



Case Study

Atrium Living Centers LLC

Client

Atrium Centers LLC is a leading provider of short-term post-acute medical care and rehabilitation and long-term skilled nursing care, serving seniors in 43 facilities in Kentucky, Michigan, Ohio, and Wisconsin. Atrium currently employs nearly 3,500 staff members.

Previously, Atrium held in-person training sessions and each facility was responsible for creating and delivering training. Compliance tracking was done manually by each facility using binders.

Challenges

Previous Training was Inconsistent and Expensive

Atrium's previous training system was decentralized; there were no standard curriculum tools so training content was different in each location. Not all facilities had nurses in the staff development position, so the level of clinical training was inconsistent.

Kay Wiggins was brought on as Atrium's Corporate Staff Development Nurse and was tasked with bringing consistency to overall training efforts. "It was a challenge," Kay says. "With each facility doing its own training and tracking, there was no consistency. Training in person was a terrible cost drain; you had to pay everyone to show up, and then deliver make-up sessions for those who missed training."

CHALLENGES

- Previous training was inconsistent and expensive
- Lack of compliance tracking lead to citations

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*Kay Wiggins,
Corporate Staff Development Nurse,
Atrium Centers LLC*

Atrium also wanted to bring more CE courses to their nurses and administrators; Kay began the provider training process through the state of Ohio, but this also proved "very expensive and paper-heavy. The provider application process also wasn't happening quickly enough for our needs," she says.

Lack of Compliance Tracking Lead to Citations

Atrium's decentralized training system presented compliance tracking challenges. The binders often were not current or lacked information;

which was a detriment during survey. "As surveyors started asking more about employee training and what employees knew, some facilities started receiving citations under F497 and F498," Kay says.

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Atrium's Director of Risk Management, Lynley Wolfe, recommended looking into the Silverchair system to help solve the training and compliance challenges. "Unfortunately I could not be everywhere at once, and I needed courses that were based on adult learning principles, and were convenient and easy to use," Kay says. Atrium began working with Silverchair in June 2009.

Results

A Comprehensive, Consistent Training Program

Atrium launched their training system in June, 2009 and followed a graduated six-month schedule of assigning courses, launching a few facilities over the course of several weeks. Atrium was attracted to the fact that "everything was in one place," Kay says. "We can make a lot of courses available and know that everyone is getting the same content."

Atrium rolled out a standard orientation program last year that uses Silverchair to deliver and track training, which includes general orientation courses and competency requirements for all major departments. Now employees can complete their orientation courses over a 90-day period, rather than trying to schedule multiple employees for one in-person orientation at a certain time.

Kay mentions, "The way the courses are structured are excellent for the adult learner. The courses allow employees to work at their own pace, and bookmark their coursework if they cannot finish the course all at one time. The courses also allow employees to add to their existing experience and pull out that knowledge when interacting with each other and residents."

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Atrium observed some employee discomfort with computers in certain facilities. Kay offered additional training on the system and developed a buddy system to help those with computer apprehension. Now the employees are big fans of online learning: "They like how easy it is to use, and the nurses love the free CEs. After a few months Administrators were asking me when they could take their CE courses."

Average Hours Taken per Year

Before Silverchair	Silverchair (since June 2009)
Less than 20,000	72,610

Kay uses the Authoring Tool to customize courses: "This [tool] was the perfect opportunity to show employees exactly how Atrium wants things done. The basic course information is there and now we can customize it with our procedures and care requirements." Kay also uses Elective courses to develop various levels of staff and is preparing to assign the Leadership Series of courses to charge nurses, new Directors of Nursing, and Administrators.

"Overall, the staff is really pleased," Kay says. "We have employees saying things like, 'I never knew so much about infection control!' They're really excited."

Improved Tracking and Reduced Citations

Atrium has seen a marked improvement in tracking, compliance, and survey citations. After launching Silverchair, they set a standard milestone for compliance at 85%. As of March 2010, 13 facilities were 100% compliant, and only three homes did not hit the 85% standard—"But they were very close," Kay says. "There is friendly competition among the facilities to see who can hit 100% compliance," she says.

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Atrium has benefited from standardized reporting: "With the push of a button I can see compliance, including offline activities. Offline tracking allows us to assign hands-on activities yet still track them accurately. Why use a 5-inch binder [for tracking] when you have a better way?"

Surveys have also improved. "Now when a surveyor comes in it's easy," Kay says. "We pull the report and everything is there." The facilities that have been surveyed since launching Silverchair have had no citations. "Surveyors have been impressed with the reports," Kay says.

Average Compliance

Before Silverchair	With Silverchair
75-80%	97%

Conclusion

Online learning allowed Atrium to develop a comprehensive employee training program that covered the basics of mandatory training and allowed for customization, professional development, and increased employee satisfaction. Atrium has seen the benefits of consistent training, tracking and reporting.

"One of the greatest benefits has been increased awareness among all employees and departments," Kay says. "When an employee gets into a course and finds something in the material that they can use in the future, it's great to see them using what they learned."



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