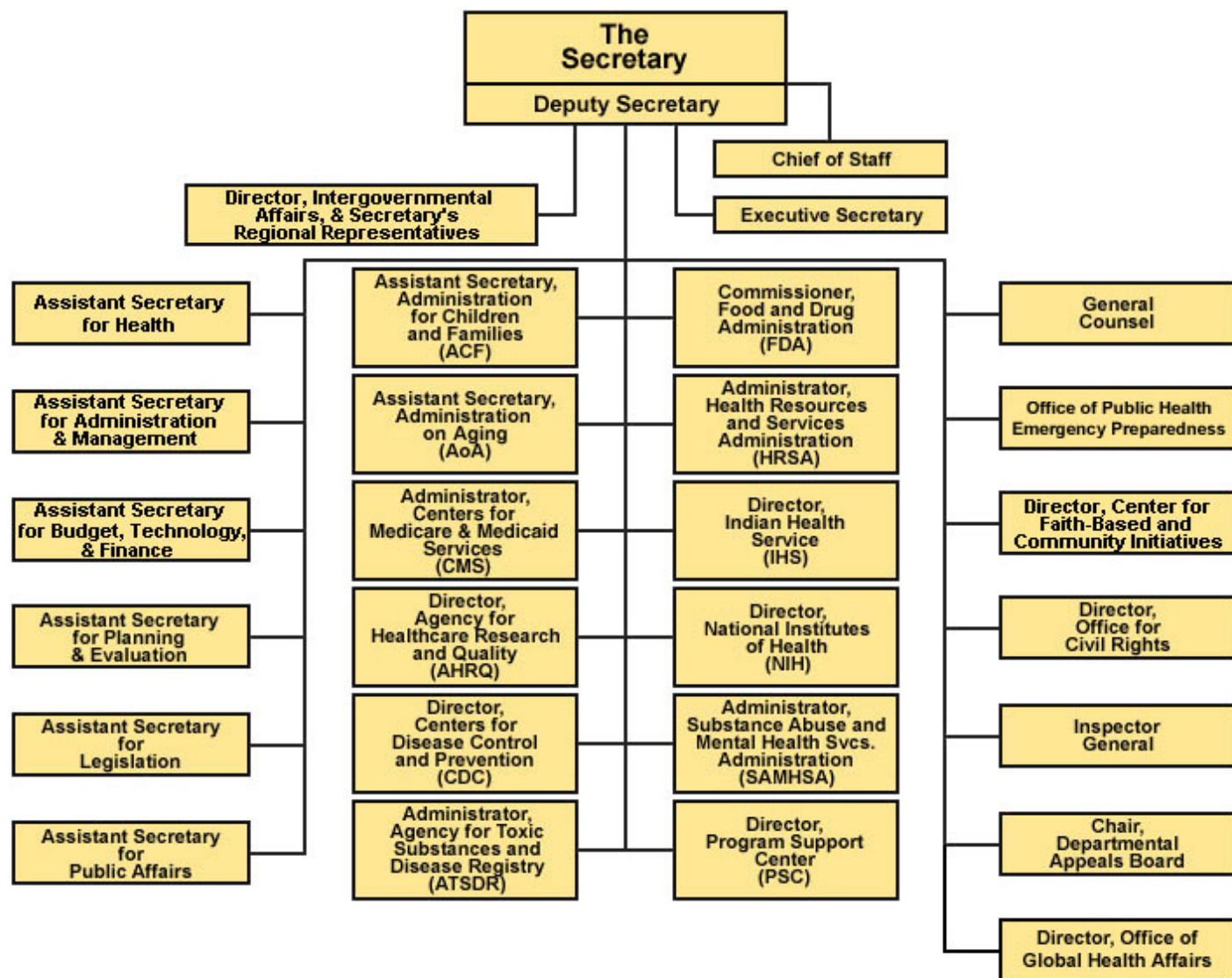
STRUCTURE:

Key Symptoms to Look For

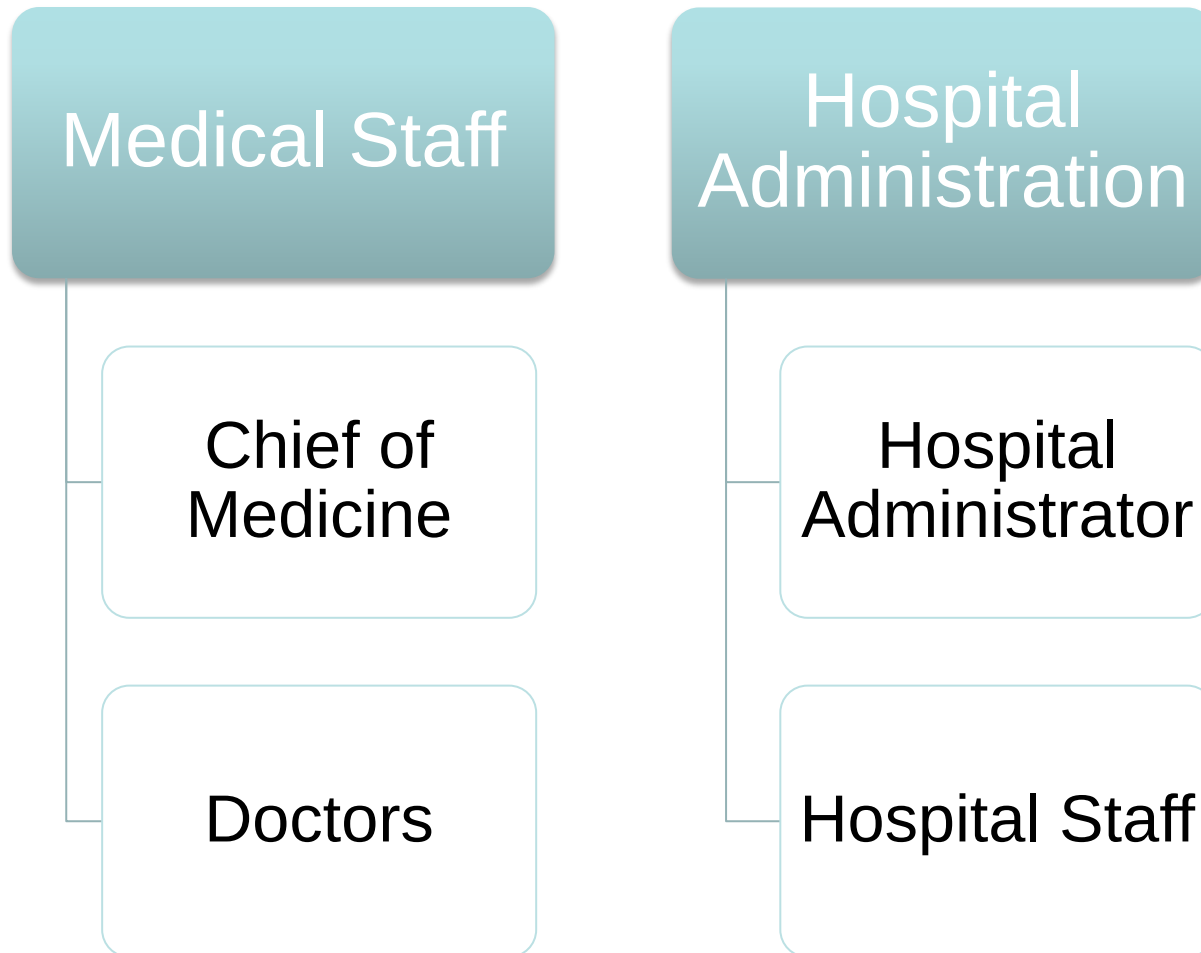
- **DEFINE THE DEMOGRAPHICS:** What is the model, size, hierarchy, staffing pattern, funding and ownership status, degree of complexity in the organization?
- **Are there multiple hierarchies?**
- **What is the optimal structure for the goals and tasks it wishes to pursue? Does the structure fit?**



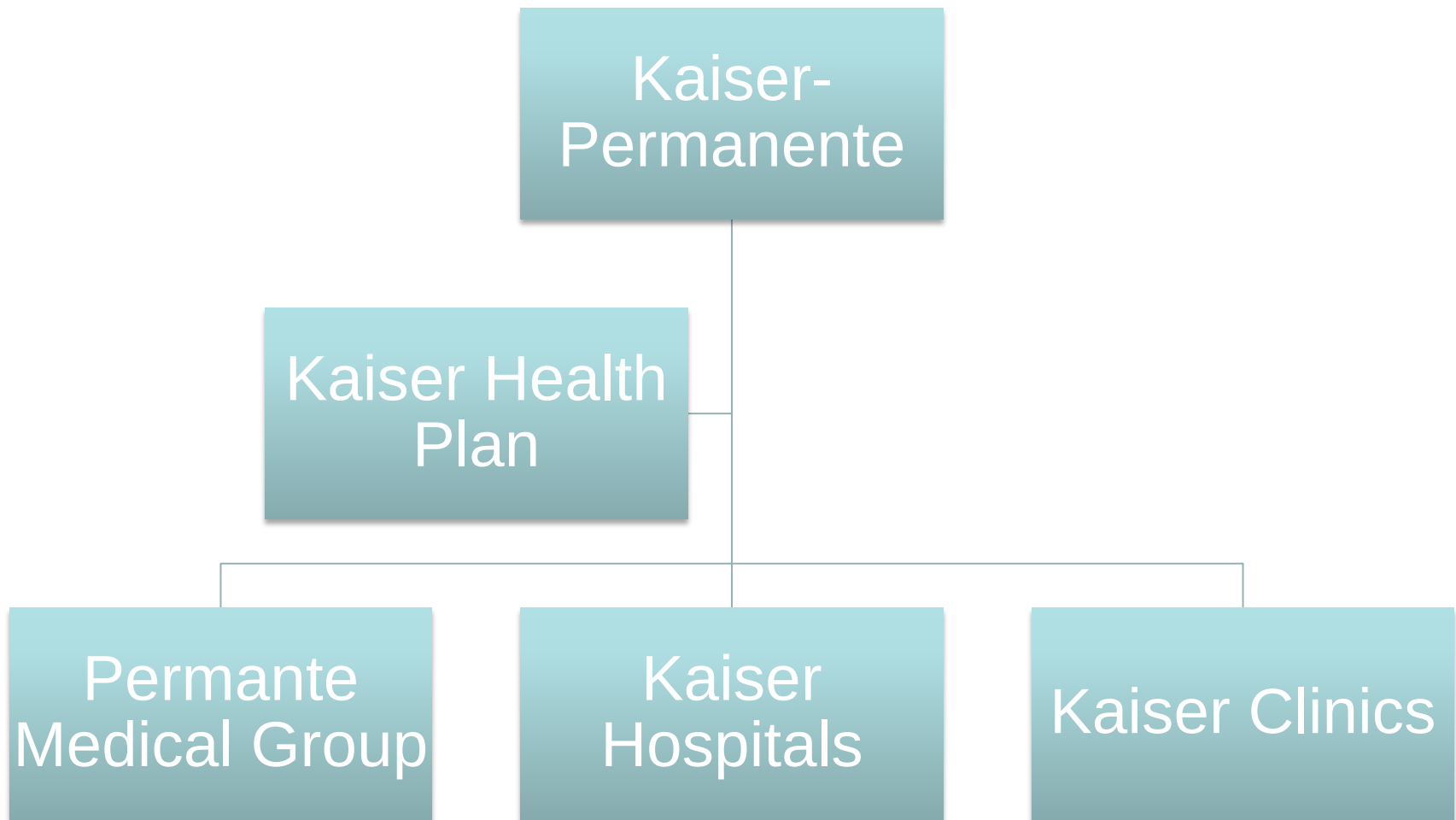
Department of Health & Human Services Organizational Chart



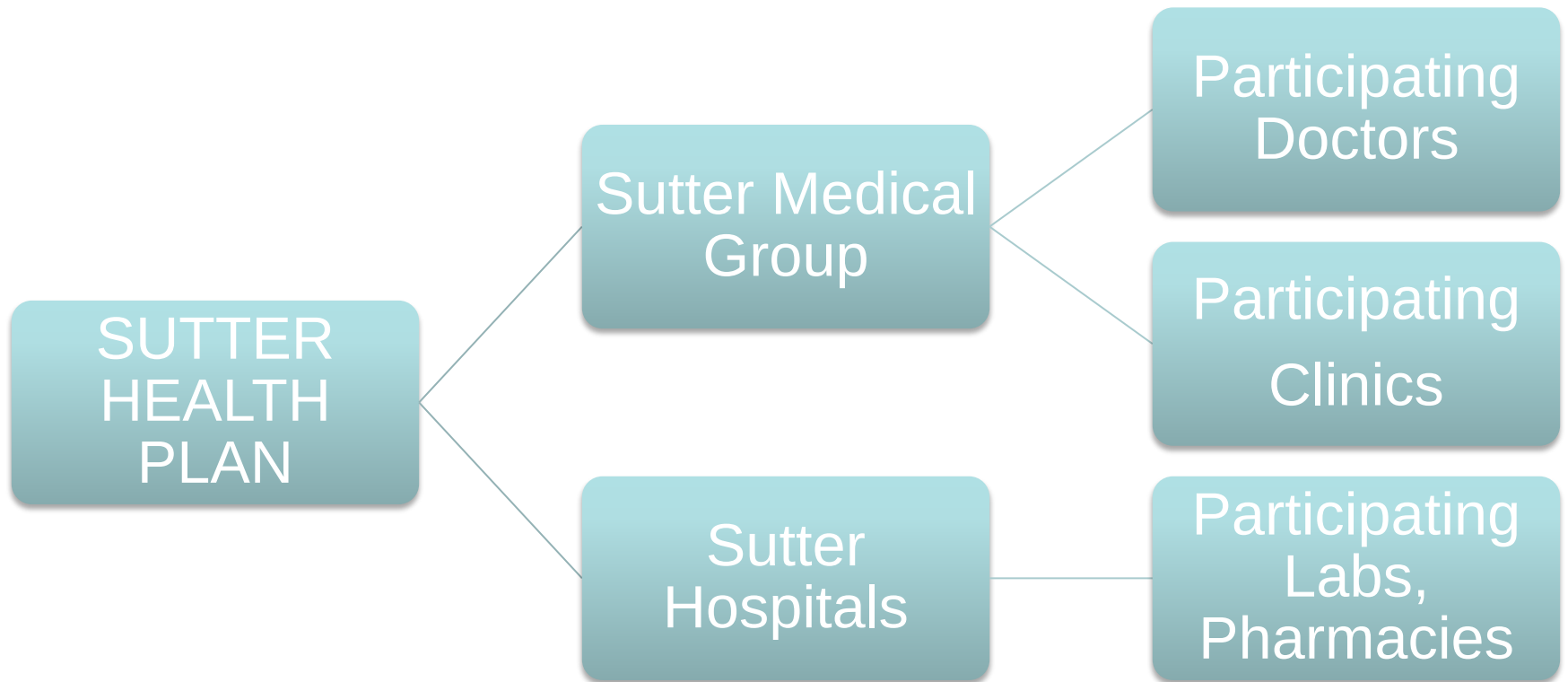
The Classic Form for Healthcare Organizations: Dual Hierarchy



Newer Forms: Integrated Delivery Systems



Newer Forms: Network Models



STRUCTURE:

Why It Matters

- **Structure is often determined by forces outside the organization; this is often why it's not optimal**
- **Top-down bureaucracies work well for routine tasks and therefore, are often poorly suited to structures for most health care organizations**

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

CULTURE= “A shared way of life.”

- shared language, behavior patterns, communication rituals**
- common sense of mission and goals**
- shared institutional history (not necessarily written down)**
- “taken-for-granted” assumptions-tacit understandings that nobody questions**

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE: Key Symptoms to Look For

- **What is the professed goal of the organization?**
- **Does the organization spend most of its energy pursuing that goal?**
- **If not, what was the main goal people pursue?**

CULTURE: Why It Matters

- **Every organization has a core managerial problem it is set up to solve, whether explicit or not**
- **Most organizations have multiple goals– some spoken, others are tacit and varied**
- **The real goal of most organizations is to survive**

GOVERNANCE and POWER

- All organizations are set up to allow some people to control others in an efficient way.
- What control strategies do the powerful use to control decision making by subordinates?

POWER, AUTHORITY, CONTROL: What's the Difference?

POWER= The ability to impose one's will on someone else.

AUTHORITY=The routinization of power based on an assumption of legitimacy.

CONTROL= Fixed, built-in systems that constrain subordinates automatically and invisibly.

GOVERNANCE/POWER:

Key Questions to Ask Yourself

- **Who has power in the organization? Its not always just those at the top of the hierarchy**
- **How do the powerful legitimize and maintain their control? Are they doing a good job of it?**
- **What formal and informal rules (off-the-books practices) govern decision-making?**
- **What effect do informal rules and power have on organizational outcomes?**

GOVERNANCE and POWER: Why It Matters

- **The work of healthcare professionals cannot easily be routinized—controlling clinicians while giving them autonomy is *the* core managerial problem**
- **Informal rules and procedures that allow people to work around the power/control structure are often critical to the success of organizations**

ENVIRONMENT:

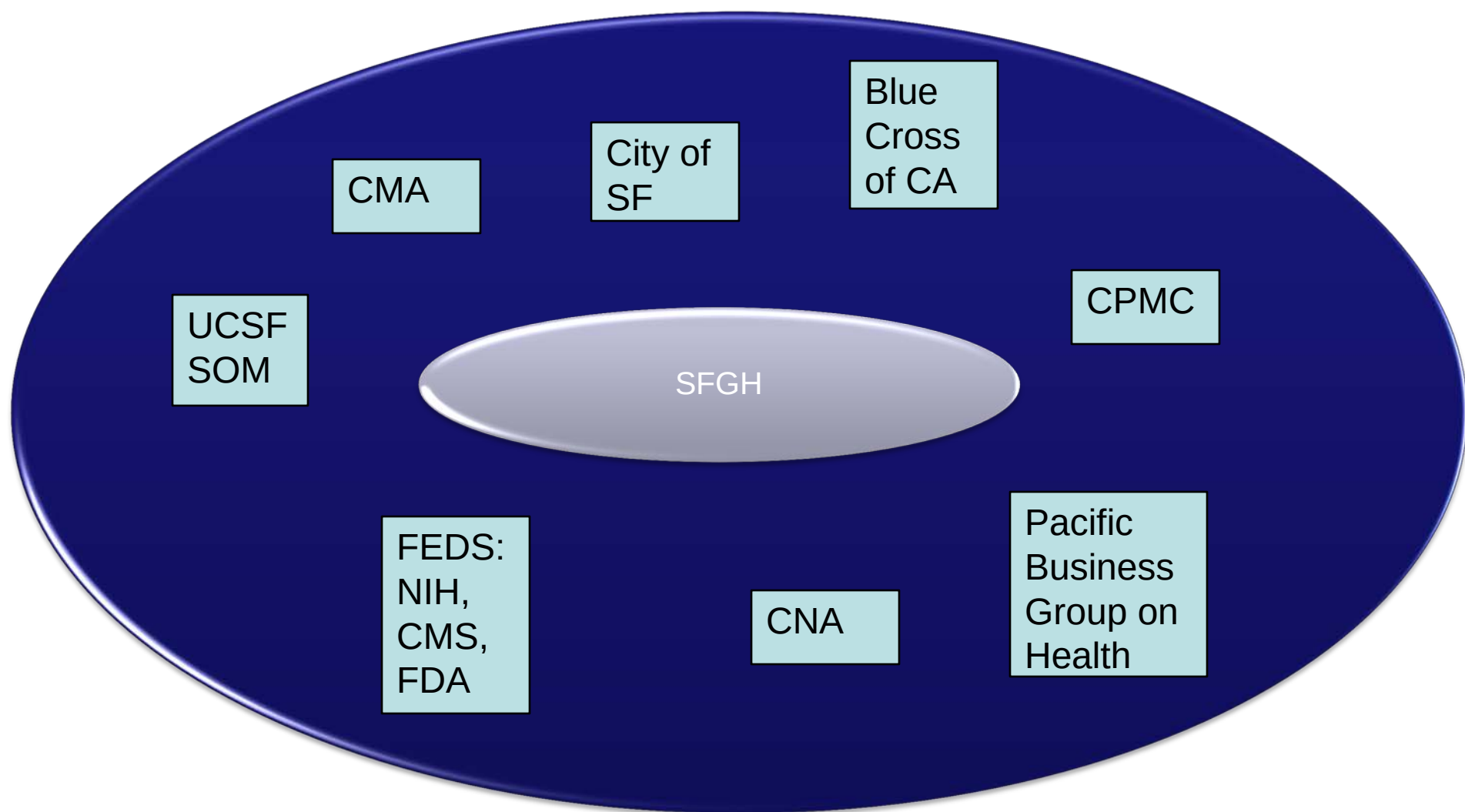
Key Questions to Ask Yourself

- **What players in the environment are critical to the organization's survival?**
- **What are the critical rules that the organization must play by to remain legitimate?**
- **How much influence does the organization have over key parts of its environment?**

ORGANIZATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

- **The organizations that dwell outside the focal organization that it regularly engages with**
- **Environments influence organizations by:**
 - **Providing critical resources for survival (money, staff)**
 - **Providing models, knowledge and cultural symbols**
 - **Defining rules that legitimate what the organization does (legal mandates, professional norms)**
- **Organizations also influence their environments**

Organizations and Environments



Defining the Boundaries of an Organization

What separates the “inside” from “outside”?

- Organizations are nested structures
- Therefore, boundaries can be defined at many ways
- Your research questions will drive how where you draw boundaries for the “focal organization” in your case study
- Don't forget that boundaries are permeable

ENVIRONMENT:

Why It Matters

- **Most healthcare organizations must adapt to their environments or they will die**
- **Government is key to understanding health care environments: it's a source of resources, regulations and legitimacy**
- **“Fitting in” to the environment is important, but for most organizations, there's a lot of window dressing involved that can confuse you**

LEVERAGE POINTS FOR CHANGE

- 1. Structure**
- 2. Culture**
- 3. Governance**
- 4. Environment**