Taking the Plunge: A CME Provider’s Journey to the 21st Century
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WE WANT CHANGE
Broward Health is the sixth-largest not-for-profit public healthcare system in the country. As an American Council of Continuing Medical Education (ACCME)-accredited provider of continuing medical education (CME), Broward Health prides itself on high-quality CME to both attract and retain physicians. CME is planned by working closely with quality departments to analyze national and state trends, as well as physician need. Yet, the CME Department under the Broward Health Department of Learning was feeling a bit stale and outdated. CME was delivered mainly through didactic, lecture-style programs. With a new hire and with guidance and push from the director, CME at Broward Health began its facelift. Physicians had requests: They desired a change in the delivery methods. The CME Department rose to the challenge and took the plunge to arrive in the 21st century.

HAVE YOU VODCASTED TODAY?
One of the overriding concerns of Broward Health physicians was that they often were unavailable to attend live CME sessions because of scheduling conflicts. The chosen topics were based on the direct needs of the medical centers, as indicated by the medical centers’ individual quality departments. These topics were the ones physicians requested and needed. The topics were thoroughly planned. The presentations were interesting and thought provoking. The speakers were engaging, articulate, and worth every penny of their honoraria, but however well the activity was planned, there were still physicians who had every intention of attending but who simply could not at the last minute. Consequently, Broward Health began research into vodcasting.

Video-on-demand (VOD) CME is different from online, Internet-based CME in that it was once a live CME program. That is, Broward Health goes through all the same channels of selecting and planning the CME, but then on the day of the live activity, they simply videotape the program. The recorded program then goes through an overhaul of storyboard preparation, editing, proofing, and launching. For a few hours, the tiny CME Department turns into a Hollywood production studio. The program is transformed into a vodcast with the help of Moviemaker and Coleman Technologies, Inc. When the vodcast is completed, it is launched on the Broward Health Physician Portal. At that point, all Broward Health physicians have access to the vodcast. They can view, evaluate, and then posttest at their convenience, without having to travel or interrupt their scheduled appointments. “We recognize that what the medical community did in the past to improve lives will not fully meet the challenges of the future,” says Jean Seaver, Director of the Department of Learning for Broward Health. “By offering an effective on-site CME Program, we help ensure that our physicians are able to treat their patients with best practices year after year.”

Some may wonder about the instructional efficacy of vodcasted/online CME. Fordis et al conducted a controlled trial and published their study and findings [1]. The findings indicated that appropriately designed, evidence-based online CME can produce objectively measured changes in behavior, as well as sustained gains in knowledge that are comparable or superior to those realized from effective live activities. “Practicing physicians have a limited amount of time available to attend CME programs because they must take care of patients, run an office, and stay current on topical medicine through other channels,” says Glenn Singer, MD, FACP, FAASM, FCCP, who is a pulmonologist, diplomate of the American Board of Sleep Medicine, and director of the Sleep Disorders Center at Broward General Medical Center. “Our CME program helps physicians achieve their continuing-education goals by targeting new advances based on leading research and addressing issues affecting medical practice in a positive way.” Broward Health is doing just that. They continue to meet the needs of their physicians while maintaining the highest of standards in the planning of CME.

CLICK HERE
A study by R. A. Burns demonstrated that the average human attention span is no more than 20 minutes [2]. Furthermore, the recall of information drops drastically after 15 to 20 minutes. With these facts in mind, how does a CME provider consider the development of CME for students or physicians? We certainly want them to retain the material being presented, because the health of the community depends on it. Prior to these statistics, we could move through CME planning like horses with blinders, but once we have become aware of these facts, we must look at CME planning and presentation through a different lens.

Broward Health’s CME Department began investigating interactive audience “clickers.” Several models were evaluated before a brand was chosen. The brand itself is not important, but the work Broward Health is able to do with these models is. Through the purchase and integration of clickers into CME programs, physicians become more deeply engaged during the activity. The clickers can be used to evaluate physicians before the activity and after assessment. The CME speaker is able to create questions on the fly to assess learning.

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at that moment, in real time. Broward Health no longer has to wait for the calculation of evaluations and post-tests. Because their anonymity is protected, physicians are more likely to participate in this manner.

In addition, clickers help to direct the speaker in delivering the topic. For example, rather than simply noting the physicians’ responses, the speaker can respond to them and either elaborate further on a topic if required or progress to the next topic if mastery of the material is evident. In essence, speakers use the clickers to modify the subsequent direction of the lecture. This approach is more powerful than simple engagement. Proper use of the clickers will ultimately tailor the CME activity to meet the specific needs of those present.

EXPLORING NEW TERRITORY

Change is inevitable. Grace Hopper said it best when she articulated what she thought was the most damaging phrase in language: “It’s always been done that way.” Being in the CME business is exciting and empowering: A role of CME providers is to educate physicians so that they in turn can more positively affect patient outcomes, ultimately changing communities, cities, states, countries. Looking for new ways to better meet the needs of the physicians who attend CME activities should become commonplace. Physicians are our CME customers. Meeting their needs becomes significant because it directly affects how they manage their customers, our patients. Staying on the cutting edge of CME has become an integral goal of Broward Health. Although CME may be just a small part in the web of providing quality healthcare, it is important nonetheless. Broward Health continues to keep one foot firmly planted in the solid foundation of their CME program while it uses the other to kick the door wide open to change and improvement.

POINTS FOR REFLECTION

- Revisit the CME Mission Statement for language associated with growth, change, and reform.
- Consider vodcasted CME for better delivery of significant topics.
- Judge the implementation of some type of interactive audience-response system for learner feedback.
- Join a local CME provider discussion group, attend CME workshops, read CME literature for ways to advance your CME program.

ADDITIONAL READING