Contract Guardian Delivers for Healthcare.

By John Reuter

The Joint Commission Hospital Accreditation Audit Assistance

Contract Guardian supports hospitals in the annual audit process. There are several features of the application that supports the audits. We will share how our clients are using some of these features.

Contract Guardian stores images of contracts along with multiple contract attributes in its database. These attributes can be searched and are available for reporting via Microsoft Excel. In addition, expiration dates are associated with every contract and are used in the email based audit reports. Automatic email based audit reports are generated and delivered to individuals who have been identified to audit specific types of contracts. The audit notifications are delivered monthly to specific users that are associated with specific contract types. The selection of contracts is based on the expiration date excluding year. The audit process insures hospital representatives are continually reviewing contracts. All suppliers regardless of type of service provided to the hospital can be included in the audit process. Contract Guardian provides the capabilities for the hospital to effectively manage this process by their Contract personnel.

On the Contract Guardian Dashboard that every user has access to in the application, are standard documents. These documents are assigned by the contract manager for the hospital or region within the hospital. When a contract is located of interest to the user, they have immediate access to the latest Joint Commission documentations created by the healthcare provider. In this example, a Patient Care Services Contract Decision Tree is available to the user to help the user determine if this contract is a Patient Care Services Contract. Included in the document is an ***Introduction to Oversight of Care, Treatment, and Services Provided through Contractual Agreement, TJC Standard LD.04.03.09***. Also available is a Contract Evaluation Form that gets completed that evaluates the quality of the contractor's service, timeliness of service, response to needs, frequency of errors or incidents, staff competence, courtesy to patients, etc. This document will be stored with the contract as an attachment when the process is complete.

Note: Our clients use these features to assist in the accreditation process for the Joint Commission.

Stark Law Conflict of Interest

Contract Guardian supports Stark Law conflict of interest provisions. There are features within Contract Guardian that allows our contract managers to enter an unlimited number of associated parties with a contract. These other parties and vendors that are typically individuals that is outside of the organization. There are contract searches that are available to every user that allows them to search by these other parties. The searches group the contract results together by the search criteria. Therefore, if someone searches on another party, all contracts that include this party will be shown in the result set. The client can then determine if there is any type of conflict among those contracts.

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Internal Audit Compliance

Contract Guardian allows users with the Contract Manager Designation access the Contract Manager Reporting. With this level of access, the Contract Manager can review all the contents of the users, contracts, attachments, departments, locations, and types. All of this information is immediately available on-line and via download to Microsoft Excel. Excel Reports can be generated and all Excel capabilities can be used against this data.

There is also a Query and Reporting facility that is available and specific data can be queried and the result set of contracts is limited to the selection criteria used within the query. As an example the contract result set can limited to status, department, location, expiration date, effective date, contract type, to name a few. The information once shown on screen within an internet browser looks like an Excel sheet. The results can be sorted by any available column and data is indexed dynamically based on the column selected. The user can select a starting point in the index, say the column selected is *Title;* the user can jump to "C" to start reviewing the titles that start with a "c". At the touch of a button the results are automatically transferred to Excel. At this point, Excel can be used to manage the results to tailor the results to support the internal audit.

The Joint Commission Audit features are also available to support the Internal Audit process.

The online search in the Contract Dashboard allows users to search for contracts based on a number of criteria including Contract Number, Title, Type, Department, Expiration Date, Effective Date, Other Party/Vendor, to name a few. The results can be sorted and document summaries are shown on the same screen. The contract and associated attachments are available to the audit process.

Organization and Risk Mitigation

In addition to the above examples, Contract Guardian delivers significantly to your organization and its risk mitigation. A couple of the more noteworthy examples include:

- Automatic notification levels of expiring contracts. Your organization will never be surprised by an expiring contract and will have ample time to renegotiate.
- Never lose or misplace a contract. Organizations of all sizes have suffered from this situation. Contract Guardian maintains a database in addition to your original copies. These documents can be accessed from anywhere in the world via a secured portal site.
- We ensure the security and access of your sensitive data. Additional backup copies of your contracts are maintained in our data vault at a secondary data center. Contracts are encrypted at all stages using SSL and AES algorithms.
- In addition to typical contracts, critical warranty information and their associated expiration dates can provide you significant financial savings.
- Contract Guardian can even protect you in a court of law. The automatic journal logs every transaction associated with an agreement including document change, email notifications and individual comments.

As you can see; Contract Guardian Delivers for Healthcare.