

## REDUCE NURSING RISK

### Improve Patient Safety by Increasing Nurses' Competence in Identifying and Mitigating Risk

According to recent studies, 16% of medical malpractice cases involve nurses and of these, the average loss is \$441,000. ELM's **Medical-Legal Education for Nurses** library trains nurses to recognize, react to, and avoid risk in their day to day interactions. These courses develop critical thinking and decision-making skills by using real-life case studies to clarify proper conduct in questionable situations. Through case-based learning, nurses will become more skilled at identifying and mitigating risk in their clinical interactions, which will help them protect their patients, protect themselves, and protect their organization.

**6% of nursing-related medical malpractice cases cost over \$1 million.**

#### Impact:

##### Increase Patient Safety

- Raise awareness of risk to avoid patient injury
- Improve nurse recognition of risk and safety issues

##### Reduce Compensable Harm

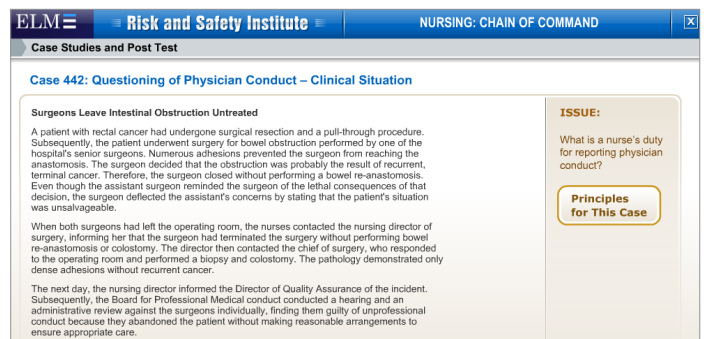
- Improve nurse-patient communication
- Increase nurses' awareness of the impact of their actions
- Help nurses appreciate the scope of their responsibilities to patients and healthcare team members

#### Features:

- Case-based learning through situational analysis
- Real life scenarios drawn from the experiences of other healthcare institutions
- Targeted test feedback and supplemental materials reinforce learning principles in weak areas

#### This library is essential for:

- Hospitals with self-funded insurance programs (Trusts, Captives, RRGs)
- High-risk specialty groups
- Hospitals or medical groups in high-risk states/jurisdiction
- Health systems with diverse geography



**ELM** Risk and Safety Institute NURSING: CHAIN OF COMMAND

Case Studies and Post Test

**Case 442: Questioning of Physician Conduct – Clinical Situation**

**Surgeons Leave Intestinal Obstruction Untreated**

A patient with rectal cancer had undergone surgical resection and a pull-through procedure. Subsequently, the patient underwent surgery for bowel obstruction performed by one of the hospital's senior surgeons. Numerous adhesions prevented the surgeon from reaching the anastomosis. The surgeon decided that the obstruction was probably the result of recurrent, terminal cancer. Therefore, the surgeon closed without performing a bowel re-anastomosis. Even though the assistant surgeon reminded the surgeon of the lethal consequences of that decision, the surgeon deflected the assistant's concerns by stating that the patient's situation was unsalvageable.

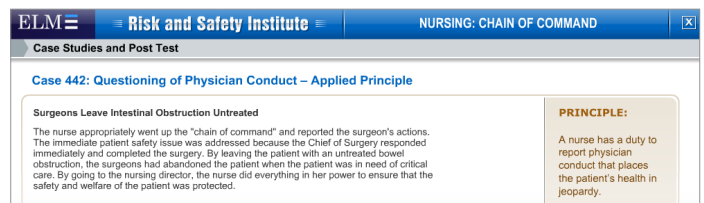
When both surgeons had left the operating room, the nurses contacted the nursing director of surgery, informing her that the surgeon had terminated the surgery without performing bowel re-anastomosis or colostomy. The director then contacted the chief of surgery, who responded to the operating room and performed a biopsy and colostomy. The pathology demonstrated only dense adhesions without recurrent cancer.

The next day, the nursing director informed the Director of Quality Assurance of the incident. Subsequently, the Board for Professional Medical conduct conducted a hearing and an administrative review against the surgeons individually, finding them guilty of unprofessional conduct because they abandoned the patient without making reasonable arrangements to ensure appropriate care.

**ISSUE:**

What is a nurse's duty for reporting physician conduct?

**Principles for This Case**



**ELM** Risk and Safety Institute NURSING: CHAIN OF COMMAND

Case Studies and Post Test

**Case 442: Questioning of Physician Conduct – Applied Principle**

**Surgeons Leave Intestinal Obstruction Untreated**

The nurse appropriately went up the "chain of command" and reported the surgeon's actions. The immediate patient safety issue was addressed because the Chief of Surgery responded immediately and completed the surgery. By leaving the patient with an untreated bowel obstruction, the surgeons had abandoned the patient when the patient was in need of critical care. By going to the nursing director, the nurse did everything in her power to ensure that the safety and welfare of the patient was protected.

**PRINCIPLE:**

A nurse has a duty to report physician conduct that places the patient's health in jeopardy.

ELM courses teach nurses how to identify and mitigate risk using real case studies to illustrate general concepts and the practical application of principles.

### Library Objectives

Nurses will:

- Become aware of societal expectation for professional conduct
- Understand when exposure to liability is present in their clinical interactions
- Recognize and prevent the factors that may cause a risk to materialize
- Respond appropriately to high-risk situations
- Evaluate the medical-legal options available and compare their consequences

### Library Outline:

This library is available as a suite or as individual courses:

The Basic Suite: Fundamental Issues

This suite of courses examines the fundamental risk issues that arise in all aspects of the nurse/patient, nurse/physician and nurse/nurse relationships. Courses include:

- Chain of Command
- Communication of Patient Info
- National Patient Safety Goals
- Team Building

### Subject Matter Experts

Sal Fiscina, MD, JD, Course Director: Dr. Fiscina is a graduate of Harvard University, the University of Rochester Medical School, and The George Washington University National Law Center. For more than 30 years he has been a professorial lecturer in Legal Medicine and is currently on the adjunct faculty at Columbia College of Physicians and Surgeons and the Georgetown University Law Center. He has authored several textbooks in law and medicine. Dr. Fiscina is a former president of the American College of Legal Medicine and former Chairperson of the American Board of Legal Medicine.

### About ELM

For more than 20 years, ELM has worked with hospitals, health systems, and insurance carriers to educate healthcare providers about risk and patient safety. ELM programs are a tested and proven offering that provides organizations with a method to proactively address critical risk issues, and to easily monitor and document those efforts.

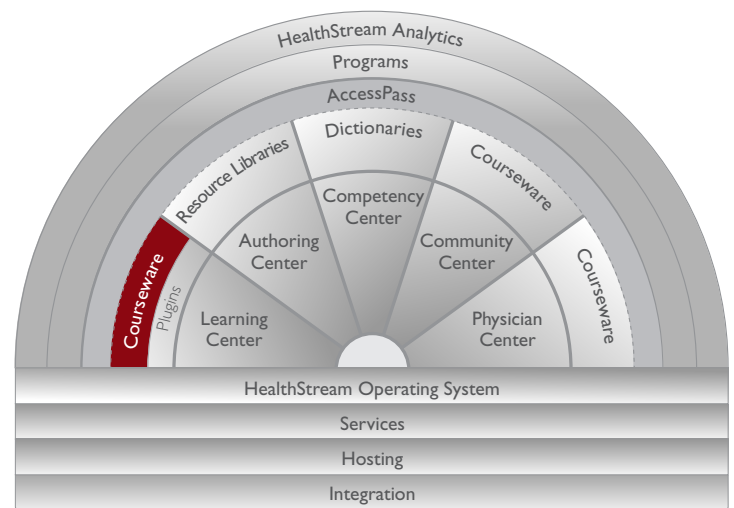
#### User Scale

- novice
- advanced beginner
- competent
- proficient
- expert

#### Recommended For:

- All Nurses

### HealthStream's Integrated Solutions



### About HealthStream

HealthStream (NASDAQ: HSTM) is a leading provider of research and learning solutions for the healthcare industry. HealthStream focuses on turning "Insight into Action" for leading healthcare providers and suppliers through continuous measurement and adaptive learning.