

# FACTS & FEATURES

## Performance and Competency Management... *How do you manage?*



Effectively develop your workforce and improve the quality of care you provide by implementing the *careSkills* Competency and Performance Management System.

Identifying and addressing the areas for improvement within a healthcare organization is one of the most important factors for success. *careSkills* can help your organization maximize the use of your competency assessment results and truly develop your employees' abilities.

The *careSkills* Competency Management System comes populated with skills required for successful performance by clinical and non-clinical employees, and they are easy to customize. Once you have defined what is expected, you can use the system to create automated assessments. This will make it easy to collect and track employee competence and eliminate misplaced documents. The best part is at the end of this process you will have meaningful, real-time data reports that will help with:

- Employee Selection – find employees whose skills best match your needs as a new employee or involvement in a project or committee.
- Employee Retention – identify employees at-risk because of skill proficiency levels that are too high or too low. Allow your organization to create individual employee development plans

based on the skills required to achieve success.

- Strategic Learning – align learning resources with identified skill gaps on an individual, departmental or organizational level. Invest in learning resources that meet the highest priority needs, rather than relying on assumptions or guesswork.
- Workforce Planning – gain an understanding of the skills needed for success in your organization. Inventory the skills, knowledge and abilities present now and plan for those needed in the future. Ensure organizational goals are met by clarifying expectations for all employees.
- Career Development – allow employees to create a career development plan based on the skills required for potential advancement opportunities.
- Succession Planning – find potential replacements for key roles at risk because of retirement, outsourcing, downsizing or disasters.

Studies show that the work observed two months prior is what most performance appraisals represent. The *careSkills* Performance Management System assists your organization in each step of the process from setting goals to feedback and review.

- Goal Setting – the appropriate appraisal template is shared electronically by your managers with the employee during performance planning so they

understand expectations.

- Continuous Feedback – performance journals allow the managers to provide feedback throughout the year to employees. Employees can also document performance events they deem noteworthy.
- Performance Appraisals – create an unlimited number of online appraisal/evaluation templates using your organization's existing paper-based appraisals or through the customization of templates

*(Continued on Page 2)*

### What's inside:



<b>Performance and Competency Management...How do you manage?</b> <i>careLearning</i>	1, 2
<b>Vision for Food: Eat Healthy</b> VSP	2
<b>Make Sure Your Benefits Plans Pass the Test</b> Hagan Newkirk Financial Services	3
<b>Optimize Your Managed Care Contracts - Take a Longer View</b> inControl	4
<b>Follow Five Recruitment Tips to Hire Exceptional Candidates</b> HealtheCAREERS	5
<b>HFMA's Live, On-Demand Webinars</b>	6

# Vision for Food: Eat Healthy



Food is taking center stage in health. Not that food choices weren't always important - your mom told you to eat those veggies for a reason. It's just that there's been an explosion of food-related research that shows the strong connection between food and health.

When it comes to vision and food, growing evidence supports the idea that various vitamins and minerals protect vision for the long haul. And that's more important today than ever before, as the well publicized "graying of America" marches on.

VSP talked to an expert to get the scoop on these vision protecting nutrients. Leland Carr, OD, is a VSP network doctor and professor of optometry at Northeastern State University in Oklahoma. Dr. Carr also sees patients regularly at several university-run eye clinics.

"Eating carrots won't make you see better than you already do, but there is a lot of truth in the idea that they can help protect vision," says Dr. Carr. "Carrots contain a lot of vitamin A, and there have been several studies recently showing that this vitamin - along with vitamins C and E - helps to reduce the impact of both cataracts and age-related macular degeneration (AMD).

The menu ticket? Eat lots of carrots and green, leafy veggies like spinach and kale, says the doctor. These in particular pack a hefty punch of key vitamins, and a vision protecting substance called lutein, too.

Vitamins A, C, and E form a fitting acronym (ACE) when it comes to vision. A major federal study showed that the combo, plus zinc, is a winner when it comes to lowering risk of advanced AMD. Just another reason Dr. Carr touts the importance of "developing good eating habits and taking in the right nutrients" for healthy vision.

"One of the best things you can do for your eyes is to eat a balanced diet high in fruits and vegetables, but also low in saturated fats and sugar," he adds. "Along with the vitamins, you should be sure to take in

adequate amounts of the minerals zinc and selenium, both of which help protect the retina - the light sensitive part of the back of the eye. You also need some fatty acids - usually from fish - to ensure adequate moisture in your eyes. Ask your family doctor if taking food supplements containing these substances is right for you."

Here's a rundown from Dr. Carr on health choices you should be getting at least three servings per week of - from each group:

<b>Vitamin A</b>	Carrots, kale, spinach, dairy products, egg yolks
<b>Vitamin C</b>	Citrus fruits (especially kiwi fruit) and juices, green peppers, broccoli, potatoes
<b>Vitamin E</b>	Eggs, whole grains, vegetable oils, sunflower seeds
<b>Lutein</b>	Spinach, corn, kale, broccoli, Brussels sprouts
<b>Fatty acids</b>	Coldwater fish, such as salmon, mackerel, and rainbow trout, sunflower oil, corn oil
<b>Zinc</b>	Meat, poultry, fish, whole grains, dairy products



For more information on VSP visit [www.vsp.com](http://www.vsp.com).

## Competency and Performance Management (Continued from Page 1)

populated in the system. Managers complete the appraisal at the performance review based on journal entries. Employees can also self-evaluate. Add value to the performance management process using multiple weighted performance scales to determine points earned at each level.

- Analyze Results – reports are available to track the status of each step in the performance management process. The employee's performance score can be used in supporting compensation decisions.

With a focus on exemplary customer service, *careLearning* provides its clients with the tools you need to get the best out of your organization with ease, convenience and top-of-the-line products.

Want to learn more about *careSkills* Competency and Performance Management system?

Visit [carelearning.com/careSkills.html](http://carelearning.com/careSkills.html) or contact Peggy Engelkemier, 866.617.3904.

# Make Sure Your Benefits Plans Pass the Test With ERISAEdge™

With Department of Labor (DOL) audits and employee complaints on the rise it is more important than ever to ensure that your benefits plans “pass the test” and comply with ERISA requirements.

ERISA is a federal law that regulates, Group-sponsored benefits (also called “welfare benefit plans” which include health, dental, vision, life, AD&D, employer paid LTD and/or STD, severance insurance policy, wellness/EAP, and or voluntary benefits that are pre-taxed under a 125 plan). Besides requiring the provision of specific Plan features and funding information, the law, in some cases, mandates employers to submit detailed information to the government. Employers face strict deadlines for disclosing Plan information to all eligible employees, and all sponsors who administer ERISA plans must follow a strict fiduciary code of conduct. ERISAEdge™ can take care of all the necessary documents, forms, and record keeping for you.

## ERISA...It's the Law!

Did you know:

- ERISA requires that all participants receive a Summary Plan Description (SPD). Participants can be awarded a \$110 a day penalty assessment for each day he/she fails to receive an SPD after requesting one in writing.
- Most Employer/Plan Sponsors assume that the EOC's/ certificates of coverage from the Insurance Carriers meet these requirements. They do not. A separate ERISA SPD must “wrap” around the certificates to meet ERISA documentation requirements.
- ERISA imposes a \$1,100 per day penalty for each day a form 5500 is late, up to a maximum of \$30,000 annually
- ERISA requires a Summary of Materials Modification (SMM) be distributed to all participants when there is a material change to the benefit plans such as a carrier change, eligibility change, benefit structure change, etc.
- Health FSAs and HRAs are also ERISA plans and must meet the same documentation and filing requirements.

## What ERISAEdge™ does for you:

Document Preparation:

- Plan Document and Summary Plan Description (SPD) known as a wrap Plan or mega-wrap Plan.

- Form 5500 and associated Schedule A or C, and provides secure software for employer to upload to The Department of Labor (DOL).
- Summary Annual Report (SAR).
- Summary of Material Modification (SMM), if needed.
- Prepares required ERISA and Healthcare Reform Notices for eligible employees (if elected).
- Monitors the ERISA Plan and the associated employee benefits to ensure timely disclosure of Plan changes to employees.
- Monitors legislative and regulatory changes, ensuring the Plan is up-to-date.
- Provides amendments due to regulatory updates automatically to clients. No need for client to remain up to date with regulations.
- Maintains all required records for the mandated amount of time.
- Provides instruction regarding required on-site record keeping.
- Provides guidelines for disclosing required information to employees.
- Assistance in the event that employee benefit plans are reviewed by the DOL.
- Self-Insured Health Plan Discrimination Testing.
- Technical and customer service assistance.

You may be at risk and not even know it! Failure to comply with ERISA's requirements can mean costly government penalties, even employee lawsuits.

If you're interested in making sure you are compliant, contact Randy Rogers, **Hagan Newkirk**, 501.823.4637 or 800.606.9381.



# Optimize Your Managed Care Contract – Take a Longer View



In the competitive world of managed care negotiations, where providers are consistently seeking to grow or preserve patient revenue and payors are applying downward pressure on reimbursement rates, many hospitals can lose track of the bigger picture because they are focused on individual contracts. With such a narrow focus, the decisions around resource allocation and negotiation strategies result in sub-optimal performance for the managed care portfolio as a whole. A bigger picture approach to contract management that looks across patient types, payors, and service lines to stimulate the negotiation for capturing top-line revenue growth is suggested. This approach should revolve around defining the right negotiation opportunities, defending the desired rates and structures to internal and external publics, and delivering sustainable financial results for organization.

Why should you take up the valuable time and resources to step back and take this big picture approach? This holistic approach has been proven to decrease volatility within the managed care portfolio, establish more focused objectives within individual contract negotiations, and create a more collaborative environment where payors and providers partner to achieve parity. It is critical for hospitals to embrace this all-inclusive approach for contract management and negotiation in order to bring real improvements to the bottom line.

## 3 Key Steps to Move Forward and Optimize

The first step in this process is data collection and analysis:

- How are your individual contracts performing today – against each other and against your peers?
- How are they performing as a combined portfolio?
- Which of your payors are at risk by being above your targeted pricing?
- Which of your payors have the greatest opportunity because they fall below your pricing targets?
- And digging even deeper, how are your individual service lines, or even specific procedures, performing against your peers and among your own contracts?

Identifying internal and external opportunity at patient type, plan type, service line, and contract levels allows you to develop specific strategies for negotiations. The data provides the information you need to clearly define your opportunity.

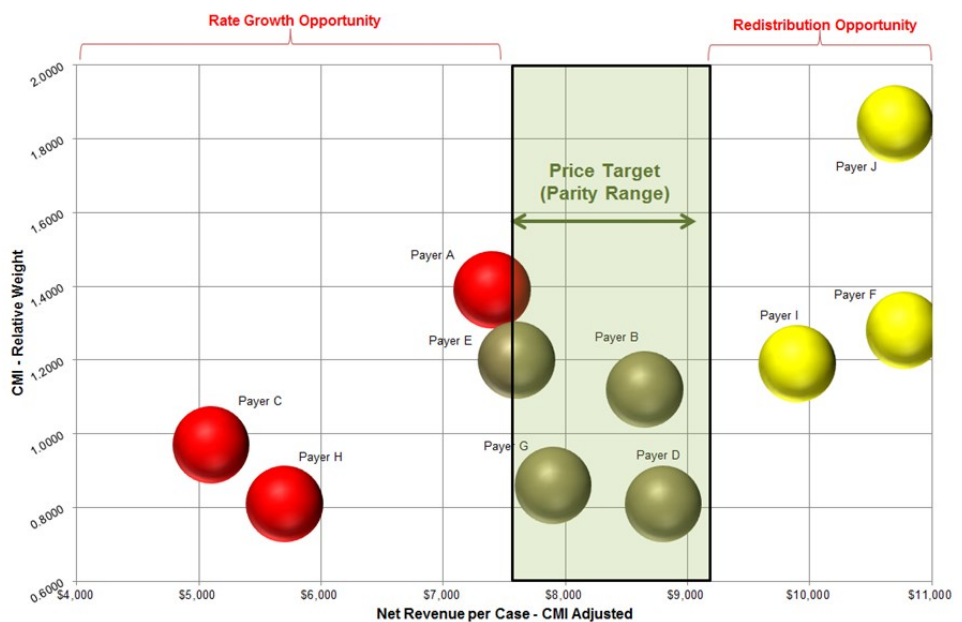
The next step is to take this defined opportunity and build a defensible managed care portfolio strategy around it: A comprehensive strategy that focuses on the service lines, volumes, and payors that will optimize your revenue and mitigate managed care portfolio risk, establish sustainable service line pricing and solve operational as well as strategic challenges. A strategy that is so defensible that it leaves little room for payer resistance. A strategy that will push the limits of what payors and

employers can tolerate, without overstepping the line.

The final step is to deliver the desired outcomes. Armed with your defined opportunity and defensible strategy, now you must execute the plan and monitor the results. Do you have the expertise to approach the negotiating table with confidence? Are you prepared to stick to your strategy and not back down? After the negotiations are complete, do you have the resources to monitor your results? Are the financial results what you had predicted? Has the volume you predicted been realized? Do you have a corrective strategy in place?

The market is constantly changing and these three steps will need to be repeated over time, but it is never too soon to begin. Are you ready to take the big picture approach?

**By prospectively defining pricing targets with parity ranges and charting current contract performance at various levels, you can readily identify areas of rate growth and redistribution opportunities to maximize negotiation efforts.**



*PDS has a new name, INCONTROL Contract Optimizer, and is now a part of iVantage Health Analytics, a leading provider of business intelligence solutions for healthcare. With iVantage's robust capabilities, INCONTROL customers can expect more user-friendly, intuitive software to evaluate contract performance and also the ability to tap into industry leading advisory services. The new healthcare environment requires timelier, more actionable intelligence as well as strategic guidance to navigate the churning waters of healthcare reform.*

Visit [www.ivantage.com](http://www.ivantage.com) for more information.

# Follow five recruitment tips to hire exceptional candidates who are best suited for the job

By Angela Rose for HEALTHeCAREERS.com



With 10.5 million Americans currently unemployed, there are more job seekers than positions to fill in the U.S. these days. However, this bounty of available talent doesn't mean it's always easy to hire qualified professionals for healthcare jobs—especially if you're looking for only the best candidates.

Physicians, registered nurses, and administrators at the top of their fields always have options. This allows them the luxury of being particularly selective about the jobs for which they apply. Whether you're hiring for a private practice, a clinic, or a hospital, consider the following ways to attract the best candidates to your healthcare organization.

## 1. Make the application process easy

The first exposure a float pool RN or primary care physician has to your organization is the job advertisement you've posted. Keep it simple, avoiding industry jargon, acronyms, and abbreviations. Stick to the details everyone wants to know such as job title, basic duties, requirements, schedule, location, and application instructions. If you require candidates to utilize an online applicant tracking system, make sure it functions properly. The best job seekers will not waste their time fighting with an unruly front end, nor will they spend hours answering dozens of irrelevant questions. Keep the application short and to the point and you'll reduce the drop off rate significantly.

## 2. Communicate throughout the process

Nothing frustrates a job seeker like weeks of waiting for a response to an application. The best cardiologists and medical office managers know they have skills that are in demand—and they will write off your opportunity and move on to the next if you leave them hanging. To attract top talent, you must communicate regularly throughout the screening process. This means providing information on the next steps after application submission, phone interview, and in-person interview at the minimum. You should also be upfront about your timeline for hiring.

## 3. Talk about salary early

You cannot keep salary off the negotiating table if you want to secure the best healthcare candidates. In fact, it may be essential to discuss pay expectations early—in the job posting or at least the phone interview—if you want to hold their interest. Top-notch professionals don't have time to play games, and refusing to discuss such an important consideration is one of the quickest ways to ensure they continue their search for employment elsewhere.



## 4. Consider peer interviewing

Recruit your hospital or practice's top performers to participate in interviews. When you allow the best candidates access to some of the professionals they will be working with, you add a great deal of transparency to the hiring process. Not only can these individuals better describe the responsibilities of the position in question, but their presence also provides the job seeker with information on the type of professional who typically succeeds in your organization.

## 5. Choose a job board wisely

While an easy application process, regular communication, and transparency can all go a long way toward helping you attract the best candidates, there's an additional step you can take this instant to put your available healthcare jobs in front of the top professionals in the industry: use a niche job board like *HEALTHeCAREERS* Network. From job posting, to resume search and website advertising, to targeted email campaigns, *HEALTHeCAREERS* is a single source solution to your healthcare recruiting needs.

To access the career center visit [www.healthcareers.com/aha](http://www.healthcareers.com/aha) and register as an employer to begin posting jobs online.

Questions? Contact us at 1 888-884-8242 or [info@healthcareers.com](mailto:info@healthcareers.com) and we'll walk you through the process.

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Registration information and meeting agenda to follow at a later date

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