

Expanding Occupational Health at OHSU – Onboard Anywhere

This project engaged with the Occupational Health Department at OHSU with a goal of making occupational health services more equitable across the states of Oregon and Washington, particularly for new hires being onboarded to meet employment requirements before starting a new job.

Background

All OHSU employees, contractors, volunteers, and students are required to complete or provide a record that they fulfill their Occupational Health compliance requirements (i.e., immunization and respiratory fit testing). Occupational Health provides compliance services free of charge for all OHSU employees at Marquam Hill. West Campus provides on-site services free of charge for West Campus staff employees only. All other employees throughout Oregon and Washington must travel to Marquam Hill to complete their requirements, or they may acquire their tests and vaccinations from any local provider and be reimbursed by OHSU for any expenses. There is limited data regarding how employees at different sites are informed and go about completing their compliance requirements. OHSU staff employed outside of the Portland-Metro area may be facing an inequitable burden and/or expense.

Methods

To appropriately address this problem, our team collected detailed employment data from OHSU for future geographic information system (GIS) analysis. We created a formal survey for OHSU hiring managers and conducted several individual interviews with OHSU staff to better understand the perceptions and realities of geographic inequity experienced by OHSU new hires. We investigated potential partnerships that OHSU Occupational Health could explore to make meeting Occupational Health requirements more convenient and less onerous for new hires far from the Marquam Hill Campus. Additional interviews were conducted of similar employers outside of OHSU to investigate how those organizations provide these types of services to new hires.

Results

GIS Analysis

Using a comprehensive employee database provided by OHSU Human Resources, we were able to better understand the geographical distribution of recently hired employees across the State of Oregon. This was done by employee GIS analysis to create several heat maps of specific areas of need, as well as tabulations of employees, employee types, and specific onboarding needs in various areas.

Individual Interviews

Our team was also able to conduct a plethora of individual interviews with OHSU staff across Occupational Health, Human Resources, and several departments in different geographic locations. From these interviews, we discovered significant deficiencies in coordination and communication with OHSU staff involved in the hiring process.

Hiring Manager Survey

Our team created an online Qualtrics survey and distributed our survey to OHSU hiring

managers across the state in various departments. We had a high response rate with useful qualitative and quantitative feedback that helped us further understand existing knowledge gaps and problems Occupational Health faces in addressing geographical inequity.

Investigating Workable Solutions

Our team investigated several potential solutions in our attempts to help the Occupational Health department address geographical inequity for new hires. Without a preliminary budget from our sponsor, we examined a wide variety of available options including the acquisition and use of mobile health vans to provide services across the state, cost sharing with existing OHSU mobile health vans (Knight Cancer Institute and Casey Eye Institute) to provide services across the state, and contracting with a number of different occupational health service providers more proximate to new hires far from Marquam Hill. Lastly, we also conducted interviews with other similar health care organizations for ideas on how they meet the occupational health onboarding needs of their new hires.

Conclusion

OHSU Occupational Health would benefit from creating clear onboarding protocols and expectations for new hires along with guidelines and resources for new hires and hiring managers on how new employees can access OHSU services or obtain services through a local contractor. Given the logistical challenges of meeting new hire needs in a timely fashion in a large geographic area, the use of any OHSU sponsored mobile health services would be cost prohibitive. OHSU would be better served by creating partnerships with existing occupational health service providers. Specific next steps for occupational health are to create centralized and available resources for hiring managers and new hires that clearly delineates requirements and provides various methods for new hires to obtain occupational health services (through OHSU Marquam Hill campus and other local contractors). Additionally, OHSU Occupational Health should consider contracting with providers in a few focused areas across the state that are able to provide occupational health services in a timely fashion for new hires. Taking these steps would allow new hires across Oregon to complete their onboarding without taking additional unnecessary trips to the Marquam Hill campus before the employment start date.

Team Members

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References

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