SESSION 3 OF 3 · NCCHCA ANNUAL PRIMARY CARE CONFERENCE 2026

Blink Check

Calibrated intuition for stakeholder-ready decisions.

60-minute executive workshop · Capstone of the series

EP Hughes Consulting

WORKSHOP MAP

Your 60 minutes

Calibrate the blink. Then translate it into language your board can stand behind.

Time	Segment	Output
0–6	Rapid judgment: useful and risky	*First-take poll*
6–17	Expert intuition vs biased shortcut	*Trust / Verify / Slow down*
17–30	Thin-slice lab with FQHC vignettes	*Cue audit*
30–42	Blink Check template	*Verification step + triggers*
42–53	Stakeholder-ready narrative + RAPID/DACI	*Board/finance paragraph*
53–60	Capstone integration + commitment	*Decision narrative to use this week*

THE SERIES

How Session 3 completes the arc.

Three sessions. One layered method. This one connects judgment to language.

01

Frame choices clearly

Decision quality workflow

02

Decide under volatility

Scenarios + 30/60/90 cadence

03 YOU ARE HERE

Calibrate first takes + align stakeholders

Blink Check + narrative

STANDALONE VALUE

Leaders leave with a 90-second check for fast judgments and a stakeholder-ready paragraph.

CAPSTONE VALUE

The Check becomes the entry point into Canvas, volatility triggers, and RAPID/DACI roles.

TEACHING MOMENT

Rapid cognition: two very different things.

The first take that arrives in 200 milliseconds. Sometimes it's wisdom. Sometimes it's a shortcut.

EXPERT INTUITION

Trust it when...

Pattern built from relevant experience

Stable cues and repeated feedback

Clear link between cue and outcome

Confidence calibrated by track record

RISKY SHORTCUT

Doubt it when...

Wrong cue or wrong context

Stereotype, status, or politics

Novel situation, weak feedback loop

Confidence without evidence

The same speed produces both. The work is in telling them apart — quickly.

Trust. Verify. Slow down.

Match the speed of the decision to the risk it carries.

TRUST

USE WHEN

Reversible, familiar, low downside. The cue has proven validity.

VERIFY

USE WHEN

Stakes are meaningful, the cue seems plausible, but one assumption could materially change the call.

SLOW DOWN

USE WHEN

Downside risk, compliance, stakeholder harm, or governance threshold triggered.

← *fast & familiar* · *measured & checked* · *deliberate & escalated* →

The goal isn't slower decisions. It's the right speed for the risk.

ACTIVITY 1 · 8 MINUTES

Thin-slice lab: four rapid vignettes.

Pick one. Write your first take in 30 seconds — before any discussion.

Payer contract 1

A payer offers a modest rate increase with new admin burden. First take?

Payment reform 2

A risk-based opportunity opens with uncertain attribution. First take?

Revenue cycle 3

Workforce 4

PROMPT

Choose one vignette. Write your first take. Then name the cue your brain used.

TOOL · BLINK CHECK

The Blink Check. Six questions in 90 seconds.

A pocket-sized calibration for any first take, before you act on it.

First take

What do I think we should do?

Cue

What signal or story did my brain use?

Validity

Is this cue proven in this context?

Risk

What's the downside if I'm wrong?

Minimum verification

What's the fastest check that matters?

Trigger

What would change my mind?

Full template in your handout. Use it on the vignette you wrote about — or on tomorrow's first decision.

RISK · DEFAULT ESCALATION TRIGGERS

When to formally Slow Down.

Three default triggers. Any one fires — you escalate.

$

Cash exposure

DEFAULT THRESHOLD

≥ $250K downside cash exposure

Or any material days-cash-on-hand impact.

G

Grant compliance

DEFAULT THRESHOLD

Any uncertainty about grant conditions

Allowable use, reporting, or corrective action exposure.

M

Medicaid managed care

DEFAULT THRESHOLD

Material payer or contract terms

Requirements, attribution, care management obligations, quality incentives.

These are workshop defaults. Local governance confirms final thresholds for your organization.

Decision Rights Stamp — without the process debate.

Skip the RAPID/DACI religion. Stamp four roles before the call goes out.

D

DRIVER

CEO

Drives the analysis. Owns the recommendation that lands.

A

APPROVER

CEO · Board on triggers

Final yes. Board/finance committee engages when $, G, or M fires.

C

CFO ROLE

Agree by default

Required sign-off when cash or compliance triggers cross.

E

EXECUTE

Functional owners

Contracting, ops, revenue cycle, HR — clear next steps.

Full RAPID/DACI crosswalk in your handout. The stamp is the operational version.

TOOL · STAKEHOLDER MAP

Same decision. Four audiences. One truth.

Stakeholder-ready means: the same decision logic can be explained without changing the truth.

Board / finance

CARES ABOUT	Risk, cash, compliance, rationale
NEEDS	Decision ask + trade-off + triggers
CHANNEL	Packet · Pre-brief

Clinicians

CARES ABOUT	Care impact, burden, quality
NEEDS	What changes and why
CHANNEL	Council · Huddle

Staff

CARES ABOUT	Workload, workflow, fairness
NEEDS	What to expect, support available
CHANNEL	Manager cascade

Payers / partners

CARES ABOUT	Performance, contract obligations
NEEDS	Clear position + next steps
CHANNEL	Memo · Negotiation

Different message, same truth. Different channel, same triggers.

CAPSTONE ARTIFACT · DECISION NARRATIVE

From first take to board paragraph.

Five clauses. One paragraph. Intuition becomes rationale; rationale becomes alignment.

THE FORMULA

We recommend [OPTION] because it best balances [TOP CRITERIA]. We considered [ALTERNATIVES] and rejected them because of [KEY TRADE-OFF]. The main risk is [RISK], which we'll manage by [MITIGATION]. We'll revisit if [TRIGGER] occurs.

This is the capstone artifact. Send it. Read it aloud. Print it on the meeting agenda.

BIAS · FAST JUDGMENT & TRUST

Where speed costs you trust.

Rapid judgment is efficient — until it lands on people. Then it's a fairness problem.

WHERE FAST JUDGMENT HARMS TRUST

Assumptions about staff capability

Stereotypes about patients or sites

Overvaluing the loudest stakeholder

Underweighting frontline burden

LIGHTWEIGHT COUNTERMEASURES

Name the cue behind the judgment

Ask what perspective is missing

Check if one story is being generalized

Add one stakeholder verification step

The Blink Check works equity-safe by design — naming the cue is the whole intervention.

CAPSTONE INTEGRATION

The 15-minute leadership routine.

Five moves. Install them where decisions already happen.

01

Independent first take

02

Blink Check

03

Decision rights stamp

04

Trade-off + trigger

05

Stakeholder narrative

Install it where decisions already happen — payer strategy, exec team, RCM, workforce, board prep.

One entry per consequential decision.

The log that captures the blink, the check, and the narrative — in one place.

First take	*What I thought we should do — in 30 seconds.*
Cue behind first take	*The signal or story my brain used.*
Decision speed	*Trust · Verify · Slow down*
Verification step	*The fastest check that would have changed my mind.*
Decision rights	*CEO driver · CFO Agree/Consult · Board review on trigger.*
Stakeholder narrative	*Yes / No — paragraph drafted and sent.*

Editable log in your handout. Keep one running. Review it quarterly.

CLOSE · CAPSTONE COMMITMENT

One decision. One paragraph. This week.

Three moves. Small enough to do. Important enough to matter.

01

Use

Apply Blink Check to one live decision this week.

02

Verify

Add one minimum verification step before finalizing.

03

Translate

Write the board/finance or stakeholder paragraph.

Volunteers — one sentence each. Which decision are you blink-checking this week?

DISCUSSION · CAPSTONE

Hard cases.
First takes you didn't trust.
Decisions that finally landed.

Thank you. End of series.

REFERENCES & SOURCES

Sources and further reading

— NCCHCA Session 3 abstract: Blink Check objectives and decision-risk triggers.

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— Bain & Company. RAPID® framework for decision rights. Bridgewater / Atlassian / various — DACI framework reference.