

# T E X ★ S Hospitals

Published by the Texas Hospital Association • March/April 2010

## Best Practices

### Thorough Background Checks Weed Out Criminals

BY TERRI SCHEXNAYDER



**Angie Rhodes, director of human resources operations and consulting at Children's Medical Center in Dallas, can remember when conducting a background check on a job candidate required a visit to the county courthouse to review pages and pages of records. The final report could take weeks to complete. Because the patients at her hospital are children, Rhodes can't afford to wait weeks for a report – fast and timely background checks are critical.**

"We want to make sure anyone invited to come on board is free of any criminal background," Rhodes said. To help meet this goal, she works with GroupOne Services, which has provided job applicant background screening for Children's since 1989.

#### HELPING PROTECT HEALTH CARE ORGANIZATIONS' CUSTOMERS

For Eric Scott, licensed private investigator and vice president of GroupOne Services, serving more than 500 health care organizations across the country is not just business as usual. "We help them create a safe hiring process. They are hiring people who might take care of your sister, daughter or son. We have to make sure nothing in these potential employees' pasts will cause harm to these patients," Scott said.

When the company was created in 1988 as one of the first to offer background checks, Scott recalled, "Many who were doing this were in HR or were private investigators, and most checks were limited to high-level positions."

Today, GroupOne Services provides its customers with innovative hiring solutions at all levels. "Children's is a great example of how we partner with our clients to give them additional support," Scott said. "The hospital is switching over to onboarding application software, which interfaces with our system. We are working directly with that software vendor to make sure all integrations are handled seamlessly for the client. It saves time on both sides – on the recruiter's side and on ours. We are there to facilitate these kinds of integrations."

Rhodes cited several examples of how the company has benefited Children's. "GroupOne has been on the cutting edge, accessing newly available databases like the Office of Inspector General's list of excluded individuals/entities and the U.S. Treasury Department's terrorist suspect list," she said. "We are one of the few clients conducting annual background checks on our current employees, and GroupOne was very diligent in setting up systems to streamline this. When we set this up in 2004, GroupOne was there to help us."

GroupOne does more than conduct background checks, Scott said. The company also helps its clients comply with hiring standards set by

state and federal law; avoid legal exposure for negligent hiring; ensure a safe workplace; and avoid problems resulting from hiring based on fraudulent credentials. GroupOne protects the rights of the applicants during the entire process.

#### PARTNERSHIP SAVES MONEY AND REPUTATIONS

Making better hiring decisions to begin with can reduce the high costs associated with turnover. Scott pointed to the substantial cost savings clients can achieve through GroupOne's services.

"The accepted estimate for the cost of a bad hire is 1.5 to 3.5 times the salary for the position after all expenses are factored in," said Scott. "The Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that it costs at least \$14,000 to replace one employee. But this estimate doesn't even take into account costs that are extremely difficult to calculate, such as the negative effect on co-workers' productivity and morale; unemployment compensation, severance pay or legal fees; and recruitment and training costs, which you must incur again to replace the employee."

The savings go beyond the monetary aspect, however.

"The need to hire the most qualified applicant, and the inherent risk in hiring the wrong applicant, has never been greater," Scott said. "Workplace crime, unethical business practices and misleading resumes are on the rise. Furthermore, negative publicity associated with negligent hiring, especially as the result of a less-than-thorough background check, can cripple the reputation of a trusted organization."

For Children's, which has received many accolades, including being named to the *U.S. News & World Report* 2009-10 list of America's Best Children's Hospitals and the *Dallas Business Journal* 2009 list of the Best Places to Work, partnering with GroupOne Services is a decision that requires no second-guessing. And for Scott and his team, it's a job well done.

"We can go home at night knowing we provided the kind of checks needed for the HR person to make the best decision," said Scott. ★

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