

Human Resource Compliance Pays



By Anita M. Gavett, PHR

In addition to allowing medical practices to focus on patient health, the investment in effective management of human resources will keep your practice compliance healthy and prevent potentially costly litigation in the future. Particularly in today's economic climate, employees are more likely to sue an employer for adverse employment actions. Ensuring

that your practice and leadership team are compliant and effective with HR systems is paramount in protecting your practice and improving productivity of your greatest asset, your employees.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS OF INEFFECTIVE AND NONCOMPLIANT HR SYSTEMS?

The financial impact of improperly managing employee relations or staffing issues can be immense. Retaliation claims are one of the most common discrimination claims and are on the rise. In addition, responding to even one wrongful discharge claim can cost your practice thousands of dollars in attorney fees and your staff's time. If the charge or complaint goes to trial, even if you win the case, it will cost your practice several thousand dollars. If you lose, you could be looking at *several hundred thousand dollars* in settlements, compensatory damages for pain and suffering, punitive damages, attorney fees, and back pay and benefits. In addition, your practice's reputation could be a risk if there is negative publicity.

HOW CAN I FIND OUT IF MY HR PRACTICES ARE COMPLIANT AND EFFECTIVE?

One way to ensure that your practice's HR systems are effective and compliant is to conduct a Human Resources Audit. A HR Audit is a systematic, objective tool that assess regulatory and policy compliance in your practice to determine the effectiveness of your HR systems and those managing them. The auditor partners with your practice leadership team to review your practice's compliance and effectiveness in the following areas: recruitment/selection/hiring; employee relations; performance management; training and development; compensation and benefits administration; payroll; and workers' compensation and safety.

Most HR Audits processes include:

- Interviewing key staff
- Reviewing relevant documents
- Completing a comprehensive questionnaire
- Compiling data and preparing a customized written report
- Assembling specific recommendations to improve the efficiency and performance of your practice's HR functions.

The auditor will provide the practice with a comprehensive report comprised of data obtained from the audit. The report will serve as a guide to follow when implementing change and resolutions to any areas of concern. The report includes an overview of the practice's current HR status, specific outline of areas of concern, and a specific action plan to ensure HR effectiveness and compliance.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF A HR AUDIT?

In addition to identifying and understanding potential HR system noncompliance, conducting a HR audit and implementing the game plan derived from the audit will benefit your medical practice in several ways. An audit will assist the practice in creating a HR business plan and identify ways to streamline HR work processes which will improve business operations. Most importantly, an audit can identify ways to increase employee satisfaction and retention, which will positively impact your patient care.

UTILIZE YOUR LEADERSHIP TEAM TO PROMOTE COMPLIANCE

Trained supervisory staff will also help to ensure that

your practice is compliant with human resources laws and regulations. Consequently, untrained supervisory staff can lead to noncompliant actions and potential claims that can cost your practice time and money.

A HR audit will also identify areas of training opportunity and best HR practices for your leadership and supervisory team. It is in the best interest of a medical practice to ensure that the supervisory team is trained on the the areas of opportunity (particularly those related to employment law) so that they can work together to ensure the chosen audit action plans are achieved.

Ensuring that your supervisors are well trained will help them be in the best possible managerial shape and ready to lead both the administrative and clinical teams. Effective supervisory training can lead to improved employee morale and communication (both supervisory and subordinate), practice protection (against legal actions, disputes, or litigation), and effective and updated leadership skills and education of your leadership teams. Training will also provide your supervisors with opportunity for growth in their positions which will help the practice with succession planning goals.

When practices improve the performance and skills of supervisors they are improving the performance of everyone in the organization. Supervisors with proper training will be able to direct and lead the staff more effectively to help increase efficiency and make employees perform better and help keep your medical practice compliant and effective.

SCHEDULE YOUR CHECK UP TODAY

Whether you conduct the audit yourself or utilize the services of a professional human

There are options for those with a life limiting illness...



Consider Gateway Health... We listen and respond
1-877-878-2244

Today, too many Americans die alone. Most people do not want to die by themselves in sterile, impersonal surroundings, hooked up to machines and cut off from family and friends. Instead they prefer to spend their last days at home, alert and free from pain with the people they love. Gateway can provide peace of mind and service that allows the family to provide ongoing support and love.

Gateway Hospice makes this possible by:

- 24 hour 7 day week availability.
- Medicare certified/all insurances welcome. Financial status has no bearing on eligibility.
- Care is provided wherever the individual "calls home" in Allegheny and all surrounding counties.
- Ongoing education and resources regarding end of life issues and hospice services.
- The frequency and length of care visits are flexible, and are determined by the needs of the patient and family.
- Clinical assessments and interventions for pain and symptom management.
- Homemaker/Home Health Aide Direct Care Visits.
- Spiritual and emotional support.
- Volunteer services including visits, massage, pet, music therapies
- Specialized services available to Skilled Nursing and Assisted Living facilities.



For more information, please call: 1-877-878-2244

resources consultant, keep in mind that a check up of your current HR practices will help nurse the unhealthy areas of your current systems and bring your medical practice back to health. Remember, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. †

Anita M. Gavett, PHR, is Lead Consultant with Virtual OfficeWare. She has over 15 years experience as a human resources generalist and leader in a variety of industries including HR consulting services, health care, construction and manufacturing, wholesale distribution, insurance, retail and communications. For more information, visit www.virtualofficeware.net.

99%
of our patients
would recommend
HEALTHSOUTH
to someone else*

I'm one of them!
—D. Kelly Agnew, MD

As a former patient and practicing orthopedic surgeon, D. Kelly Agnew, MD, knows what it is like to be both a patient and a doctor.

When a traumatic injury occurred, his personal recovery was in the hands of others... In the hands of healthcare professionals at HealthSouth.

If you need a higher level of rehabilitation care,

DEMAND
HEALTHSOUTH
Rehabilitation Hospitals of Pittsburgh



www.DemandHealthSouth.com
1.877.937.7342

Harmarville • Sewickley

*According to an independent organization, UDS, based on 2011 data.