

PreCheck Ink

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Why Performing Criminal Background Checks on Vendors is Essential to Patient Safety

By Andrea L. Siskind, CPCS

Picture this – An operating room. Other than the patient on the table, there are two surgeons, an anesthesiologist, a physician’s assistant, three nurses and a monitor tech – all have had criminal background checks performed prior to their employment or appointment to the medical staff of the hospital. Now look out the window of the operating room door – see that man with the tool belt? He is an elevator repairman. He works for the company contracted by the hospital to repair the operating room elevator. He is also a felon. He spent time in jail for assault and sexual abuse. The hospital does not know, nor does his company. Would you want this man walking around in the recovery

room while your wife, mother, son or daughter was still under the effects of anesthesia?

Neither would I. Unfortunately, this is a more common scenario than most people would think. On any given day, the average size hospital has 30-50 vendors working in the facility, many with unrestricted access.

Most hospitals perform criminal background checks on their employees prior to hire and on the medical staff members prior to their appointment – so, why not vendors? For the most part, hospitals have little to no information about the vendor representatives that come in and out of their facilities. Performing criminal background checks would limit risk and liabilities associated with vendors, as well as give the hospital the peace of mind that all vendor representatives have been as thoroughly screened as the employees and the medical staff.

Every hospital has a credentialing process for their medical staff members, the primary purpose of which is to ensure that any individual who wishes to provide patient care services is qualified and competent. Credentialing is essentially a patient-protective activity. Many state and federal courts have stated that hospitals have a

duty to the public to ensure that only qualified, competent practitioners are allowed to provide care. Equally, hospitals have human resources policies and procedures to ensure all employees – healthcare providers and others – are qualified to perform the duties for which they are hired. These policies and procedure are also a patient-protective activity.

While there are increasingly stringent and numerous requirements for credentialing medical staff members and hiring employees, prescreening/credentialing requirements for vendors are unclear, open to interpretation or non-existent. *Webster* defines credentials as *evidence of authority, status, rights, entitlement to privileges or providing the basis for confidence, belief, credit, etc.* This is exactly the information that hospitals need for their physicians and employees, and it should be what they demand of their vendors as well. Best practices dictate that hospitals should conduct the same due diligence process with their vendors as they do with employees and medical staff members.

This article originally appeared in the TSMSS Winter 2007 Newsletter.



We've Got a Live One! New Product - VendorCheck



PreCheck’s newest product in our line of healthcare outsourcing solutions, **VendorCheck**, was recently released. **VendorCheck** is a complete vendor credentialing and screening solution, offered at no cost to the healthcare facility. For more information contact Zach Daigle at 888.463.5041 or visit our website at www.PreCheck.com to download a **VendorCheck** brochure.

Celebrating 25 Years of Investigation

PreCheck is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year. PreCheck, founded as a private investigation firm in 1983, began focusing on the specialized needs of hospitals, clinics and other healthcare providers in 1993. We have expanded from offering one product, background screening, to an entire suite of outsourcing solutions ranging from a license management solution, employment verification, sanction screening and vendor credentialing system to background checks for physicians and students.

What can PreCheck clients expect during our 25th year of business? More focus on our customers, whether that be improving customer service or the overall client experience or the development of new products and services. PreCheck's product development and success has been driven by listening to our customers' needs. PreCheck founder, Glenn Woolsey has always believed that, "Customers are the greatest teachers. You never know when you are listening to them talk about a problem or something that could make their job easier that it could turn into another PreCheck product. " Over the past 25 years, PreCheck has grown from a company of 3 employees that worked out

of a house, to a business with over 150 employees in two locations. Glenn has always promoted the importance of customer service and maintaining repeat customers to all PreCheck employees. PreCheck's first healthcare client, Baptist Beaumont is still our client today. "We've made a lot of changes over the years, but one thing we never want to lose is focus on our clients' needs," stated Bruce Smith, President and Chief Operating Officer. Bruce began employment with PreCheck in 2002 as Operations Manager and has been a huge part of the company's growth and success. During his 5 years with PreCheck, he has improved operations and internal processes, which in turn has provided benefits to the clients, such as faster turnaround time, better applications and reports.

We have a long list of clients to thank for many of our products. Inova Health System in Virginia needed a way to manage their licensed staff to meet the new Joint Commission's licensing requirements in 2006. PreCheck worked together with Inova Human Resources and developed CredentCheck, a complete outsourcing solution that ensures that healthcare staff li-

censes are up to date and meet all state and federal requirements. "We designed and built the product around Inova's expressed needs and they became the first users of the product and we still enhance the system today based on client feedback," explained Mike Piana, Senior Vice President of Marketing at PreCheck. In 2008, we will make our commitment to the healthcare industry and their unique needs more evident. "Our clients will notice some big changes in the next couple of months," stated Lindsey Reczek, Marketing Specialist at PreCheck. "PreCheck will be getting what you could call a much needed facelift. We're committed to improving our existing products and providing the ultimate PreCheck experience for our clients and users and we want to communicate that commitment to our clients."

We thank all of our clients for a wonderful 25 years and look forward to 25 more. We ask our clients to always give feedback or share their needs or ideas, because we're always listening and you never know when you could be responsible for the idea of another one of our products or services.

And the Award Goes to...

PreCheck, Inc. was nominated for the prestigious Houston West Chamber of Commerce 2008 Economic Development Summit and Star Award. Nominees were businesses and community members who have made a positive economic impact on Houston's Westside. Nominees were required to complete an application and were judged on economic growth, contributions to community and industry recognition.

PreCheck was honored as a finalist at the 10th Annual Houston Star Awards luncheon held in February.

PreCheck 2007 highlights listed on application:

- An increase of staff by 19% since 2006
- 20% growth in sales revenue
- Community Involvement Committee developed—donations made by employees to the Susan G. Komen foundation, Houston Food Bank, Texas Children's Hospital Annual Toy Drive, free background services provided to several not-for profit children's hospitals.
- Several West Houston client testimonials in support of our services.

"For the past 7 years as our vendor, PreCheck has exemplified a shared commitment to patient safety and facility security by providing the information we need to make the right decisions about the people we hire."

-Vicki Jones—HR Director

MHHS Memorial City Medical

Conference and Tradeshow Calendar

One of the ways PreCheck supports clients is through sponsoring and exhibiting at various healthcare human resource, medical staffing and staffing association conferences and tradeshows where our clients and target customers are members. Tradeshows are not only an outlet for PreCheck to seek new business, but they also present the opportunity to meet our existing clients.

If you would like PreCheck to exhibit at a conference or need a guest speaker for an event, please contact Lindsey Reczek, Marketing Specialist at PreCheck at Lindseyreczek@PreCheck.com or at 713.590.1139.

Upcoming Calendar of Events

April

3-4 Ohio Association of Medical Staff Services Spring Seminar (Columbus, OH)

3-4 Mississippi Hospital Association Annual Societies Conference (Jackson, MS)

16-17 Texas Society for Medical Staff Services Annual Conference (Houston, TX)

May

14-16 California Association of Medical Staff Services Annual Forum (San Diego, CA)

15-16 Illinois Association of Medical Staff Services Annual Educational Conference (Oak Brook, IL)

June

12-13 Tennessee Association of Medical Staff Services Annual Conference (Pigeon Forge, TN)

Coming Next Month

PreCheck is in the process of redesigning our website and logo. Launching in early April, our new website will be easier to navigate, find important information about our products, and keep up with industry and company related news. Our new image will reflect our healthcare focus and investigative approach.

The new logo and sneak preview of the website was revealed to our employees at PreCheck's March Staff Meeting to much enthusiasm and applause. PreCheck is excited about rolling out the new image, website and logo designs to our clients. Don't forget to check back to www.PreCheck.com in April for our new look.