

# CASE STUDY

Accountability, Consistency,  
and Adaptability Create a  
Culture of Excellence



In 2014, by any measure, the medical staff services department at WorldClass Hospital\* was not meeting expectations. Greeley compliance and accreditation experts were onsite looking into the root causes of recent CMS survey findings. As a matter of course, there was an evaluation of the current state of credentialing and privileging within the organization. In summary:

- The credentialing and privileging process was largely paper-based.
- The culture of the medical staff services department did not match the technology-rich, quality-committed, investment-willing culture of the organization as a whole.
- The turnaround time for new practitioner applications was greater than 120 days, although that measure was generous as there was a common practice to stop and restart applications when benchmarks were missed.
- Temporary privileging was more of a constant than an exception.
- There was a high level of frustration among physicians with duplicative, contradictory, and subjective forms and requirements.
- Frustration with “the process” and its lack of consistency and transparency was adversely affecting physician engagement and job satisfaction.
- Compliance-, risk-, and quality-related committees were trending toward dysfunctional. Again, this was culturally inconsistent with WorldClass Hospital as an organization.

Greeley made several recommendations for bringing the medical staff services department into line with the quality and service culture at WorldClass Hospital. The goals were to improve efficiency and compliance, while mitigating risks and reducing negative impacts on physician engagement.

This began with onsite training and mentorship by Greeley experts. While some progress was made and the physician leadership at WorldClass Hospital was fully brought into the mission, there was resistance among long-term employees, particularly with regard to technology adoption and commitments to service expectations.

WorldClass Hospital hired a new director and it seemed like progress was being made, but this was short-lived and a pattern of constant staff turn-over began. With every change of the employees -- management or staff level -- the recruiting, hiring, onboarding, and training of

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\* *WorldClass Hospital is a pseudonym for a large, system-affiliated hospital client in Central California.*

new staff repeatedly derailed progress toward stated goals. Plus roles and responsibilities were constantly shifting among new and remaining staff, and accountability for day-to-day duties faltered.

Today the entire medical staff services department at WorldClass Hospital is outsourced to a Greeley Credence<sup>SM</sup> team. And team is not a mantle they wear lightly. Teambuilding, ongoing training, clear roles and responsibilities, and goalsetting and measurement are hallmarks Credence -- form and function.

## AT THE CORE

WorldClass Hospital **credentialing** and **privileging** are now a completely **paperless** process. Greeley's Credence team optimized staffing (skill and allocation) to achieve this larger initiative, while exceeding expectations for the day-to-day duties of the department.

There is now a **service level agreement** in place that guarantees **application turnaround times** of less than 21 days. At last measure, turnaround time from initial application submission to completed for department consideration stands at **12 days**. Physician satisfaction is up and the organization is seeing revenues sooner.

**Privileging** at WorldClass Hospital is now a painless system of information collection, verification, and decision-making. All forms have been **distilled**, all data points are **centralized**, all processes are **transparent**, and all decisions are **objective**. This involved a year-long process working with stakeholders from across the organization in every specialty. Physician frustration, procedure delays, and risks are now minimized. The need for temporary privileges is now an extreme exception.

Reappointments have been streamlined to a degree that allows the members of the medical and allied health staffs to complete and submit them electronically, often in less than 10 minutes. With the technology optimized, 30 percent of the process is fully automated and completed on submission, freeing up valuable human resource time to focus on other duties and responsibilities.

There is now a system of alerts for continuous queries to the NPDB, plus monthly to GSA and OIG for exclusions. The previous practice was to check once every two years. **Current competency** is also now measured through a **regular, consistent**, and ongoing performance monitoring (OPPE)- and focused monitoring (FPPE)-**compliant** process. This attention to detail is much more consistent with the risk-averse and quality-focused culture of the organization as a whole.

## ABOVE AND BEYOND

While Credence solutions at some client institutions are focused exclusively on credentialing and privileging, the overall function of the medical staff services department at WorldClass Hospital needed to eventually reflect the excellence of the organization – a high bar indeed. To that end, the Credence team went further.

Greeley professionals handle **meeting management** for the entire organized medical staff. The Medical Executive Committee, Credentialing Committee, Peer Review Committees, and Medical Staff Departments, among many others, all meet regularly with a quorum and an agenda.

Greeley professionals actively participate in quality and performance improvement activities, participating as ad hoc members of the Clinical Quality Council and the Quality Council of the Board. They work in concert with the Quality Management Department to assure continuous quality improvements are made. Credence team members play an integral role in the ongoing development of physician-specific performance monitoring systems that negate the need for vendor-offered “OPPE” programs.

WorldClass Hospital’s **task forces** are also managed by Credence team members who ensure that stakeholders are at the table, goals are set, resource needs are addressed, and progress is made and reported.

To meet a larger organizational need for supply to meet demand, Credence team members now work with WorldClass Hospital’s **business development** team to assess bandwidth and specialty needs and establish a pipeline for clinical talent.

## MORE THAN A PRODUCT

Credence is not a product of Greeley, but a service of Greeley. This is demonstrated by the ability of the Credence team to assess, anticipate, adapt, and act in concert with, and in service of, the client stakeholders at WorldClass Hospital. As a result, they have helped WorldClass Hospital to build a medical staff services department that epitomizes the culture of excellence the organization aspires to and achieves daily.

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