Can Software Improve Compliance?

Healthcare providers deal with numerous requirements from different regulatory bodies, and having a policy management system can help them stay up to date on these requirements and improve compliance. By automating policy management, hospitals can save time and money, as well as reduce risk, according to Saud Juman, CEO and founder of PolicyMedical, which provides healthcare software solutions.

In his article appearing in *Becker's Hospital Review*, Juman says policy management software can help hospital leaders develop compliance plans and ensure that regulatory compliance remains a priority. "In today's healthcare environment, things are constantly changing, and hospital employees are required to do more with less. Policy management activities can easily become low priorities," he points out.

The right software makes it easier for a healthcare organisation to track and update policy training efforts, report results in real time and prepare for audits.

Tracking of employees' comprehension of new and updated policies can be improved if a hospital's policy management system could be linked with a learning management system. An attestation feature in the policy management system gives "you the ability to provide additional resources and quizzes to staff members to ensure they have fully understood the policies they have received," Juman explains. Also, the paper trail created by closely monitoring policy-related training and exam-passage rates reduces potential litigation costs.

An efficient policy management system can store a huge amount of data that can be compiled and analysed regularly. This information could include utilisation of the system, progress of policy updates, and attainment of long-term education and compliance goals. And if hospital managers want to know how many policies are up to date, and how many are past a due date, all they have to do is run a real-time report that will give them this information. Real-time reporting is an important tool in a hospital's policy management system.

The right software also eliminates excess costs associated with copying, distribution, organisation and storage of policies, as well as the time spent doing so, Juman notes. "Nursing leaders, IT staff and policy administrators no longer have to spend time on the paper shuffle associated with manual policy management," he says. "Time and resources can be reallocated to bigger-picture planning to reach compliance goals."

With an efficient policy management system, hospitals can stay audit ready, according to Juman. Preparing for audits can be an overwhelming and time consuming process. The most important preparatory step for the hospital is to maintain up-to-date documentation of policies and procedures. With a policy management system, this is much more manageable, says Juman.

"A policy management system that is well organised and searchable allows specific policies to be pulled up quickly and easily," he explains. "In addition, a policy management system can link policies and procedures to relevant regulations, demonstrating the hospital's compliance instantaneously."

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