



Case Study

How Asking the Right Questions Enables Southwestern Vermont Health Care and Medical Center to Effectively Address Risk

As the Corporate Compliance Officer at Southwestern Vermont Health Care and Medical Center, Mitchell Barody oversees the compliance program for an organization with locations in Vermont, Massachusetts and New York. These include a hospital, skilled nursing facility, cancer center and numerous physician practices. The scope of his enterprise raises a variety of compliance challenges, calling for the ability to uncover and address risks in an efficient and effective manner.

ComplyTrack's Risks Assessment Management Application delivers that ability.

This case study is based on an interview with Mitchell E. Barody, JD, Corporate Compliance Officer.

ComplyTrack's Risks Assessment Management Application ("RAM") Proved Instrumental in Moving from a "Paper-Centric" to a Technology-Based Risk Assessment System

Coming into his position as Corporate Compliance Officer at Southwestern Vermont Health Care ("SVHC"), Mitchell Barody recognized that the process by which he collected data would have a direct effect on the data itself. *"This is the first compliance role I have held. So, upon arrival, I reviewed the process currently in place at SVHC and all the elements of the existing compliance program. I learned that SVHC was taking risk and compliance very seriously, but what*

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Interview with Mitchell E. Barody, JD
Corporate Compliance Officer
Southwestern Vermont Health Care
and Medical Center

Challenge

Implementing an objective, enterprise-wide risk assessment program that uncovers and prioritizes risks.

Solution

ComplyTrack's Risks Assessment Management Application enables Southwestern Vermont Health Care and Medical Center to assess their regulatory compliance stance, uncover areas of risk, and manage the remediation process across their enterprise from one central location.

I also observed was that the processes could be improved while also maximizing efficiency. Maybe it is just my millennial mindset, but to maximize efficiency and improve data collection, I determined that the program should move away from using so much paper and towards utilizing technology that is readily available.”

RAM Has Allowed SVHC to do Much More in Less Time

Mr. Baroody commented on his experience of revising SVHC’s compliance program of which RAM played a key role. *“To launch the revised compliance program, we conducted a campaign to market and communicate its importance internally. We even conducted digital culture surveys for the compliance program for many reasons, one being whether or not there would be any cultural impediments to conducting a broad risk assessment. After we obtained the software, I met with each owner individually to explain why we are doing this, why this process is important and why everyone needs to participate. RAM makes it much easier for me to get everyone involved. The fact that RAM is automated means I do not have to remind anyone to complete the assessment. The emails go out and remind them for me. As we moved forward, the people involved understood and enjoyed the process. They thought it was straightforward and to be quite revealing.”* To put the utility of RAM during this process into context, Mr. Baroody shared some real-world numbers. The scope of what he has been able to accomplish in such a short time is staggering. *“Over a three month period utilizing RAM, we collected answers to a total of 5,937 risk-related questions organization-wide. You cannot perform this magnitude of an assessment on paper, especially if your Compliance Department is not large. A paper-based process will possibly result in finding 5 to 10 risks. This number may be much less for a paper-based program if the questions are open ended and overly subjective without any grounding in relevant Compliance guidelines or law.”*

Questions Are One Key to RAM’s Remarkable Effectiveness

For Mr. Baroody, much of RAM’s effectiveness comes from its extensive library of questions, linked to the regulatory sources on which the

questions are based. *“Choosing the topics was straight forward. I looked through every single question in the library that consists of several thousand of these questions. We ended up reviewing 40 different departments with 40 different owners. If there is a question related to any relevant topic in my organization, and I can find an owner to answer this question, I will ask the owner for the answer. I do not want to be surprised by any underlying risk or a trend that I have not been informed about. Additionally, I use RAM for enterprise risk management and not just for compliance. I look at more than just OIG-related compliance questions, too. RAM is a tool that allows us to see where the risks are, so we can actively monitor them and put corrective actions into place that will mitigate these risks. We conduct assessments utilizing everything from the OIG Guidance, Conditions of Participation, to the OIG Work Plan. The system is automated and user friendly. The people that answered the questions and the department leaders have even expressed how much they like the program. They say it is like game.”*

Being Able to Ask Questions Across the Entire Organization Is Vital

RAM’s technology also made it possible to pose questions to a greater number of personnel. *“Being able to reach and utilize the entire organization to answer risk-related questions is a very important feature. Just because an owner is not able to answer a question, does not mean that a nurse on the third floor cannot help provide an answer. We have so many people that answered questions in the assessment this year. This program truly brings the whole organization together as a cross-functional team. We have an amazing team, and we always strive to do the right thing for our patients and our organization. This risk assessment is just another step in our continuing evolution of providing exceptional care to the people we serve.”*

Connecting Questions to Primary Source Material Is Another Key

“Just because I have a law degree, does not mean I am an expert at interpreting every law,” Mr. Baroody says. This is related to just one more benefit RAM delivers that he greatly appreciates.

“RAM is a tool that allows us to see where the risks are, so we can actively monitor them.”

“If the government has a law applicable to a healthcare organization, you better have a written policy or procedure in force to cover this applicable law.”

“My favorite feature is the custom risk analysis. This allows me to monitor the risk scores and perform an analysis.”

“One of the most valuable features of RAM is that I do not have to spend countless hours determining what a specific regulation means and spend hours consulting with outside counsel. The team of attorneys at Wolters Kluwer have already done this for us.” The fact that RAM stays current is also vitally important. *“I like the frequent updates on the software and really like how relevant the questions are, as they are pulled right from the federal law. I have been able to tell people, ‘I know this question sounds silly. I know it sounds crazy, but click the citation link, go to the regulation, and then you will see why it is being asked. It is the law.’ Citation link is my best friend because it reinforces everything that I am doing. If the government has a law applicable to a healthcare organization, you better have a written policy or procedure in force to cover this applicable law.”*

No Other Product Provides Everything RAM Does

In deciding how to proceed with introducing technology into SVHC’s risk assessment program,

Mr. Baroody considered a number of options. *“We looked at three vendors. I wanted the specific questions that need to be answered, that have a risk score and that show us exactly where we stand. The other products fail to provide these questions and are dependent on the end-user to perform the research, write the questions, and determine what is and is not risky. The other products are not pulled from the OIG Work Plan. They do not let you know where you stand. They also do not calculate the risk score. My favorite feature of RAM is the real-time, custom risk analysis. This allows me to monitor the risk scores and perform an analysis and review trends. I am able to even create a risk graph and track progress. It is really important after you perform the initial assessment to have a base score. No other software that I am aware of does this in the health care industry. It was a simple decision to select RAM as the product we needed in order to be able to provide the most thorough but efficient risk assessment. Competition simply does not exist today in this market. Wolters Kluwer is the only company with functional software that performs the same way as RAM.”*

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