

CHALLENGES

- Required by regulatory bodies to provide education to employees
- Unable to track employee training or identify which departments were in compliance
- Needed a way to effectively deliver, track and report on staff education

RESULTS

- Achieved 100% compliance rate
- Reduced the education burden on staff significantly
- Reduced training time for clinical employees from 17.25 to 11.25 hours
- Reduced training time costs saving over \$150,000 each year
- Eliminated ongoing costs associated with regulatory research estimated at over \$190,000 per year
- Eliminated over 1,300 hours per year building educational modules in-house
- Freed up time in clinical employees' schedules—gaining 300 days of employee time annually
- Reduced the time spent preparing for roll out of education from 4 days to just a few hours
- Generate reports associated with staff competencies quickly and easily



Great Plains Health: *Effectively delivers required education courses and achieves 100% compliance rate*

In order to access federal funds to cover patient care and private funds from insurance plans, all hospitals in the United States are required to provide education to employees on certain topics and most require that staff complete education on every compliance topic every year. Great Plains Health in North Platte, Nebraska adopted a unique approach to satisfy this requirement.

With a drive to deliver education in the most effective and timely manner, Great Plains Health's training coordinator, Jan Wright, worked with her management and The Joint Commission to identify core topics requiring education every year and other topics that could be required every other year or even every three years. Based on this—along with an annual training-needs assessment—she assigns mandatory courses by employee role, preventing employees from taking courses that are not applicable to their jobs. To put this plan into practice, she knew the hospital needed comprehensive yet flexible elearning courses.

Seeking Courseware to Support a Unique Approach to Education

To deliver the training to about 400 employees initially, Wright evaluated courseware options with the following criteria in mind: it provided a means to easily evaluate compliance rates and prove education and reinforcement of employee guidelines to governing bodies, and it reduced the burden on Great Plains Health's education team while increasing productivity. Wright also wanted a solution that made it easy to generate reports associated with staff competencies.

Off-the-Shelf Courseware Saves Time and Money

Great Plains Health chose HealthcareSource® Compliance Series, part of the HealthcareSource eLearning LibrarySM. Comprising 25 web-based modules, this compliance program greatly streamlines the process of ensuring compliance with regulations and assessing staff competencies. Great Plains Health selected this program because HealthcareSource works with healthcare subject matter experts and accreditation consultants to maintain and update the course content each year. "We can be confident the content we use is accurate and relevant, without needing to invest our own time researching regulatory changes and modifying elearning modules," explains Wright. Moreover, the modules interface with Great Plains Health's learning management system (LMS) to assign education to employees, track completion progress, and produce reports for management and regulatory bodies. Great Plains Health uses HealthcareSource NetLearning®, however, these courseware modules interface seamlessly with any LMS software solution.

By using the HealthcareSource Compliance Series, Great Plains Health was able to eliminate the time—over 1,300 hours per year—its education team would have spent to build educational modules in-house. It is also able to eliminate the on-going costs associated with researching changes in regulations, modifying course content to reflect changes, republishing revised courses and redeploying revised courses to its LMS. Wright estimates that Great Plains Health saves over \$190,000 per year as a result. "If each subject matter expert had to create courses and keep up with various guidelines, we would never get them done in a timely fashion because these employees also have full-time clinical jobs. With HealthcareSource Compliance Series, we get state-of-the-art information delivered to us," says Wright.



Supporting Custom Requirements

HealthcareSource helps Great Plains Health customize the course content to reflect Great Plains Health's unique information and processes. This is an accreditation requirement, and one that is usually not met by typical "off-the-shelf" elearning modules. Because this customization is fully embedded into the HealthcareSource learning module, the course flows seamlessly between the content developed by HealthcareSource and the custom content added by Great Plains Health.

Streamlining the Test Experience

The HealthcareSource Compliance Series modules have a built-in test bank of multiple questions so that each employee's test — and each test attempt — is different. This provides a better test experience and a more accurate evaluation of employees' knowledge. Each year, HealthcareSource adds new test questions to ensure a continually challenging assessment process for employees. At the same time, Great Plains Health can customize the test questions, allowing the hospital to make assessments more rigorous or simply zero in on certain topics or issues.

Electronic Delivery Reduces Administrative Costs and Processes

By converting from paper education and tests to web-based elearning modules, Great Plains Health's education staff no longer needs to photocopy and prepare paper packets for distribution and grade paper tests by hand. This has reduced the time spent preparing for the rollout of education from four days to just a few hours. Because the courses can be tracked through Great Plains Health's LMS, its education team is able to provide necessary reports and information to other departments much more quickly than in the past. For example, Great Plains Health's Environment of Care Safety team needs to know how many people have completed training on Hazardous Materials each year. Determining this used to require a manual count taking at least half a day. Now the team can run a report within seconds that shows how many employees completed the training.

Freeing Employees to Focus on Patient Care

One of the biggest complaints in healthcare is that patient care personnel don't have enough time to provide the desired level of care while addressing additional requirements, such as training. Great Plains Health's new compliance program freed up considerable time in clinical employees' schedules. Instead of being assigned an average of 17.25 hours to complete education, employees now are assigned 11.25 hours on average. This frees up an extra 6 hours for every clinical worker, or 2,400 hours across all of Great Plains Health's clinical employees — a gain of 300 days of employee time annually. Plus, because some employees take as few as eight courses instead of the former 25, Great Plains Health saves over \$150,000 each year.

Minute Mandatories, unique to the HealthcareSource Compliance Series, further reduces the time required to prove competency. This unique feature offers experienced employees a quick way to review only the most important points in a module along with any new content compared to the previous year. Minute Mandatories meet education content requirements and prepare employees for the test in as little as 6 minutes per module.

Improving Compliance and Responsiveness

When Great Plains Health relied on a paperbased education process, the training staff could not determine the education compliance rate. With its new program in place, the staff can confidently say — and prove — that the hospital has achieved a 100% compliance rate. Great Plains Health's new process for identifying which topics to educate employees on each year also allows the hospital to be responsive to the changing needs of staff. For example, in 2011, Great Plains Health was



seeing as many as 8-10 tuberculosis exposures each month. The education staff changed the frequency of tuberculosis education from every three years to every year. The increased frequency of education in 2012 and 2013 has reduced tuberculosis exposures by 75%. This reduction ensures a safer environment for employees and patients. It also reduces the frequency of exposure reporting to regulatory bodies, which helps avoid being red flagged by governing bodies – and reduces the likelihood of costly investigations, citations, and even fines.

Extending the Impact

Since first using HealthcareSource Compliance Series, Great Plains Health is now educating nearly 1,000 employees annually. With a goal of establishing itself as western Nebraska's education destination, Great Plains Health is preparing to roll out its training program to as many as 20 sister hospitals in the region. "We will enable other organizations to access our LMS online, allowing these organizations to get credit for participating in our compliance program," concludes Wright.

ABOUT GREAT PLAINS HEALTH

Location: North Platte, Nebraska

Overview: Great Plains Health, a not-forprofit, community-owned hospital, provides a full-range of services to those in 17 counties in West Central Nebraska. Employing nearly 1,000 individuals, GPRMC performs 4,500 surgeries and serves 150,000 patients each year with a diverse offering of inpatient and outpatient care, home healthcare, education and outreach services

Employees: Almost 1,000

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