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# A healthcare facility badging primer: How to improve vendor credentialing compliance

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By Jennifer Williams, RN, MBA, PhD, JD

Jennifer Williams ([jwilliams@ghx.com](mailto:jwilliams@ghx.com)) is Director of Market Development & Education, Credentialing, Global Healthcare Exchange (GHX), Louisville, CO.



Jennifer Williams

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly affected the healthcare landscape, resulting in the need for more comprehensive safety and security programs. While this concept is not novel, the pandemic has brought more attention to these programs. As a result, hospitals and health systems are reevaluating and reinvesting in vendor credentialing and visitor management programs, a specialized area of healthcare compliance. At the center of these programs is a commitment to creating safer environments for patients, staff, and the organization as a whole. Fortifying these programs is not optional.

### What is vendor and visitor credentialing?

Vendor credentialing is a subset of a health system compliance program. Obtaining a compliant badge to gain entrance into a health system is one example of vendor credentialing. For instance, in the United States, healthcare industry representatives (HCIRs), including vendors and vendor representatives, should be vetted and credentialed to help ensure compliance with the health system's credentialing requirements. This credentialing process should occur before allowing virtual or physical entrance into the healthcare facility for business or clinical purposes. Compliance programs also include visitor management. Visitor management is the process of authorizing individuals who seek to visit someone in the healthcare facility. This type of management system generally supports visitor watch lists and alerts and enables detailed reporting.

Given the wide-ranging disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, it is more important than ever for health systems to help ensure that everyone walking their halls, including HCIRs and visitors, is compliant with their policies. Whether health systems have 25 or 2,500 HCIRs to account for, a complete and robust credentialing compliance program is a business necessity. To best implement such a robust program, health systems should focus on ensuring all HCIRs within a health system are "fully badge-compliant." In this case, fully badge-compliant means all health system requirements for entry are met by a given representative or individual.

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