

Case study overview

Customer Profile

Sumner Mental Health Center (SMHC) provides a variety of mental health therapy and addiction treatment services to the Wellington, Kan. community.

Challenge

SMHC needed to move HIPAA policies from binders and desk tops to an electronic management system that allowed access to all employees, prevented outdated policies from being used and prevented current policies from getting lost while continuing to comply with HIPAA requirements.

Solution

PolicyTech's Policy & Procedure Manager™ (PPM) software allows for central storage and access of important documents, readership tracking, content quizzes and templates for consistent document formatting.

Benefits

Eased the logistical burden of managing policy and procedure documents by creating a manageable review and approval process with emphasis on consistent formatting to appeal to creators, readers, and auditors.

"We know that the employees have read those 'must-read' policies"

Case Study: Sumner Mental Health Center Optimizes HIPAA Compliance

"We created a HIPAA compliance test in the Policy & Procedure Manager that employees must take yearly and get a certain score to pass. That way we always know that they are up on their HIPAA compliance."

--David Robinson, SMHC

Summary

Sumner Mental Health Center (SMHC) moved its HIPAA policies and procedures from notebooks to Policy & Procedure Manager™ to make their policy documents manageable and increase HIPAA accountability.

HIPAA policies move from loose-leaf to secure internet

When the employees of SMHC needed to find a policy they had to go from desk to desk looking for the binder that held it. When the binder was found, it was often difficult to determine if the policy was up to date and accurate.

"We were forever having the notebooks get misplaced," said David Robinson, SMHC director of IT. "They wouldn't be in an office when somebody would come so we would have to try to find it."

The state of SMHC's policies made it difficult to prove compliance with HIPAA's mandate to "...train their employees in their privacy procedures and ... be responsible for ensuring the procedures are followed..." (<http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/hipaa/>).

Utilizing PolicyTech's Policy & Procedure Manager software transformed SMHC's policy management strategy. PPM stores all of the policies and procedures in a central database that is accessible from any internet connection. It also creates reports that record who has read what documents—and who hasn't read them. It also ensures that only the most recent version of each document is published to readers.

"Policy & Procedure Manager has been very helpful," said Robinson. "We are confident employees know where the policies are available and that we are covered both in a quality and legal manner because the policies are all up to date. From an administrative level it puts our mind at ease knowing every employee has the same information."

SMHC also utilizes PPM's quiz feature to test each employee's knowledge and bolster their HIPAA compliance efforts.

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About PolicyTech:

Policy Technologies International Inc. (PolicyTech) develops and provides web-based software that manages company or government policies and procedures in a convenient, reliable way. PolicyTech software has become the policy management software of choice for over 400 companies in a variety of industries including government, health care, education, and finance as well as in non-profit organizations. With a slate of recent government regulations pressing the need for corporate responsibility to an all-time high, PolicyTech policy management software is the solution for quality assurance and enforcement of best practices.

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Challenge

SMHC needed to revamp its process for storing and authoring key policies for HIPAA compliance. Their method of binders was inefficient and difficult to manage. It also took management significant time to find, review, and approve new policy documents.

As is typical in smaller organizations, many of SMHC's policy creators do not write policies on a daily basis. However, when they do they need to be able to get it done quickly and easily.

Result

SMHC administrators benefit from the convenience of the PPM's searchable document retrieval as well as the time it saves them both in managing policies and in the review and approval process.

With the centralized storage and readership tracking, SMHC knows that their employees have read and understood their HIPAA documents.

SMHC also benefitted from the user-friendliness of the PPM software. Microsoft Word modules saved SMHC from the expense and hassle of installing and training on new word-processing applications.

"I have multiple users who don't just create policies all day," said Robinson. "Policy & Procedure Manager is much easier for them to create policies because it is intuitive."

Conclusion

Policy & Procedure Manager makes SMHC's policy headaches go away with its user-friendly functions and compliance conscious design. Because each of SMHC's employees can access PPM on a daily basis, SMHC can protect itself legally as well as protect the rights of its patients with more time to focus on improving the quality of their care.

"I really like that Policy & Procedure Manager is browser-based so I don't have to install any extra software. It is in a Word format that non-technical users can get in and use in a format they are used to."

—David Robinson