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M.D.s Are Rewarded With CME for Compliance/Quality Risk Assessment

By Nina Youngstrom

To Scott Jones, chief compliance officer of Augusta Health in Virginia, compliance is fundamentally about the patients. When people resist this idea—isn't compliance mostly about billing and reimbursement?—he responds that compliance is broader and concerns itself with quality of care, from the integrity of documentation to how quickly patients are notified of abnormal test results. It's with that wide-angle lens that Augusta Health does its risk assessment and performance improvement program for physician practices.

"We are chasing some of the same rabbits as our quality people, like medication management. It's a compliance issue, a patient safety issue, an accreditation issue and a medical malpractice issue," Jones said. "So we are trying to ensure there are good, solid practices in place."

Augusta Health's physicians earn up to 20 CME credits when they participate in its two-year performance improvement program, because it addresses quality, safety and compliance. The credits are awarded by the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP), which co-sponsors the program.

"This is something physicians understand," he said at the Health Care Compliance Association's Compliance Institute in Boston in April. "It makes CME a valuable part of your tool kit." The 150 employed physicians and advanced practice providers (APPs) in Augusta Health's 34 practices and the independent physicians in its accountable care organization (ACO) can participate in the performance improvement CME program.

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