

Case Study

Uncovering More Than 860,000 Available Work Hours Drug & Health Screening Concierge Via Sterling's Healthcare Division

"We run hospitals. We have an Employee Health department. Why would we need to outsource drug and health screening services?"

Sterling's Healthcare Division loves this question. Sharing the experience of a client that decided in early 2019 to consolidate their pre-employment drug and health screening program with us may be the best way to answer it. The client, a large health system based out of the Midwest, came to us with three main goals:

1. Significantly reduce the time from a candidate accepting the offer to Day One
2. Ensure compliance focus with federal, state, and local laws
3. Deliver a superior candidate experience

We took over the management of their drug screening (10-panel and expanded opiates testing) as well as their health screening (TB blood tests, as well as varicella, measles, mumps, rubella, and hepatitis B titers) in February 2019. Let's take a look at how we partnered with this client to achieve each goal.

Goal #1: Reduce time from offer acceptance to Day One

When our client began working with us, it was taking on average over four weeks (22 business days) for a candidate to move from "offer accepted" to starting work. We have been able to reduce the average time to start to under two weeks, with an average turnaround time for each candidate's background check and drug & health screening services to 3.3 days. Even during the peak of Covid disruption, turnaround time remained under five days.

If we are able to make a candidate productive up to 12 business days faster, assuming 8-hour shifts, that is 96 extra hours per candidate. Multiply that by the 9,000 candidates that our client screens in a year, and the result is 864,000 extra working hours. Of course, our client might not be able to start a candidate the day they are cleared to work, so it is impossible to be precise with the hours saved. Given dire healthcare talent shortages, however, "finding" even a fraction of these hours is consequential and may mean the difference between life and death for patients.



“ Sterling's partnership is now the gold standard that we hold all vendors to. We love working with you and appreciate the exceptional customer services you provide us.”

Vice President
HR Operations

Industry: Healthcare | Acute & Post Acute

Employees: 40K employees across multiple states

Company Profile: A not-for-profit health system serving the comprehensive health needs of communities through a robust and fully integrated health care delivery system. More than 20 hospitals, 290 physician offices and other outpatient and virtual care services, 10 post-acute facilities, comprehensive home care and hospice services, a pharmacy benefit company, a health insurance company and an accountable care organization. It is one of the largest employers in every community it serves.



How exactly did we reduce the turnaround time so dramatically? Our pre-employment health screening services come with state of the art technology and a unique concierge service model that focuses equally on providing a fantastic candidate experience and proactively chasing results from labs and clinics. Our concierge service includes a dedicated, point of contact for our client and their candidates, consolidating what can otherwise be an unwieldy, confusing, and disjointed process. Our concierge keeps an eye on every detail and task. As soon as our client places an order, the concierge moves briskly to get the candidate registered for the required services at the most convenient locations. Sterling has a network of over 15,000 collection sites and clinics sites nationwide—one of the most expansive and convenient networks—so the concierge has flexibility and options.

Equally important, though, the concierge's work doesn't stop when the candidate's services are complete. The concierge then pivots to aggressively chasing results. The end result of all of these activities is that testing and reporting happen much more swiftly and efficiently.

Goal #2: Promote compliance with federal and state laws, role by role

Our client was nervous that specific requirements for a candidate were occasionally falling through the cracks in their old process. For example, they would discover belatedly that a candidate had not provided proof of a negative tuberculosis result before starting work. Tracking these requirements was complex, because our client operates in multiple states, and each state and role has its own requirements.

Sterling was able to create clinical and non-clinical packages for each state and role and configured them in the client's ATS (Workday) to make things much easier while also reducing potential for human error. By automating and streamlining many aspects of the process, we have been able to encourage stronger compliance focus, but also reduce the administrative burden shouldered by busy teams. This allows them to spend their time more valuably. Another benefit has been cost reduction—no longer does the organization end up ordering unnecessary services for candidates. For example, the candidate who requires the Wisconsin Caregiver Search gets the Wisconsin Caregiver Search, but no one else.

Our tools and processes, designed with compliance in mind, help provide peace of mind to clients like this one. However, our in-house experts have been able to advise on the challenging questions that have arisen since program launch. Our Healthcare Division's cross-functional team—including Implementation Project Managers, Client Success Partners, and Regulatory Consultants—work exclusively with Healthcare clients and bring their own knowledge to bear at each step along the way.

Goal #3: Provide a better candidate experience

Our client was also committed to improving the experience for their candidates. Completing all required drug and health screens before starting work can be extremely time-consuming and stressful for candidates. Typically, there have only been two options: **1)** Requiring your candidate to go to one central employee health location, often leading to long commutes and limited appointment times; or **2)** Getting sent to multiple locations for different tests, and then not hearing anything for days. It is challenging, if not downright painful, for candidates whether they are wrapping up another job or anxiously awaiting a job (and income) to start.

Having a dedicated Clinical Concierge team has made life easier for our client's candidates. The Concierge team welcomes and guides the candidate through each step, finding a location that can complete all required services in one stop, registering the candidate, and ensuring clinic readiness. Candidates have flexibility with facilities—for example, they can opt for a location that is not closest to home but is around the corner from work, so they can complete testing on their lunch break. The Concierge team also provides a paperless experience—no longer is the candidate having to print and sign large amounts of paper. The Concierge's team mandate is also to aggressively chase results once tests are complete, and overall reduction of the average screening turnaround time from 22 days to 3.3, have had an enormous impact on our client's candidate experience. No longer is this a weeks-long ordeal.

Conclusion

Best of all, perhaps, our client's Employee Health departments—already busy, especially amidst a raging pandemic—are now able to focus entirely on employees. They do not need to juggle the sometimes conflicting needs of pre-employment and employee health screening. And honestly, the fact that our client has expert employee health departments itself makes us especially proud that we have demonstrated value and earned their trust.