

## **Defining the Skills of the Perfect SPH Manager**

The certification committee for the Association of Safe Patient Handling Professionals set out to define the skills that would make a "perfect" manager of a safe patient handling program. The committee examined the characteristics of successful SPH managers. It also looked at the tasks that make a SPH program successful during its creation, implementation, and continued maintenance. From these personal characteristics and task demands, the committee refined a list of skills.

From the outset of this endeavor, we recognized that few, if any, program managers will be highly proficient in every one of these skills. In most cases, effective program managers will rely on the team that they have established in order to meet all of the skills necessary for the program to be successful. And that, ultimately, is the nature of a "perfect" manager; they assemble the right team and provide the direction for that team to be successful.

And while no one is expected to be proficient in every one of these areas, all of the skills identified reflect areas where it would be beneficial for SPH program managers to increase their skill sets. These skill sets are what the certification committee looks to see in an applicant's work history, work product, recommendations, and continuing education. These skill sets are what we encourage SPH managers to continue to build through future continuing education. And finally, these skill sets are the organizing principles for the webinars, articles, and other educational materials that the ASPHP develops.

The skills have been broken into three general categories: planning a program, implementing a program, and sustaining a program. Yet many of the skills needed to plan a program are still needed during the implementing and sustaining phases. It is more accurate to view these broad classifications as being when these skills are most importantly and prominently required for success.

When planning a program, three of the most important skills sets are financial acumen, team leadership, and policy/procedure deployment. Financial acumen is needed to perform cost justifications, establish budgets, and negotiate with vendors. Team leadership allows the SPH manager to develop and nurture a broad cross-functional team and to collaborate with those persons who perform a wide range of functions and roles within their organization. Finally, the SPH manager must have the ability to both develop and roll-out the policy and procedure documents.

As the program progresses from the planning phase to the implementation phase a different set of skills come to the forefront, namely: training deployment, clinical knowledge and expertise, and risk analysis and control. Training requires both the development and the delivery of effective sessions covering both the equipment use and the policy. Having a working knowledge of the interaction of patient condition, treatment, patient handling requirements, and limitations is crucial to achieving staff buy-in to the program. The SPH manager needs the ability to effectively communicate the benefits of SPH and the results that will be realized by patient and staff.

Once the program has been put in place, a new set of skills is important in sustaining that success. In order to maintain the success of a SPH program the manager must be able to promote the program internally and externally, audit the program effectiveness, adjust the course of the program for greater levels of success, and transition the program to more unit specific approaches.

The list of specific skills required of each phase of an SPH program is outlined below:

## **Planning a Program**

- Finance
  - Cost Justification
  - Budgeting
  - Vendor Negotiation (if necessary)
- Team Leadership
  - Inclusion of Cross-disciplinary Team
  - Collaboration Across Wide Ranges Within the Organization
- Policy and Procedure Deployment
  - Develop Written SPH Policy and Procedures
  - Obtain Management and Staff Acceptance

## **Implementing a Program**

- Training Deployment
  - Develop training programs
  - Modification, facility customization of training materials
  - Present training programs
  - Conduct skills validation
- Clinical Knowledge and Experience
  - Working knowledge of the interaction of patient condition, treatment, patient handling requirements, and limitations
  - Ability to effectively communicate with staff, including nurses and administrators, the benefits that SPH has for the patient
- Risk Analysis and Control
  - Understands and relates the principles of ergonomics and biomechanics to patient handling risks and ergonomic control measures/risk interventions
  - Identification of appropriate countermeasures including product selection
  - Incident/accident/near miss investigation
  - Track/trend injury data
  - Conducts root cause analyses

## **Sustaining a Program**

- Program Promotion
  - Internal promotion activities
  - External promotion activities
- Program Audit
  - Establish and Track Performance Metrics
  - Conduct Review of Program Elements
  - Implement Program Enhancements Based on Program Review Data

- Unit Specific Customization
  - Conducts clinical unit/area-based ergonomic evaluations to determine appropriate patient handling technology recommendations.
  - Integrating SPH equipment and procedures into care pathways
  - Develops unit-specific changes in policy and procedures (e.g., those related to program implementation, bariatric patient care, maintenance/repair procedures, storage, and other issues impacting the use of patient handling equipment.)