

Pullman Regional Hospital Implemented HeartCode BLS and ACLS, Achieved Savings, and Changed Hospital Attitudes About Online Learning

A Success Story for Using HeartCode BLS and ACLS

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IMPACT

- Achieved certification compliance rates in the high 90s
- Raised the level of verified BLS and ACLS skills competency
- Cut significant training time for BLS and ACLS by taking it online
- Cut costs in three areas: instructor costs, staff replacement time, and resources for training
- Improved already high trainee satisfaction ratings from 87% to 92%

OVERVIEW

Pullman Regional Hospital is one of the newest hospitals in the Pacific Northwest and the third to be built in Washington state in 25 years. Located in the rolling wheat fields of the Palouse, Pullman is home to Washington State University, a Pac-10 school with more than 17,000 students and approximately 10,000 residents year-round. Although considered a “rural” hospital, the 25-bed critical access hospital offers a full range of advanced medical services and has more than 50 physicians on its medical staff. The facility features a state-of-the-art surgery department, digital imaging, private birthing suites, helipad, 24 hour emergency department, and wireless patient information. Additionally, Pullman Regional Hospital was recognized as number one in the state of Washington in patient satisfaction by HCAHPS and nationally recognized for achieving 12 consecutive quarters of patient satisfaction in the 95th percentile.

THE CHALLENGE

The hospital has rigorous Basic Life Support (BLS) and Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS) training requirements with approximately 125 BLS and 50 ACLS certifications awarded annually. Prior to its transition to HeartCode, Pullman’s training process for BLS and ACLS certification and recertification was inefficient, requiring many people and resources to maintain. BLS classes were taught by a certified instructor but it was difficult for the instructor to arrange to teach the

four hour classes. Additionally, the process required regular oversight and coordination by staff to locate rooms, schedule classes, advertise offerings, and register staff into a limited class size. This was often compounded by frustration when registered staff were unable to attend their scheduled class.

Since ACLS is more specialized in scope, staff had to take their ACLS course at outside facilities or Pullman had to partner with other facilities to provide the training. This comprehensive class takes 16 hours total over two days to complete, which led to increased scheduling difficulties, staff travel, overtime, and other organizational costs.

APPROACH

Pullman Regional Hospital was a HealthStream customer prior to implementing HeartCode, for online learning regulatory coursework. The staff who used this online learning were open to further online training.

Bernadette Berney and Donna Haynes attended the HealthStream Summit for the first time in 2007 where they were introduced to HeartCode. “We quickly grasped what an incredible solution it would be to our staff’s certification compliance needs,” said Haynes. “It didn’t take long for us to decide to implement HeartCode for our entire organization.”

The hospital invested in the HealthStream HeartCode product for both BLS and ACLS in 2008. Staff complete the didactic (Part 1) portion of the course on the computer and then go to the skills lab to complete the hand-on (Part 2) portion on the simulation manikins.

Certification compliance is a requirement for employment. Staff members are given a choice on how they will complete their training, including traditional classroom learning. Some staff still choose the more traditional avenue, but increasingly staff are opting for online HeartCode BLS and ACLS training.

“Pullman Regional Hospital has been recognized as one of the most committed facilities to providing wireless technology and electronic patient records and systems,” said Berney. “Our strong culture and focus on electronic efficiencies makes online learning a natural fit.”

RESULTS

HeartCode has helped generate enthusiasm for online learning throughout the organization. With HealthStream available by Internet from home or during downtime at work, training is now far more convenient and efficient for everyone involved. Access to the manikins in the skills lab is easy to fit into everyone’s schedules. Best of all, it has become an accepted standard of training by staff. Employees embrace the convenience and shorter training times.

These benefits have resulted in consistent staff compliance scores in the high 90s and satisfaction levels now at 92 percent from 87 percent.

“We have noticed that HeartCode provides a higher level of validation of training competency,” said Haynes.

“Participants tell us they really learn because they have to use the correct technique on the simulation manikins in order to pass the course.”

“You REALLY learn and cannot pass the the manikin without getting it right!”

—Pullman HeartCode Trainee

An experienced emergency department nurse had gone through traditional ACLS classes many times during her career. With HeartCode, her ACLS training took only 60 minutes to complete instead of two 8-hour days.

A certified nursing assistant who was uncertain of her skill level during the compression phase of CPR after a patient coded was shaken and unsure of herself following the incident. HeartCode training reaffirmed that her skill level was indeed appropriate and assisted her in regaining her confidence as a code team member.

BLS is open to all hospital staff. As an example, a maintenance staff member completed the BLS course because of his involvement with the Boy Scouts. Two staff members who work full-time in the registration department and are currently nursing students were able to complete the BLS training requirement for their program.

Overall, the option of online training has contributed to a culture of employee responsibility and accountability. Employees say they value the strong online educational system that has been built.

As a result, expanded applications of online learning are now offered, including employee orientation, individual courses, and online registration for monthly all-staff meetings. Berney and Haynes continue to investigate additional online learning programs to improve patient care.

Additionally, BLS and ACLS training are available for a fee to physicians and EMS workers in the community who are not hospital staff.

“Overall, Pullman Regional Hospital is pleased with the return on investment from HeartCode training and the benefit to our staff and the community,” said Berney.