

Fitzgerald Health Education Associates:

Helping Nurse Practitioners Achieve Certification

"We will begin to broaden our usage with patient recordings of symptoms, sound bites from our learning modules for wrong-answer feedback and other sophisticated approaches."

FHEA CEO Marc Comstock

Background

Fitzgerald Health Education Associates, Inc. helps nurse practitioners, advanced practice and ambulatory care nurses (APNs) achieve certification through review courses prior to their exams. The company also helps APNs maintain professional competence by providing live continuing education seminars, web and computer based learning courses, audio/video learning modules and books. In addition to its work with individual APNs, FHEA recently began providing pharmacology and pathophysiology coursework and testing services for universities. The Fitzgerald Nurse Practitioner Certification Exam Review and Advanced Practice Update has helped more than 50,000 nurse practitioners nationwide achieve certification and improve their clinical assessment skills since its inception in 1988. Some 4,000 people take FHEA courses each year.

Online Learning Resources

APNs purchase automated courseware from FHEA to update their knowledge. Those also seeking to earn continuing education credits for licensure purchase assessments that certify their knowledge of course material. Prior to using Questionmark, FHEA hand-graded paper assessments that customers submitted by mail.

Initially, FHEA hosted Questionmark on its own server. "We switched to hosting in 2007 when all interaction became web-based and it's much easier for us to manage," explains FHEA Database Manager Bernice Flete. "Now we don't need to deal with software upgrades and other technical issues, because Questionmark takes care of those things for us."

Automated Scheduling

Questionmark Consulting Services helped FHEA develop a process for managing and synchronizing participant records in Questionmark Perception. When customers purchase assessments from FHEA's Web store, they are automatically scheduled for on-line learning modules and post tests. The system sends participants email notifications that link them to the appropriate Perception learning modules and assessments on the hosting site.

"Automating the way we handle orders for assessments has been a tremendous help," says Flete. "For many years we had to enter each learning module and its assessment order through our fulfillment system. Then, we re-entered these orders into Questionmark using an ASCII file listing test takers and their assessment schedules. This may not sound like much, but one customer order could result in dozens of assessments to schedule."

Helping Universities

FHEA's expertise in working with APNs is making the company useful to universities struggling with a shortage of qualified nursing instructors. "With faculty spread very thin, rather than develop their own pharmacology courses our teachers do it for them," explains FHEA CEO Marc Comstock. "Our instructors create 20-minute modules for each lecture together along with post-tests—all delivered on-line through Questionmark. The university can either use those post-tests for grading or for self-assessment. We can keep the courses up to date for them, which free university instructors to do more one-on-one with their students."

Questionmark's scoring and reporting tools are helping FHEA measure the effect of their courseware.

Future Plans

The company plans to expand its use of Perception's capabilities in the future. "Our use of question types to date has been fairly basic, with multiple choice dominating," explains Comstock. "We will begin to broaden our usage with patient recordings of symptoms, sound bites from our learning modules for wrong-answer feedback and other sophisticated approaches."

More information

Email: info@questionmark.com

Phone: (800) 863-3950 • (203) 855-4500

Web: www.questionmark.com

