

A Regional Guideline System for 40.000 Users – The Importance of User Participation and Management Commitment.

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Abstract

As a part of the regional quality strategy and as a prerequisite for accreditation in hospitals, the Capital Region in Denmark will implement a new system for providing easy access to valid, coherent and updated policies, guidelines and protocols. The implementation of such a system is mainly an organisational challenge. This paper highlights the importance of user participation and management commitment when developing a specification for an electronic guideline system. The main functionality of the required system is also described.

Keywords:

Guidelines, Quality system, User involvement, Management.

Introduction

The Capital Region is that largest of the five Danish regions, and constitutes with its 1.6 million inhabitants 30% of the Danish population. The hospitals in the region will in 2011 complete an accreditation process in cooperation with the Joint Commission International and The Danish Institute for Quality and Accreditation in Healthcare.

The guidelines and protocols documents are seen as an important part of the quality management in the region. IT-support is required since the guideline system should include approximately 40.000, mainly narrative, guidelines and are to be used by all 40.000 persons employed in the region.

Methods

The public tender is managed by the Unit for Development and Quality Assurance, which is holds the secretarial function for the Regional Quality Council. The Council is coordinating the regional quality groups – including the Quality Document Handling Group consisting of coordinators for quality documents in hospitals and other regional units.

The Quality Document Handling Group has been heavily represented in the project group and the reference group. In addition a steering group was established representing the top management in hospitals and various regional units.

Results

The requirements must fulfil a variety of legal, organisational, management and user demands. Examples are given below.

Accreditation: In order to pass the accreditation a guideline system must be in place. The staff must be able to demonstrate that they can find the relevant guidelines in the system.

Requirements: A robust, user friendly and intelligent search option is crucial, and an advanced search must be available.

Editorial and hearing process: The region has set up an extensive hearing process when developing and reviewing guidelines. This includes the regional Health Care Advisory Boards, and affected parties in the clinical practice. As a final step, the guideline is approved at the appropriate management level.

Requirements: The system must support the whole workflow, i.e. email reminders when a review of an existing guideline is due, structure and format templates for guidelines, support for sending the guideline to a hearing, collecting comments, and approval. The guideline must be issued to the relevant staff based on their professional or organisational roles – followed by an email and information on their logon-page.

Monitoring of use: The managers are responsible for that the staff use and understand the guidelines.

Requirements: The system should include a system for monitoring the use of guidelines. For instance, a set of guidelines can be assigned to a new employee, which is requested to read the guidelines and sign off when it is done.

Conclusion

The development of the specification has been run as an open consensus process with several iterations. The final requirements are resulting from a “negotiation” among different user groups. The endorsement of the specification from the steering group is essential due to the tightly connection of the guideline system to the management structure.

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