Centralized Credentialing and Beyond: Navigating the Frontier of System Integration

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Centralized Credentialing and Beyond: Navigating the Frontier of System Integration

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Objectives

1) Understand what centralized credentialing entails and the changes to the organizational structure
2) Assess the effects of each step of the credentialing process in a centralized environment
3) Explore the benefits, challenges, and solutions of centralizing credentialing activities across an integrated healthcare system
4) Evaluate the additional opportunities of integrating credentialing, recruitment, and provider enrollment
5) Identify the key components to achieve success

Why Consider Centralizing?

- Healthcare organizations continually seek opportunities to improve efficiency, eliminate redundancies, and increase quality to stay competitive in this ever-changing environment
- Centralizing and standardizing credentialing processes across an organization can support this goal and achieve significant benefits
### What is Centralized Credentialing?

- Merriam-Webster: Centralized is to bring (things that are in different places) together at a single point or place.
- Term has many different meanings depending upon the system’s culture and goals.
- Depending on the organization, can be as varied as a kaleidoscope.

### “Traditional” 4-Step Credentialing Approach

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step 1: Establish Policies &amp; Rules</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Credentials committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>Step 2: Collect &amp; Summarize Information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 3: Evaluate &amp; Recommend</td>
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<tr>
<td>Department chairs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Step 4: Grant, Deny, or Modify</td>
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<tr>
<td>Governing board or designated agent(s)</td>
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</tbody>
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### 5-Step Credentialing Approach

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step 1: Establish Policies &amp; Rules</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Credentials committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2: Manage Information &amp; Integrate with Recruitment and PE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 3: Evaluate &amp; Recommend</td>
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<td>Governing board or designee(s)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Step 5: Complete On-Boarding</td>
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<tr>
<td>Practitioners Services</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Centralized Credentialing

Most Common Functions

Step 1: Establish policies & rules
- Credentials committee, MEC, medical staff, governing board, management
  - Centralized credentialing service or organization (CVO)

Step 2: Manage information & integrate
- Management and medical staff leaders
  - Centralized credentialing service or organization (CVO)
  - Internal vs. external
- Recruitment/provider enrollment
  - Eliminate duplicative processes
    - Application data, copies of documents, verifications, outreach

Organization Structure – Steps 1 & 2

External

CVO

- Hospitals
- Group Practices
- Surgery Centers
- Health Plans

Do CVOs Perform the Same Functions?

NO!
An industry saying ...

When you have seen one MSSD,
you have seen one MSSD

The same goes for CVOs!
Benefits of a Centralized Credentialing Verification Process

• Standardization of processes
  – One system, one process
  • CVOs differ in services offered
    – Preapplication/application/reapplication
    – Verifications
    » Complete, partial
    – Expirables management

• Standardization of forms
  – Application/reapplication
  – Reference letters
  – Privilege forms

Benefits of a Centralized Credentialing Verification Process

• Knowledgeable, dedicated staff
  – Greater number of staff
  – Vacancy in position does not “shut down” credentialing function
  – Internal education, mentoring

• MSSD functions
  – Allows MSP more time for other responsibilities
Benefits of a Centralized Credentialing Verification Process

• Potential reduction in staff at customer facilities
  – Highly dependent on percentage of overlap of practitioners
  – Caution: Initial estimates are generally not realistic
    • Generally, reductions occur in MSSDs with 3 or more FTEs
    • Resulting in MSPs focusing on higher-level functions
• Reduction in practitioner and office staff time
  – Less duplication of effort
  – Completing fewer applications/reapplications and privilege forms
  – Submitting fewer documents (CME, licenses, certifications)

Benefits of a Centralized Credentialing Verification Process

• Reduction in risk
  – Less disparate information
  – Reduce different outcomes
    • Information error
    • Decision error
• Increased efficiency
  – Less duplication of effort for shared practitioners
  – Volume leads to increased proficiency, streamlining
  – Better utilization of technology
    • Dedicated IT staff
    • More leverage with software and other vendors

Benefits of a Centralized Credentialing Verification Process

• Source of information to individual facility
  – Knowledge of credentialing requirements and processes, technology, resources available
• Improved outcomes
  – Better information available to all
    • Generally raises the bar to highest level
  – Turnaround times (TAT) reduced
    • Focus is on credentialing verification only
Challenges of a Centralized Credentialing Verification Process

• Loss of control at facility level
• System decides
  – Processes
  – Forms
  – TAT goals
• Uniformity vs. individuality
• Reduction in credentialing quality (i.e., leading practices)

Challenges of a Centralized Credentialing Verification Process

• Reduction in scope of MSSD services provided
• Centralization may require added steps or processes
• Resistance to change
  – Continuing old processes
  • Not taking full advantage of available technology
  – Lack of trust leading to repeat or additional verifications
  – Undermining centralization goals and processes

Solutions to the Challenges

Centralized Credentialing Verification

• Qualifications and competence of director
  – Communication
  – User groups (MSLs, VPMAs, MSPs)
  • Input on forms
  • Input on processes
  • Education
  • Problem solving
  • Support for MSSDs
Solutions to the Challenges

Centralized Credentialing Verification

• Establish and monitor expectations
  – TAT
  – Processes
  – Handoff

• Access to information
  – Read-only viewing of information obtained
  – Status of verification

Centralized Credentialing Verification

• Customer feedback process
  – Surveys
  – Evaluation, trending, reporting of complaints
  – 360° evaluations

Benefits of an Integrated Credentialing, Recruitment & Provider Enrollment Process

• Further eliminate duplicate activities
  – References, background checks, interviews
  – Delegation agreements

• Improved data integrity across teams

• Enhanced communication among departments

• Decreased TAT

• Timelier reimbursement from payers

• Increased practitioner satisfaction
Challenges of an Integrated Credentialing, Recruitment & Provider Enrollment Process

- Loss of control at department level
- Identifying unique roles and responsibilities
- Determining provider data source of truth
- Managing communication between units

Solutions to the Integration Challenges

- Joint ownership of processes
  - Vested interest in working collaboratively
- Evaluate the tasks and workflows
- Establish a single provider database
  - Shared screens for common data
  - Unique screens for specific functions
  - Controlled access rights and permissions
  - Clear policies and procedures
- Assess process on regular basis

Organization Structure – Steps 1 & 2
5-Step Credentialing Approach

Step 1: Establish Policies & Rules
- Credentials Committee, MEC, Medical Staff, Governing Board, Management

Step 2: Manage Information and Integrate
- Management and medical staff leaders

Step 3: Evaluate & recommend
- Department chairs, credentials committee/MEC, management
- Centralized credentialing service or organization (CVO)

Organizational Structure – Step 3
With Centralized Credentialing Service

MSSDs → CVO → Cred Cmtes

Dept Chairs → MECs

Organization Chart – Step 3
(Example 1)
Centralized Credentials Committee

GB → MEC → CCC
Organizational Structure – Step 3 (Example 2)

Centralized Credentials Committee – Rural Hospitals

Hosp B  CCC  Hosp D

Hosp C  CVO  Hosp E

Cred Cmte

Hosp A

Organization Chart – Step 3 (Example 3)

GB

System Medical Board

MEC  MEC  MEC

CCC

Benefits of a Centralized Recommendation Process

Initial Appointment

• Standardization of processes
  – One system, one process
    • Same information available to all
    – Avoid information error
  – Reduction of risk
    • Each facility comes to same conclusion
    – Avoid decision error
• Increases standardization of criteria
• Allows for broader input
Benefits of a Centralized Recommendation Process

Initial Appointment
- Reduces conflict of interest
  - Internal vs. external influence
- Improved outcomes
  - Better information available to all
  - Better decision-making
  - Generally, raises the bar to higher level

Reappointment
- All same benefits as for initial appointment
- Includes sharing of performance data
  - Increases information available
  - Assists in evaluating low-/no-volume practitioners

Organizational Structure – Step 3

Integrated Performance Data Model

Performance data at all system facilities is available for evaluation
Challenges of a Centralized Recommendation Process

- Loss of control
- System decides
  - Qualifications
  - Competence
- Uniformity vs. individuality
- Confidentiality circle expands
- Loss of immunities of confidentiality
- May lengthen appointment/reappointment process

Solutions to the Challenges

Centralized Recommendation

- Communication
  - Recognition of commonalities
  - Recognition of differences
  - Agreement on standards
  - System events
    - Committees and/or task forces
    - Education
- Ensure state statutes protect shared information

Solutions to the Challenges

Centralized Recommendation

- Develop “sharing agreements” between facilities
- Early warning of “issues” spurs early communication
- Avoid delay through timely scheduling of committee meetings
- Utilize expedited governing body approval when appropriate
5-Step Credentialing Approach

Step 1: Establish Policies & Rules
- Credentials Committee, MEC, Medical Staff, Governing Board

Step 2: Manage Information & Integrate
- Management and Medical Staff Leaders

Step 3: Evaluate & Recommend
- Department chairs, Credentials Committee/MEC

Step 4: Grant, deny or modify, hire/contract
- Governing board or agent(s), management

Organizational Structure – Step 4

Single Governing Body

Benefits, Challenges, Solutions to Centralized Credentialing Decisions – Step 4

• Essentially, all the same as previously provided
5-Step Credentialing Approach

Step 1: Establish Policies & Rules
- Credentials Committee, MEC, Medical Staff, Governing Board

Step 2: Manage Information & Integrate
- Management and Medical Staff Leaders

Step 3: Evaluate & Recommend
- Department chairs, Credentials Committee/MEC

Step 4: Grant, Deny or Modify, Hire/Contract
- Governing Board or agent(s), Management

Step 5: Complete onboarding
- Practitioner Services, MSSD, provider enrollment representatives
- Centralized credentialing service or organization (CVO)
  • Recruitment, MSSD, provider enrollment

Highly Effective Integration

Benefits, Challenges, and Solutions for Integrating Onboarding Process – Step 5

• Essentially, all the same as previously provided
Keys to Success

- Look at the big picture
- Enlist leadership’s support
- Embrace change
- Track results

Q&A