



ENSURING CONTINUITY OF CARE THROUGH A SUPPLYCHAIN DISRUPTION MICRO-CREDENTIAL PROGRAM



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INTRODUCTION

Over the past few years, disruptions in the healthcare supply chain have posed serious risks to patient safety and the overall quality of care, highlighting the vulnerability of healthcare systems to global and local shocks. These disruptions, ranging from global pandemics to trade disputes and logistical failures, have led to critical shortages of medical supplies, including pharmaceuticals, personal protective equipment (PPE), and other essential medical devices. For instance, during the COVID-19 pandemic, hospitals and healthcare facilities worldwide faced unprecedented shortages of masks, gloves, and gowns, essential for protecting healthcare workers and preventing the virus's spread. The lack of adequate PPE not only endangered the health of medical staff but also compromised patient care as facilities struggled to manage and contain the outbreak effectively.

Beyond protective equipment, supply chain disruptions have also impacted the availability of crucial pharmaceuticals and medical devices, leading to delays in treatment and, in some cases, forcing healthcare providers to ration care or seek alternative treatment protocols. For patients with chronic conditions or those requiring continuous medication, such as insulin or cancer therapies, these disruptions can lead to suboptimal treatment outcomes or exacerbate health conditions. The uncertainty and inconsistency in supply chains can cause significant anxiety and distress among patients and healthcare providers alike, undermining trust in the healthcare system's ability to provide necessary care in times of need.

The ripple effects of supply chain disruptions extend into surgical and procedural areas within hospitals. Shortages of surgical instruments and necessary implants can lead to postponements of elective and non-elective surgeries, affecting patient health outcomes. Delays in surgical procedures can lead to worsening medical conditions, increased complication rates, and prolonged recovery times, which not only harm patients but also place additional strain on healthcare resources. Moreover, the inability to perform surgeries in a timely manner can backlog the system, reducing the facility's overall throughput and efficiency.

Financially, the impact of supply chain disruptions is also profound. The cost of scrambling to find alternative suppliers often leads to increased expenditure for healthcare providers, with the premium costs of urgent orders further straining already tight budgets. These additional costs may eventually be passed on to patients, manifesting as higher healthcare fees or increased insurance premiums. Inefficiencies and increased operational costs not only burden the financial health of care facilities but also contribute to the broader economic impact on the healthcare sector, affecting insurance markets and public health funding.

Efforts to mitigate the effects of healthcare supply chain disruptions have included increasing inventory levels, diversifying supplier bases, and implementing more robust supply chain management systems. However, these strategies come with their own challenges, such as increased costs for storage and potential wastage of medical supplies. As the healthcare industry continues to grapple with these issues, the importance of resilient and responsive supply chain systems becomes ever more apparent. Addressing these vulnerabilities is critical not only for safeguarding patient care but also for ensuring the sustainability and readiness of healthcare systems in facing future disruptions.

OBJECTIVES

The Association of Healthcare Value Analysis Professionals (AHVAP) Certification Center has launched an innovative, micro-credentialing program focused on building core practices for mitigating the impacts of supply chain disruptions across the healthcare continuum. The new credentialing program was created in response to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and ensures that healthcare leaders and facilities operate in a state of continuous readiness and mitigate supply chain disruptions.

Supply Chain Disruption Micro-Credential Program:

The Supply Chain Disruption Micro-Credential Program crosses the chasm of the healthcare continuum and incorporates the unique perspectives of each of the following key stakeholders involved in the clinical supply chain process:

- Hospitals and Healthcare Facilities
- Medical Device Manufacturers
- Medical Supplier/Distributors
- Group Purchasing Organizations

Whether you are a value analysis leader, professional, clinical leader, consultant, industry partner, or other healthcare professional, this training series will provide you with valuable skills that you can apply in your day-to-day work.

The training sessions are led by a team of experienced healthcare supply chain and value analysis professionals and will review each of the following core topics related to supply chain disruptions:

- Disruptions
- Backorders
- Recalls
- Rolling Back Orders
- Get Well
- Changes in the Industry
- Just In Time Delivery
- Relationship with Manufacturers
- Relationship with Distributors
- Relationship with Group Purchasing Organizations
- Federal Implications with the Food and Drug Administration
- Correction Strategies
- Auto-Sub Process
- AI-Forward Thinking into Possible Disruptions

CERTIFICATION VS. CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS

Credentialing is an overarching term that includes processes, policies, and practices that support credentials such as a license, registration, certification, qualification, or assessment-based certificate to demonstrate that an organization or individual has met predetermined and standardized criteria. Given the range of terms, different interpretations and distinctions between mandatory versus voluntary requirements among these credentials, can create confusion. This document serves as the first in a series of brief statements that clarify and communicate the value of credentials to stakeholders, beginning with certification.

Certification is a process by which an entity grants formal recognition to individuals that meet predetermined, standardized criteria. The certification process involves determination of eligibility, an assessment of demonstration of competence, and requirements for regular recertification. Certification is usually voluntary and established by a non-governmental entity.

Certification holders benefit from:

- Increased recognition by peers and respect of colleagues in the profession
- Improved opportunities for employability and advancement
- Greater confidence in their professional competence
- Increased professional trust from employers or the public
- Increased autonomy in the workplace
- Better compensation and career longevity

Consumers benefit from:

- Objective, independent, third-party evaluation and assessment of professional competence
- Commitment to public safety and/or consumer protection
- Accountability through ethical conduct standards and/or a disciplinary process
- Recertification requirements for continued or enhanced competence

Employers benefit from:

- Qualified individuals for employment or advancement
- Recertification requirements for continued or enhanced competence
- Commitment to public safety and/or consumer protection
- Reduced risk of errors, accidents and/or legal liability
- Reduced employee turnover and increased job satisfaction
- Justification for potential compensation differential

An Assessment-based Certificate (ABC) program is a non-degree-granting program that: a) provides instruction and training to aid participants in acquiring specific knowledge, skills and/or competencies associated with intended outcomes; b) evaluates participants' achievement of the intended learning outcomes; and c) awards a certificate only to those participants who meet the performance, proficiency, or passing standard on an assessment verifying learning. This distinguishes assessment-based certificate programs from those that only require attendance and/or participation.

Value of Assessment-based Certificates:

Certificate programs can help build capacity in an industry, emerging profession or specialty area. When there is an ongoing learning gap to fulfill a role or become workforce ready, an Assessment-based Certificate (ABC) program is well suited to address this gap. Because ABC programs are built on a needs analysis, the learning and assessment are directly tied to a knowledge, skill, or ability gap that the program is designed to fill. Finally, when highly specialized knowledge or skills are required for a particular job or role, a well-designed training program with learning objectives that are aligned to an assessment can help confirm attainment of the requisite skills or competencies.

Certificate holders benefit from:

- Learning from a focused course of instruction
- Acquisition of new skills
- Opportunity to learn new content or skills specifically tied to workplace needs (through a needs analysis)
- Recognition of accomplishment for demonstrating desired educational outcomes
- Increased recognition by peers and respect of colleagues in the profession
- Improved opportunities for employability and advancement
- Greater confidence in their professional competence
- Increased professional trust from employers or the public
- Increased autonomy in the workplace
- Potential for higher compensation and greater career longevity

Consumers benefit from:

- Better trained workforce / training targeted to needs
- Objective, independent, third-party evaluation and assessment of professional knowledge
- Knowing the certificate holder is committed to continuous professional development

Employers benefit from:

- Better-qualified individuals for employment or advancement
- Ability to match workplace needs with current, relevant training
- Justification for potential compensation differential

CONCLUSIONS

Supply chain disruptions pose significant challenges to healthcare systems, affecting everything from the availability of surgical supplies to the timely delivery of pharmaceuticals. The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted these vulnerabilities, as hospitals worldwide faced shortages of critical supplies, such as personal protective equipment (PPE) and ventilators. Managing these disruptions is crucial not only for maintaining hospital operations but also for ensuring consistent patient care. An effective strategy to manage such disruptions involves proactive planning, diversification of suppliers, and the use of technology to predict and mitigate risks. These steps help ensure that healthcare providers have the necessary tools at their disposal to deliver care effectively and without unnecessary delays.

Ensuring access to essential medical supplies directly impacts patient safety and health outcomes. When supply chains falter, the risk of treatment delays or the use of suboptimal or inappropriate medical supplies can increase, potentially leading to adverse patient outcomes. For example, a shortage of surgical equipment might delay necessary operations, extending hospital stays and increasing the likelihood of complications. Conversely, robust supply chain management ensures that clinicians have timely access to the correct, high-quality resources needed to treat patients effectively. This not only enhances the quality of patient care but also boosts patient and provider confidence in the healthcare system's ability to deliver under various circumstances.

Moreover, efficient supply chain management plays a pivotal role in reducing preventable costs within healthcare systems. Disruptions often lead to last-minute purchasing at premium prices or the need to substitute with more expensive alternatives, inflating healthcare costs significantly. By implementing advanced planning and risk assessment protocols, healthcare organizations can avoid these costly scenarios. Furthermore, maintaining a reliable supply chain ensures that resources are used efficiently, reducing waste and optimizing operational costs. In the long term, these measures contribute to more sustainable healthcare practices by aligning resource allocation more closely with patient needs, thereby enhancing overall healthcare delivery and outcomes.

Contact Information:

To learn more about the AHVAP Certification Center Programs: <https://www.ahvap.org/ahvap-certification-center>

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