NEWS & VIEWS

A Complimentary Newsletter from Med-Net Concepts, LLC

A Network of Healthcare Compliance & Consulting Companies

COMPLIANCE AND ETHICS COMMITTEES: CROSS-TEAM MEETINGS

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Compliance and Ethics Committees ("Committee") bring departments together for addressing potential fraud, waste, and abuse issues and concerns. These Committee meetings are no different than other day-to-day meetings, and we all know that, unfortunately, departments often work in silos, even when gathered together for cross-team meetings. Bridging across silos is critical in order to have successful Committee meetings. The goal: solve challenges, reduce reiteration of the same issues and discussion, and improve productivity. The following steps support cross-team communication and focus.

Step One: Summarize discussion from the last Committee meeting and ask for comments.

Step Two: Identify the topic challenge or opportunity for the current Committee meeting.

Step Three: Identify what the Committee meeting's accomplishment will look like. Is the goal to create an action plan, identify needed corrective actions, develop necessary audit or monitoring tools, list future training needs, etc.?

Step Four: Provide guidance to assist participants on how they should participate during the Committee meeting.

Step Five: Invite participants to contribute input by soliciting their thoughts as a prelude to, and throughout, discussion of the topic for the Committee meeting. Brainstorming is an important component of this step—all ideas are welcome, and no idea is rejected from consideration.

Steps Four and Five will be most successful when Committee members have undergone training in the team process. While it may seem overwhelming to organize and train teams, it is a valuable part of a facility's efforts and will help ensure the success of the Compliance and Ethics Committee. It is helpful to ensure that everyone understands the stages of team development so they are not discouraged when conflict or confusion initially occur, thus reverting back into silo thinking. Here are the stages of team development that all Committee members should know:
- Forming – The 1st stage - individuals assemble into a group
- Storming – The 2nd stage - group members develop roles and relationships— competition and conflict often occur

- Norming – The 3rd stage - group members begin to work together and define goals and rules of behavior
- Performing – The 4th stage - group members agree on the purpose of the group, necessary activities, and work together to achieve the identified goals
- Adjourning – The final stage - the team completes its objectives. As there is a new focus or additional Committee members are added, the team will repeat the first four stages

Indications that the Committee members have successfully bridged their silos and achieved cross-departmental function include that clear communication occurs among all members. Regular brainstorming occurs, with all members participating. Consensus is reached to accomplish identified goals, with problem solving done by all. There is commitment to any new effort decided upon by Committee members, and the identified projects keep moving in the right direction. Working outside of silos in cross-departmental efforts has been achieved when it is evident there are positive, supportive working relationships among all Committee members and the work of addressing potential fraud, waste, and abuse is embraced by all.

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