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CCO: Stay Focused on Main Goals, Keep Team Engaged During Pandemic

By Nina Youngstrom

Compliance officers would benefit from a “not-to-do list.” They should identify three to five core activities, such as billing audits, “and delegate, automate or eliminate” the rest, according to Ron Skillens, chief compliance officer and senior vice president of enterprise risk management at JPS Health Network in Tarrant County, Texas.

Focusing on core activities is one way to maintain productivity in the COVID-19 pandemic age, when many compliance officers are managing their compliance programs virtually, either fully or in part, Skillens said at the Feb. 12 Health Care Compliance Association Dallas regional conference.^[1] The effectiveness of compliance professionals is diminished when they’re spread too thin. “Many take on operational responsibilities, particularly in health systems with limited resources,” he said. Suppose the compliance officer does a compliance review, identifies problems and recommends three new internal controls. In response, the manager of the department says, “Great! Can you put them in place?” And the compliance officer agrees. “Those small ‘yeses’ can pile up to squeeze out four things the organization really needs you to be good at,” Skillens said. “So the concept of a not-to-do list lets you reset and remember what they are and be willing to say no appropriately to operational and other leaders.”

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