

“Our chosen solution—Vendormate—helps us to fulfill our patient and family promise to keep you safe, care for you, involve you and your family, and respect you and your time.”

A GROWING HEALTHCARE SYSTEM ACHIEVES CONSISTENT VENDOR CREDENTIALING

A close-up photograph of a hand holding a white vendor badge. The badge contains the following text: 'Adams Stone, Inc.', 'Buyer', 'Department Operating Room', 'Hospital', 'Badge ID: 112028', a photo of a woman, and 'WEDNESDAY, 11:15 AM'. The word 'VENDOR' is printed vertically on the left side of the badge.

How a large regional health system used a comprehensive credentialing solution to uphold its promise for patient safety

A nationally recognized academic medical center and health system worked with GHX to deploy a comprehensive vendor credentialing solution across its growing network of acute and non-acute facilities to support its promise of safety. Engaging GHX to implement Vendormate Credentialing, they were able to implement consistent credentialing processes and best practices enterprise wide. With visibility into and management over individuals seeking access to any of its facilities, the health system has strengthened its commitment to patient safety while empowering vendor reps to best serve the organization.

RESULTS



Increased visibility and management over the vendor rep credentialing process to support the safety of its patients, employees and their families



Established a system-wide approach to vendor credentialing that meets the needs of all of its various facilities



Enhanced enforcement of its healthcare industry representative policy (HCIR), including immunization and background checks



Strengthened its relationship with vendors by giving them tools to be successful business partners to the organization

SITUATION

Already a respected university-related health care system, the organization set out to expand its care network through a series of mergers and acquisitions. Today, the 1,500+ bed system encompasses five hospitals, three urgent care centers, emergency departments at more than a dozen community hospitals, maternal-fetal and neonatal units, freestanding dialysis, imaging and endoscopy facilities, and over 200 primary and specialty clinics in its network.

“Our healthcare system has a patient and family promise: ‘We will keep you safe, care for you, involve you and your family and respect you and your time. We want to make sure our patients and their families are safe and that our employees and their families are safe, as well.’”

— Healthcare System
Purchasing Manager

As with many healthcare organizations that have experienced rapid growth, the health system has worked to establish consistency across its many different facilities, ranging from acute care hospitals to non-acute clinics. Patient safety is a top priority, regardless of care location, and one important area of security is vendor and representative credentialing.

The health system had a standardized process for vendor credentialing at its acute care locations using kiosks for rep sign-in and badging, however, use of credentialing practices was inconsistent at its newly acquired outside clinics and other non-acute sites.

Some of the clinics used notebooks at their front desks where vendor reps could sign in before meeting with a physician or clinician. The format of the notebooks varied widely from clinic to clinic and there was no standard set of criteria for the information gathered. Staff members monitored the sign-in process at some locations, but this was not feasible at all locations.

"We had been doing a pretty good job with credentialing, but as we added hundreds of outside clinics, additional acute care facilities and academic research facilities, it was apparent that we needed to standardize the process. We chose Vendormate, a robust tool that has worked with us to develop and deliver consistent processes and best practices across our growing healthcare system."

— *Healthcare System Purchasing Manager*

SOLUTION

By implementing GHX Vendormate Credentialing, the health system now has a comprehensive solution for establishing, implementing and maintaining standardized vendor credentialing procedures at all of its acute and non-acute locations. It can now also store and access all credentialing documentation in one centralized online location. With Vendormate, everyone has access to the same data and information on vendors and their representatives, whether they're located in an acute care hospital or one of the off-site locations.

The purchasing manager, as the administrator responsible for setting up new users on the health system's Vendormate solution, noted that the process is fast and easy. When a request for access comes into the purchasing manager, she creates an individual profile and Vendormate sends the representative an email with instructions on logging in. Because the Vendormate solution is so intuitive and straightforward to use, users rarely need training.

"We chose Vendormate for the visibility of vendor rep credentials and because it is easy to use and almost immediate in setting up our vendors. I always offer a short tutorial but because of its usability — including tutorials and videos right in the app — I am very seldom asked to go through tool instruction."



“GHX provided the support we needed to engage and educate all our employees, including the credentialing tool users and our IT department. GHX also supported the change management processes externally with our vendor reps with ease and speed.”

A strategic approach to stakeholder communication

The new standardized credentialing process was rolled out to both internal and external stakeholders, including employees across all the health system's sites, its vendors and their representatives, with help from the GHX team.

“With our varying facility types using different procedures and tools, making the change effectively was complex. Change management practices and internal communication strategies were extremely important and time-sensitive,” said the purchasing manager.

The GHX team worked with the health system to customize a variety of communications vehicles to help employees understand why a new approach to credentialing was needed and get familiar with the Vendormate solution. These included printed educational materials, training documents and videos on the health system's intranet. Vendormate was first introduced at 'Safety Starts Here', the health system's morning meeting for representatives of every medical department, then other communications followed up.

The importance of manager buy-in

“We announced we were going to implement Vendormate and asked everyone to start looking for the badges on vendors and stop them if they encounter a rep without a badge. The importance was reinforced when our executive VP of health system affairs emphasized by saying, ‘this isn't just an ask, this is your responsibility too, it takes everyone here to keep our patients safe.’”

Because various facilities had their own credentialing processes and criteria, the health system worked with each location to compare what had been in place with Vendormate, including required rep immunizations and background checks. This way, they filled any gaps and achieved system-wide standardization.



“We achieved buy-in from all teams, from administration to clinicians, to help ensure our patients and employees are never put in jeopardy.”

— Healthcare System Purchasing Manager

For locations with existing credentialing kiosks, the GHX team helped construct a plan and timeline leading up to the Vendormate go-live date. This included education not only for the staff members who would be monitoring the kiosks and credentialing process, but also the information technology (IT) staff who would periodically update the kiosk computers and badge printing capabilities.

At the clinics, where credentialing in general was less widely implemented than at acute care sites, staff members needed help understanding the terminology and the overall value of credentialing while learning how to use the Vendormate solution.

“We really needed the clinical staff to buy-in to the program,” the purchasing manager said. “Those front-facing people have to be willing to say to a rep, ‘you haven’t been credentialed, so you’re putting our patients and employees in jeopardy.’ We have to have that safety net in place.”

The flexibility to customize processes

While Vendormate provides a comprehensive solution that facilitates “system-ness” for the health system’s credentialing policies and procedures, it also offers the flexibility to customize based on specific site needs.

For example, one of the system’s newest acquisitions is an acute care tower with two separate surgery centers and numerous clinics. Because of the complexity of this location, GHX was asked to place two badge printing kiosks — one near materials management and the other near surgical services — to accommodate vendor reps visiting either site.


“There is complexity with our surgery centers because they have a different board. That board had to approve our healthcare industry representative policy (HCIR). Working with GHX, we accommodated their specific credentialing needs.”

— *Healthcare System Purchasing Manager*

Vendor and rep outreach and training

The transition to Vendormate also meant communicating the changes in policy and processes to vendors and their representatives. The GHX team helped develop the communication and establish the best timing for it to take place.

For new reps entering the health system, the health system's value analysis team provides an orientation program to educate reps on exactly what criteria they need to meet in order to enter secure areas of the health system's facilities.



"We try to create a very strong relationship with our reps so they fully understand why we require them to do what we do. We don't want to simply serve as gatekeepers but to empower the reps to do the best job that they can for us."

— *Healthcare System Purchasing Manager*

Access and efficiency

The health system credits Vendormate with improving their process efficiency by allowing users throughout the system, including those at different facilities, departments and functions, to access vendor and rep information. Each individual user has access to their own information, rather than having to rely on a centralized team to find and send it.

"All my buyers have access to Vendormate, so if they need to reach out to one of our suppliers, they can use Vendormate to find that rep. It's a wealth of information. I've also provided access to other departments, so our financial team can review organizational information for potential future business partnerships."

THROUGH ITS WORK WITH GHX, THIS LEADING HEALTH SYSTEM HAS ACHIEVED:



Enhanced patient and employee safety through enforcement of its healthcare industry representatives policy (HCIR), including immunizations and background checks



One single, comprehensive, consistent process for vendor credentialing across all its acute and non-acute facilities



Visibility and management over facility access; information on previous access success or denial and specific reasons for denial (e.g., failure to meet specific credentialing requirements, policy infractions/bans)



Cross-functional access to a comprehensive database of vendor and rep information for purchasing, finance and other functions



Stronger vendor and rep relationships via clear, shared standards and processes for their successful support of the health system

