

The Benefits of Pre-employment Testing in Ambulatory Care

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The Benefits of Pre-employment Testing in Ambulatory Care

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Lehigh Valley Physician Group (LVPG):

LVPG was founded in 1993 as a not-for-profit subsidiary of Lehigh Valley Health Network, one of the largest health systems in eastern Pennsylvania. LVPG is among the largest medical groups in the United States with more than 700 physicians and more than 300 advanced practice clinicians representing 46 medical specialties in 141 practices across three counties. The combined total of clinical staff support in the practices is estimated at 600 with a combined skill mix of registered nurses, licensed practical nurses, and medical assistants. In 2014, LVPG provided ambulatory care services to 1,945, 764 patients.

Background:

According to the experts, pre-employment testing can lead to higher productivity. Research has shown that cognitive baseline knowledge assessments provide a more accurate predictor of job performance than other traditional methods of employee selection techniques. Heneman, Judge, & Kammeyer-Mueller (2011) conducted a comprehensive review of peer-reviewed studies related to selection techniques and concluded that cognitive testing is twice as predictive as job interviews, three times as predictive as experience, and four times as predictive as education level. The researchers infer that cognitive tests are accurate predictors of job performance because this type of evaluation measures problem solving, the ability to learn and apply new information, critical thinking, and reasoning.

Reference: Heneman H., Judge T., & Kammeyer-Mueller J. (May 23, 2011). *Staffing Organizations 7th Edition*. McGraw- Hill Education (McGraw-Hill Ryerson Publishers). New York, NY. ISBN: 0078112680.

Analyzing Current State and Identifying Gaps:

People: The current testing process did not measure the capabilities or skills required by the candidate to work effectively in ambulatory practices. There was no direct correlation between test scores and the ability to forecast the candidate's performance or critical behaviors in the clinical setting (Example: vital signs, anatomy, medication administration).

Quality: The method of testing new hires and existing staff prior to the fall of 2013, was the utilization of an outdated and poorly designed assessment tool which focused heavily on basic math skills.

Service:

- There was a perceived lack of transparency related to communication between key stakeholders throughout the hiring process (LVPG Clinical Services, The Practice Manager, & Human Resources).
- There were no standard operating procedures to improve communication and identify specific role responsibilities for each department involved in the employee pre hire selection process.

Planning a New Process for Pre Hire Employment Testing: Goals/Targets/Desired Outcome

- Improve the quality of the pre hire testing process by confirming job relatedness of tests for ambulatory clinical staff in the physician office setting.
 - Created a new written examination to support the relevance and practicality of test content and the candidate's previous academic instruction or work experience (**Figures 1 and 2**).
 - Revised the critical behavior skills portion of the testing and had each candidate perform specific psychomotor skills (including SQ and IM injections on low fidelity task trainers) (**Figure 3**).
 - Collaborated with network statisticians to review the structure of test questions and confirm face validity for the written assessment of the testing process.
- Implement focus groups to evaluate cognitive testing and critical behavior tools to determine content validity of re-structured assessment tools.
 - Conducted focus groups with RNs working in the float pool and Medical Assistants from various medical specialties to support content validity of the newly designed written exam.
- Develop a communication plan between the Human Resources Department and Practice Managers utilizing web based request forms and standard operating procedures specifically created for pre-employment testing.
 - Created two Standard Operating Procedures (LVPG Employment Testing Pre Hire Process and LVPG Employment Testing Requirements).
 - Developed and implemented a web based form where Practice Managers could go to request a pre hire interview assessment. The owners of the form included all LVPG Clinical Educators, the Director of Clinical Education, & Human Resource Recruiters. This improved transparency allowed all stakeholders to view job applications and potential candidates for open positions throughout 141 practices (**Figure 4**).

Outcomes

Figure 1.
FY 2014 Pre Hire Testing Results:
Medical Assistant Education and Training

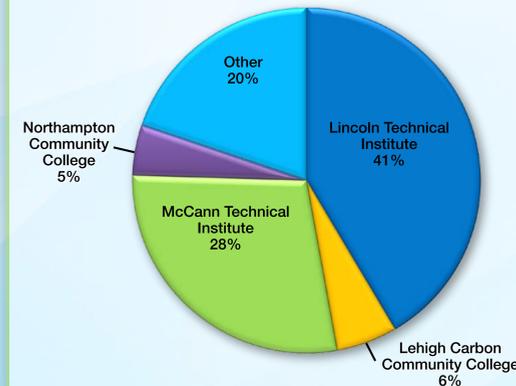


Figure 2.
FY 2014 Pre Hire Testing Results:
Medical Assistants

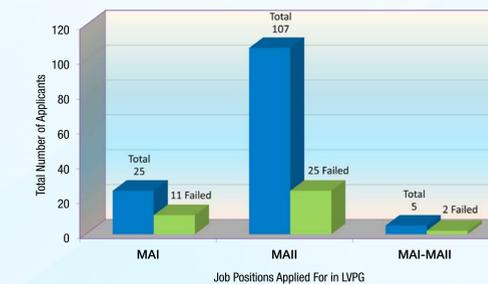


Figure 3.
FY 2014 Pre Hire Testing Results:
Average Scores by Job Description
(Includes Critical Behavior Skill Sets)

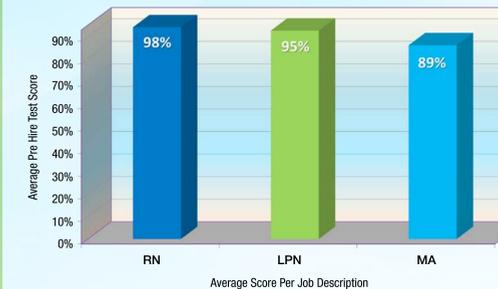


Figure 4.
Pre Hire Web Form Request

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