

## OUTSOURCING HOSPITAL PEER REVIEWS IMPROVES QUALITY MANAGEMENT

### The Facts

company: Bay Area Hospital

location: Coos Bay, Oregon

focus: Hospital Peer Review

cases sent for review: Surgical, Radiology, Orthopedics

website: [www.bayareahospital.org](http://www.bayareahospital.org)

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### About Bay Area Hospital

Located in the coastal community of Coos Bay, Oregon, Bay Area Hospital provides care to the 15,000 Coos Bay residents and 80,000 rural inhabitants living between Reedsport and the California border. It has over 1000 employees, 130 doctors and 100 volunteers and is governed by an elected five-member board of directors.

### The Challenge

The peer review process is an essential component of virtually every hospital's quality management system. However, smaller hospitals serving rural areas often have trouble finding doctors without a conflict of interest or with suitable medical experience and credentials for conducting peer reviews in a timely manner. The small staff and close working relationships of doctors at Bay Area Hospital have made it difficult to handle hospital peer reviews internally. According to Sandy



Qualman, certified provider credentialing specialist and medical staff coordinator at Bay Area Hospital, doctors are sensitive to reviewing colleagues with whom they work and often depend on.

With only 130 doctors on staff, conflict of interest and competition make anonymous peer reviews obvious to the doctors practicing at the hospital. “Our doctors simply prefer not to review their peers, because of the close working relationships among the medical staff,” she said.

Bay Area Hospital was once part of a group of hospitals sharing peer reviews, so it had been using external reviews for some time before beginning to outsource its peer reviews to AllMed Healthcare Management in 2003.

“Sharing reviews with other hospitals lessened the conflict of interest issue,” she said. However, timely response became an issue as did finding the right specialists.

## The Solution

Qualman indicates that as the need for more review specialists and timeliness increased, the hospital began sending cases to AllMed Healthcare Management. Bay Area Hospital usually sends cases to AllMed for review in groups.

“Most of our cases sent to AllMed are general surgery and orthopedic, but we do, from time to time, send radiology cases for review as well,” said Qualman.

## The Outcome

Turnaround for these batches of cases has improved nearly 70 percent. Depending on the type of review, the turnaround time can be as little as seven to ten days.

“AllMed has always been responsive to us, and if we have a question, their reviewing doctors are always available,” she said.

According to Qualman, Bay Area Hospital is constantly undergoing internal quality reviews. It relies on its skilled doctors to help correct operational failures that occur when delivering patient care. Its small staff of dedicated and concerned doctors works hard to deliver patients quality care at the facility and understands that peer review is a necessary part of the process.



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This effort, with a mix of external case and peer reviews, brings about systematic and organizational improvements that increase patient safety for Coos Bay area residents.

## About AllMed Healthcare Management

Founded in 1995, AllMed is a URAC-accredited Independent Review Organization (IRO) serving hospitals, medical groups and insurers, nationwide. All Hospital Peer Reviews are conducted by board-certified physicians in active practice. More information on AllMed can be found at [www.allmedmd.com](http://www.allmedmd.com).