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LMS e-Learning Implementation Podcast Transcript #30 *SyberWorks LMS e-Learning Implementation Podcast Interview with Paula Suyama of Liberty Dialysis LLC*

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Mary Kay Lofurno: Welcome to the next edition of the SyberWorks LMS e-Learning Implementation Podcast Series, where we look at real world learning management system (LMS) implementations and e-learning program rollouts.

SyberWorks specializes in custom e-learning solutions, learning management systems and e-learning development for corporations, governments and non-profit institutions.

My name is Mary Kay Lofurno. I'm the marketing director here at SyberWorks, and your host today. In this edition, we are talking with Paula Suyama, Learning Center Manager for Liberty Dialysis Incorporated, about their use of the SyberWorks hosted LMS to provide internal employee compliance training.

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Mary Kay: And now let's talk with Paula Suyama, Learning Center Manager for Liberty Dialysis Incorporated. Good afternoon, Paula. Thanks for coming to talk with us today.

Paula Suyama: Aloha, Mary Kay. Thank you for inviting me to share Liberty Dialysis' experience with SyberWorks.

Mary Kay: Great, OK. So, Paula, why don't you go ahead and tell us about yourself.

Paula: I'm an RN with over 28 years of experience of dialysis here in Hawaii, and I've been working with Liberty Dialysis now for over three years. My focus in dialysis has been primarily with education, especially staff, patient and community.

Liberty's involvement and commitment to staff education and my interest in providing patient and staff education led me to this position as a Liberty Learning Center manager for our LMS, as we call it.

Mary Kay: OK, great. So, can you give our audience a little bit more information about Liberty Dialysis as a company?

Paula: Sure. Liberty Dialysis and its affiliates develop, own and operate dialysis clinics throughout the United States. Liberty has a history of developing clinics in under served communities in conjunction with local physicians and non-profit organizations. Liberty partners with local nephrologists and/or hospitals in owning and operating these centers.

We have presently over 85 dialysis clinics and acute programs, approximately 92 or more nephrology partners and over 1000 employees, actually well over 1000. We've serviced about 4400 ESRD, or end stage renal dialysis patients. And we have about 32 Liberty clinics that are partnered directly with hospitals.

Our physician partners are nephrologists who own and participate in its ownership and decision making for each of the clinics that they are affiliated with. Local medical directors dictate clinical policies; it doesn't come from one main branch.

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And our patient focused care is to drive outstanding clinical outcomes and we provide modern amenities such as wireless Internet service, flat screen TV's and high end finishes to make a comfortable experience for our patients.

Mary Kay: OK. So, after listening to that I think I pretty much know the answer, but Paula, can you describe the business factors that drove your company to investigate and ultimately purchase a hosted learning management system as an e-learning solution for your company.

Paula: Since Liberty Dialysis is a broad based company that stretches from the east coast to Hawaii, as well as Alaska, we needed to find a program that could support our goal of providing and tracking education for all of our clinics.

There are many educational topics that are mandated by regulatory agencies such as CMS, CDC, OSHA. They all require dialysis clinics to have, upon initial hire as well as annually, certain educational topics.

In order for Liberty to cooperate to be assured that all staff has met these requirements, our LMS can provide these required education as well as monitor and track our clinics' compliance.

The LMS is also used to provide educational courses that are targeted and designed to enhance knowledge for specific staff positions such as RN, dialysis technicians, dietitians, social workers, biomedical technicians.

This process assures us that all Liberty staff in a particular job position has had the same basic information provided to them, and that all Liberty clinics have a basic level of competence.

Mary Kay: OK, well that makes a lot of sense. So, why did your company choose the SyberWorks hosted LMS to create your training portal?

Paula: After doing our homework, we felt that SyberWorks would be the best fit for Liberty Dialysis. The program insight would be able to meet many of the different features that we needed in order for our LMS to be successful.

Some of the requirements that were important to us were ability to upload staff information via interface between our IT and SyberWorks; hierarchy levels that can support our multiple regions, clinics, departments; reports that can track and document staff performance as well as the various hierarchal levels, multiple presentation formats, ability to upload and edit our own presentations and tests as well as Liberty's expansive clinic base required ability to support across the United States and Hawaii and Alaska, as we mentioned earlier, and most importantly the ability to grow with us.

We felt it was important for Liberty to have a handle on all clinics' basic training and standardized basic training tools and competence across all the clinics.

Mary Kay: OK, that sounds great. So, I understand that you have a new hire training program that's deployed by the LMS when a new employee starts. And you're producing a new compliance training course just about every month, which everyone in the company is required to take.

Can you just give us a little bit more information about those two programs?

Paula: Sure. As part of our new hire training program, all new staff are required to complete courses in the LMS.

Core competency modules for the direct patient care staff were developed to provide comprehensive information on hemodialysis. PowerPoint presentations and tests are assigned to the new direct patient care staff via their job codes when they are entered into the LMS for the first time.

Their progress can be monitored and tracked via the report feature of the LMS.

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This assists managers to have a record of their staff new hire education and competency along with their own on the job training activities and check lists in the clinics.

All Liberty staff must complete courses that have been identified as regulatory and or corporate specific, such as a read and sign for computer user agreement, HIPA and corporate compliance to name a few.

Compliance training is assigned monthly. Mandatory in service courses have been developed to meet the basic requirements of the conditions of participation with CMS as well as other regulatory requirements of the CDC and OSHA that are usually required annually.

By assigning our staff monthly in services, we're able to track and monitor Liberty's overall compliance to regulatory training. These courses are assigned automatically, have been set up to be assigned annually.

Report features of the LMS is extremely helpful; not only in monitoring and tracking group our progress, but is also a great tool for managers to keep track of their staff as a group and individually.

Staff compliance to meetings the requirements on the LMSs can be easily identified and used for their annual staff evaluation.

Also printing out a transcript and having a hard copy in their personnel file makes the employee's files up to date and survey ready.

Mary Kay: OK, well that sounds great. Now who actually works with the SyberWorks hosted learning management system at your company?

Paula: Liberty has a team that works with SyberWorks. We have our director of IT who works with SyberWorks in setting up our active directory interface as well as the components needed for computers.

Another team member assists with the development of a hierarchy and keeping it up to date as we are a growing company and we add several new clinics each quarter.

Then there's an educator that's out in the field that assists with the development of courses, reviews and has hands on experience with LMS out in their various clinics.

Then there's myself, an RN educator that manages the LMS. My role is to assure that all various components, and there are many, can work together so that our LMS can meet the educational goals of Liberty.

Mary Kay: I understand that your course offering is based on content you developed. It would be great if you could share with us some of the instructional design and planning processes you go through to develop your courses. Also what types of course offering tools are you using to develop your training?

Paula: OK, the courses in the LMS are presently PowerPoint presentations with no audio or animation. The reason for this is not that SyberWorks cannot support this but because we have such a large variance in the types of computers we have across Liberty.

Mary Kay: Oh, yes that makes sense.

Paula: We have found that this is one of our biggest challenges. Therefore, in order to assure that there are no clinics left out of the LMS programs, we have kept it basic and simple.

The tests that are usually attached to the presentations are usually only single answer and a few matching questions as well.

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We have a process in place that assures that only vetted presentations are placed onto the LMS. Basically the process is this. The group decides on what presentations will be developed. It's assigned to persons with particular expertise. Then these presentations must include a title page, objective, content summary and resources.

We also have a time frame. These presentations should be able to be completed within 30 minutes. Including approximately ten question test attached to each presentation. This template is used to keep the format uniformed and within time.

Once presentation is completed, it's submitted to a committee that includes our own educational medical director as well as our VP of clinical services for final review.

After all presentations are finalized, it's given a stamp of approval. Then I upload the courses and assign it to targeted staff. Once we have it ready, I send out a memo or a communication such as a newsletter to the mangers, educators alerting them that a new course and timeline for completion is available.

Mary Kay: OK, that sounds great. Can you tell us a little about your customer experience with SyberWorks?

Paula: SyberWorks has been extremely patient during our learning phase of the program. We had a steep learning curve and with the assistance and perseverance of the SyberWorks training team we were able to meet our LMS goals for 2008 as well as 2009.

They've assisted us with understanding the various features and have helped to tweak some of them for customized program for us.

Through conference calls, webinars and email we have come to truly appreciate the magnitude that SyberWorks can offer our LMS. We have had many discussions, frustrations and have given lots of headaches.

Dana, our main contact for training and support has been there. Through her dedication and perseverance we have come to understand the program and know what questions to ask and how to understand why certain features work the way they do or not.

We have become Syber friends and although we do not have to talk with her that often now, we know that she's there and will be able to assist us when we need to.

Mary Kay: OK, that's great. Anything more you'd like to say about working with SyberWorks and its system?

Paula: Sure. When deciding on a program, we realized that no program has everything. However, with SyberWorks, we were able to get most of the features and some that we haven't even used yet. More importantly, we added a willing partner to our education team.

They've exhibited endurance when our knowledge was limited. They've shown us perseverance when we were stuck and not sure how to move forward. Most importantly, they have showed us that they care about our goals and have backed up their promises with action.

We look forward to continuing our relationship and moving to utilization of the advanced teachers that SyberWorks offers. We know that SyberWorks will be there to help us through this journey.

Mary Kay: Well, you know Paula, that sounds great. I'm going to let you go because you're a very busy lady. Thanks for joining us today.

Paula: Aloha and Mahalo which means thank you.

Mary Kay: Super. This is Mary Kay Lofurno, marketing director at SyberWorks. Thanks for listening to our interview with Paula Suyama, learning center manager for Liberty Dialysis Incorporated on the SyberWorks LMS e-Learning implementation podcast series.

Talk with you next month.

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