

Offering a Collaborative Network for Clinical Placements

Michigan Health Council

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Situation:

Healthcare systems in Michigan, and throughout the nation, face major hurdles in preparing qualified patient caregivers for their clinical workforce. Even in a down economy, hospitals admit a steady flow of students in nursing and other allied health professions and provide clinical experiences during their educational programs. As the nation's aging population increases demand for health services, hospitals search for ways to fight workforce shortages and replace their also aging clinical workforce. Enrolling more students to become trained caregivers could assist with the shortage, but a number of long-term stresses on the clinical education system prevent schools from preparing enough students to meet future needs.

Often, administrative duties steal precious time away from educators. Productivity gains from technology have been slow to materialize on the administrative side of clinical education. Manual processes, such as tracking compliance items with students, are cumbersome and slow the overall pace of progress. The coordination effort involved with student placements in clinical settings is taxing to both educators and healthcare providers.

Michigan Health Council (MHC), a nonprofit organization committed to connecting healthcare professionals and employers in Michigan, developed a program called ACE Passport (Alliance for Clinical Experience) in partnership with Adayana. The program's goal was to provide a novel approach to collaboration with hospitals and educators to bring greater efficiency for each.

Solution:

ACE is designed as a *passport* that provides certification information for all healthcare providers prior to any student engaging in a clinical rotation. The program involves technology-enabled support for the most time-consuming activities including compliance training, background checks, health screening, and other important requirements prior to student placements. Students complete web-based courses, such as HIPAA, OSHA, and Bloodborne Pathogens and pass standardized exams that are scored and accessible to hospital clinical coordinators and educators. The online portal also serves as a focal point of contact for students, schools, and hospitals, facilitating placement of certified students into clinical rotation programs.

The online system continually updates student information and clinical opportunities, reducing the lag-time associated with previous manual administration. This provides hospitals and educators immediate and accurate information when placing students into the proper clinical rotations. Hospitals can see which students are ready for immediate placement and are certain that they are certified for their patient-care assignment.

Success:

The ACE program has helped qualify and place more than 5,000 students from 17 Schools of Nursing in its first year of operation. These students have participated in 2,100 clinical rotations at 38 different hospital facilities. As students attend their second, third and fourth clinical site, administration has been streamlined by eliminating the redundant re-processing of each student.

And, several program members have commented on the high quality of educational experience provided in the web training. This has standardized the preparation for students that was previously handled in vastly differing ways and from multiple sources.