



UP2DATE:

CREDENTIALING MADE EFFECTIVE



IntelliCentrics
Experience SEC³URE Healthcare



Hospitals were created to take care of the sick and restore them to health. However, because hospital patients are in a weakened condition, they are often more susceptible to adverse events such as infections and injuries from falls.

Adverse events not only have a tremendous human toll, they also result in the average hospital spending more than \$4.5 million per year in additional costs.¹ The financial risk has been compounded since hospitals will no longer be reimbursed by Medicare for extended hospital stays and medical treatment associated with adverse events.



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A comprehensive credentialing program is one of the most effective ways a hospital can improve patient safety and reduce adverse events. Credentialing is the process of obtaining, verifying, and assessing the qualifications of hospital employees and occupational visitors. It ensures they have been:

- Properly immunized
- Received the appropriate training
- Vetted through drug tests and criminal background checks
- Understand the hospital's health and safety policies

By ensuring that hospital staff and third-party visitors have the right credentials, hospitals can decrease the risks to patients and ultimately lower the costs of healthcare. That's why regulatory organizations and government agencies including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) are moving towards greater accountability from all healthcare personnel including every person who has the potential for contact with patients.





As a result, it is important for occupational visitors to be held to the same standards as hospital staff for keeping their credentials up-to-date. While the number of required credentials is not changing, there are a number of credentials that need to be updated on a regular basis, including:

1. Immunizations: Vaccinations must to be given at the right intervals and in the right dosage to effectively stop the spread of infectious disease. Because of their contact with patients, hospital staff and third-party visitors may be at risk for exposure to (and transmission of) vaccine-preventable diseases. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, hospital personnel, including third-party visitors, are considered to be at substantial risk for acquiring or transmitting hepatitis B, influenza, measles, mumps, rubella, pertussis, and varicella and need to be immunized to prevent the spread of disease.² The American Hospital Association shares this belief and has endorsed the concept of vaccination programs for both hospital personnel and patients as an essential part of infection prevention.³

2. Compliance Courses: All healthcare personnel need regular reminders about the importance of hand hygiene, bloodborne pathogens safety, and other safety protocols such as fire and electrical. For instance, according to World Health Organization (WHO), hand hygiene is the most important measure to avoid the transmission of harmful germs and prevent healthcare-associated infections,⁴ yet studies show that many caregivers neglect to wash their hands between treating patients.

In addition, as course content is updated, personnel need additional training to ensure they understand the new material. As an example, Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) training has evolved as healthcare has embraced electronic data records and the sharing of patient information and technical advancements may require a mid-year change in training content.

3. Evidence of Competency: Facilities need to have confidence that vendor representatives and service personnel are fully trained and up-to-date on their company's new products and services. Most vendor representatives already receive regular training updates on the products and services they provide. Proof of their continued competency should always be available to the facilities they serve since they are the people who train healthcare personnel.

4. Criminal Background Checks and Drug Screenings: According to Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), violence is a recognized hazard in the healthcare industry.⁵ In addition, The Joint Commission requires hospitals to obtain a criminal background check on staff when designated by state law or hospital policy. While most vendor companies perform criminal background checks and drug screenings upon hire, employees should be rescreened on a periodic basis to ensure continued compliance. Background checks, drug screenings, and even profile photos should be updated regularly in order to improve safety and reduce vulnerability.





IntelliCentrics is committed to protecting the health and safety of everyone who enters a healthcare facility from patients and staff to vendor representatives, volunteers, and visitors. As healthcare standards continue to evolve, it is important for all healthcare personnel to update their credentials and training requirements in order to provide a safe and SEC³URE healthcare experience.

We all play a role.



Reference

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