



Greeley
A CHARTIS GROUP COMPANY

The Greeley Company's Evolving MSP Competencies

Redefining Success for Medical
Services Professionals

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INTRODUCTION

When we think about the essential elements of a truly effective medical staff services department or credentialing department, we recognize the pivotal role of the medical services professional (MSP). **But what does a contemporary medical staff services department or credentialing department look like if it continuously fulfills its mission in protecting patients and mitigating risk while also supporting physician-hospital integration and alignment as the most highly functioning organizations now expect?** To accurately respond, we must redefine the general competencies for all MSPs.

Competency encompasses more than just the possession of knowledge and skills. It entails the ability to meet complex demands by drawing on and mobilizing psychosocial resources (skills and attitudes) in a particular context.¹

MSPs often must explain what their job entails to administrators, physician leaders, and other hospital department staff. While MSPs are not highly visible in some organizations, they are often the gatekeepers for ensuring the achievement of essential functions such as patient safety and physician-hospital relations and alignment for healthcare entities and clinically integrated networks. Fortunately, MSPs are increasingly recognized as experts not only credentialing and privileging but in project management, risk management, leaning processes, onboarding, provider enrollment, and medical staff accountability based on the skill and competencies they have garnered as the key liaisons between healthcare administrators and physicians of the medical staff.

When advocating for the profession, Greeley often applies the analogy that MSPs are similar to air traffic controllers—behind the scenes but of immense, unquestionable value. The airline industry would simply come to a halt without air traffic controllers. Air traffic controllers are well trained, concerned for both crew and passenger safety, and must be able to anticipate and provide solutions to potential problems as well as handle crises that develop along the way. They do not wait for the pilot or copilot to suggest solutions; they have already provided the answer based on their skills and experience. Just as the air traffic controller is looking out for the passengers and crew, MSPs understand that credentialing has no master other than the patient. They anticipate challenges and provide the best potential solutions for the patient from a safety and risk-management perspective.

Historically, the MSP fills a traditional role in a hospital setting as a vital resource to the senior administration and to medical staff leadership in the areas of:

- Practitioner competency (credentialing and privileging)
- Accreditation, regulatory, and internal compliance
- Legal principles of credentialing
- Implementation and development of credentialing and privileging systems
- Orientation and development of medical staff leaders
- Meeting and information management

¹ Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD), 2005, 4.

WHAT IS CLINICAL INTEGRATION? A HEALTHCARE NETWORK WORKING TOGETHER USING PROVEN PROTOCOLS AND MEASURES TO IMPROVE PATIENT CARE, DECREASE COST, AND DEMONSTRATE VALUE

In the world of clinically integrated healthcare, the traditional role of the MSP to administer a risk-adverse, quality-focused, and practitioner-friendly credentialing process is strained by mounting financial and market pressures.

This scenario of a “perfect storm” provides MSPs with opportunities to redefine their skills to be a part of the clinical integration solution and the evolving healthcare system.

The Greeley Company values and respects the professional position that MSPs carry in healthcare organizations. In fact, a tenet of our mission has always been: “We are professionals collaborating with fellow professionals to help them succeed.” Establishing general competencies and defining measurable elements that identify what makes an excellent MSP ultimately will help the profession to achieve further recognition. More importantly, it will help position MSPs for success in the changing healthcare environment.

Whereas job descriptions list roles, responsibilities, and functions to define a position, competencies identify the knowledge, skills, and abilities required to succeed within the role and the profession at large. In 2008, The Greeley Company created the following six areas as a framework for defining the dimensions of performance—or competencies—for all MSPs.

- Managerial expertise
- Professional knowledge
- Interpersonal and communication skills
- Professionalism
- Practice-based learning and performance improvement
- Systems-based skills

These areas are familiar to every individual involved in credentialing, privileging, and the determination of practitioner competency. They are in fact almost identical to those defined by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education and the American Board of Medical Specialties (as a result of their joint Outcome Project in 1999) and later adapted by The Joint Commission for assessing the proficiency of privileged practitioners. Appropriately adapted for the MSP, these six areas continue to outline a strong foundation for the critical leadership skills required of the position.

Once areas of general competency are established, specific elements within each of the six areas should be defined so that they may be accurately measured. The Greeley Company’s work with MSPs and medical staff leaders nationwide, as well as our internal expertise, provides us with clear direction on the expectations and principle accountabilities that are relevant to MSPs. As with practitioners, there is also a wide range of leadership abilities, professionalism, knowledge, and communication skills among MSPs.

The following competencies identify specific knowledge, skills, and abilities required for each of the six areas of MSP performance.

MANAGERIAL EXPERTISE

- Demonstrates knowledge of, and applies, appropriate management techniques including time management and team motivation. Fosters professional growth.
- Demonstrates knowledge of, and applies, appropriate project management techniques including initiation, planning, execution, oversight, and completion (results focused)
- Interviews, trains, evaluates, and counsels staff and ensures that new staff members are oriented appropriately
- Applies appropriate decision making
- Applies traditional management techniques (organizing, planning, directing, controlling) to the organized medical staff structure

PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE

- Actively seeks ongoing professional (managerial) development
- Demonstrates to medical staff leaders knowledge of regulatory and accreditation requirements
- Demonstrates and applies knowledge of recruitment, credentialing, privileging, practitioner competency, provider enrollment, and onboarding processes
- Understands and supports compliance with regulatory and legal standards for the clinical integrated entity
- Achieves and maintains certification as a Certified Provider Credentialing Specialist (CPCS) and/or Certified Professional Medical Services Management (CPMSM)

INTERPERSONAL AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS

- Meets regularly with department staff to provide organizational information
- Provides periodic communication and feedback to personnel regarding performance
- Applies effective written and verbal business communication skills
- Demonstrates effective presentation skills using appropriate tools and techniques
- Interacts appropriately with the organization's departments (quality, recruitment, IT, hospital administration, board of trustees, etc.) (Client focused.)
- Uses effective facilitation, negotiation, and conflict resolution techniques
- Uses relationship management skills to cultivate change and understands the cultural change and buy-in challenges that have an impact on needed improvements in credentialing
- Employs successful interpersonal and communication skills to manage, lead, and finalize projects

PROFESSIONALISM

- Maintains confidentiality and professional ethics at all times
- Follows the appropriate chain of command
- Adheres to other established organizational and departmental policies
- Accepts constructive criticism and demonstrates a willingness to improve
- Actively exemplifies the organization's values and mission

PRACTICE-BASED LEARNING AND PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT

- Improves overall performance in credentialing processes, tools, resources, and outcomes to facilitate the achievement of the organization's strategic goals
- Applies and implements accreditation and regulatory standards
- Implements internal ongoing performance improvement initiatives and implements corrective measures as applicable
- Attends professional and industry educational programs and participates in networking
- Is knowledgeable of industry-leading practices and implements as appropriate to the situation

SYSTEMS-BASED SKILLS

- Understands the strategic opportunities and challenges faced by the organization in improving the value of credentialing activities
- Actively participates in the organization's compliance activities as required
- Serves as a resource regarding medical staff issues, as applicable
- Gathers and analyzes data (aggregate and performance data by practitioner compared with pre-established indicators and targets)
- Adapts to new, different, or changing ideas or requirements
- Establishes and maintains a cooperative relationship with peers and other organizational faculty and staff
- Actively commits to a spirit of cooperation with the medical staff

To determine how to measure that a desired dimension is present, the elements above may be further delineated. Consider the following as sample behaviors or activities to help determine the presence of appropriate interpersonal and communication skills:

- Are medical staff leaders appropriately informed of changes in accreditation standards related to credentialing and privileging?
- Are applicants apprised regularly and consistently of the status of their application for membership and/or privileges?
- Are informational/educational credentialing and privileging resources routinely disseminated to medical staff leaders?

- Are medical staff documents (medical staff bylaws, rules and regulations, applications and forms) posted as resource documents on the hospital intranet?
- Are available communication methodologies used effectively to communicate with the medical staff?
- Has the medical services department conducted a survey of the physicians for their preferred method of receiving communications?

MSPs in many healthcare organizations across the country provide the level of sophistication and aptitude detailed in these competency dimensions. By recognizing and applying the MSP competencies uniformly across the profession, we can begin to appreciate and measure the true value that MSPs bring to their organizations. On an individual level, we can assist MSPs in continuously striving to achieve their personal and professional best.

Pilots depend on air traffic controllers to develop, implement, and direct processes to ensure passenger safety based on FAA regulations. MSPs may not directly care for patients. However, medical staff leaders, like pilots, depend on MSPs to develop, implement, and direct processes to ensure patient safety based on accreditation and regulatory requirements.

The Greeley Company, a division of The Chartis Group, is a leader in healthcare consulting, education and interim staffing solutions, with unmatched experience in the areas of regulatory compliance, accreditation, bylaws and peer review, as well as credentialing and privileging. Greeley's mission is to help healthcare organizations improve efficiency, comply with regulations and standards, achieve practitioner engagement and alignment, and excel in delivering high-quality, cost-effective patient care. For more information, visit greeley.com.