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Ten Tips for Surviving a Performance Audit

November 6, 2007

Background on the DOH Audit

- Press reports in 2005-06 highlighted licensing gaps.
- Governor directed us to make changes.
- Governor also asked SAO to audit under I-900.

The Seattle Times | **LICENSE TO HARM**
The unchecked problem of sexual misconduct by health care providers

Series home | Misconduct database | About this series | How to use the database

Tuesday, April 25, 2006 · Page updated at 12:00 a.m.


THE STATE'S PROBLEM

The case of Dr. **Huong Luu**, family practice doctor

Weak regulation fosters more abuse

The state allows hundreds of doctors, counselors, others to keep practicing despite their sexual misconduct.


- Probe prompts changes by state
- How sexual misconduct complaints move through the system
- Who does the most harm
- The state's role in the flawed system
- The case of Keith Fair, Chehalis chiropractor



JOHN LOK / THE SEATTLE TIMES

Dr. Huong Luu, of Vancouver, Wash., was allowed to keep his license despite secretly taking pictures of dozens of female patients' genitalia.

The case of Dr. **Richard Toby Sutcliffe**, eye surgeon



Doctor convicted, loses license

One of this Seattle surgeon's 10 victims describes her inner battle about coming forward and filing a complaint.

The case of Dr. **Eugene Kester**, psychiatrist



Highlights of DOH Performance Audit

- SAO contracted with Clifton Gunderson of Austin, Texas.
- Seven professional auditors were housed with us for five months.
- Staff spent 1,500 hours assisting the auditors.



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Audit Report and Findings

- Audit report was 135 pages long.
- It included 13 findings & 67 recommendations.
- We are now hard at work making changes.
- We learned a lot along the way, including 10 important tips.

Performance Audit Report

Department of Health
Health Professions Quality Assurance

Executive Summary

Report No. 1000002



August 21, 2007

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10. A credible performance audit is important for everyone

- The agency needs recommendations that all can support.
- The Legislature must have faith in the product.
- The auditors want it to be acted upon.





9. The right attitude makes the difference

- Look at it as an opportunity to improve.
- Prepare managers and staff.
- Constantly and enthusiastically communicate.

The trick is in what one emphasizes. We either make ourselves miserable, or we make ourselves happy. The amount of work is the same.

Carlos Castaneda

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8. Appoint an audit czar

- Does not need to be subject expert.
- Should be the whole job, not an add-on.
- Must be a strong project manager.

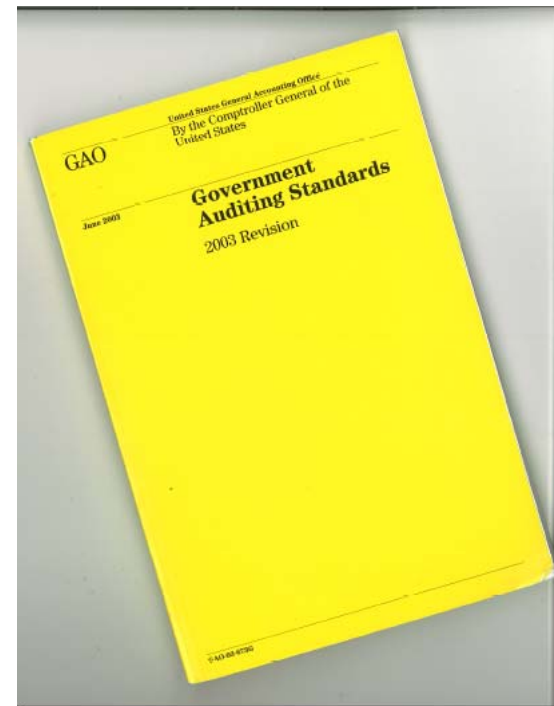
Never try to teach a pig to sing; it wastes your time and it annoys the pig.

Robert Heinlein



7. Get a jump on your homework

- Review Governor's Office Web site.
- Learn performance audit protocols.
- Review GAO Yellow Book standards.
- Look at other state performance audits.



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6. You don't get a second chance to make a first impression

- Do an in-person briefing for auditors.
- Introduce auditors to all the key players.
- Have everything in the book.
- Set up a good space for them to work.





5. Book'em Danno

- Schedule regular briefings and hold them.
- Leadership needs to be there.
- Raise issues as they come up.
- Track actionable items.



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4. Buy plenty of toner and copy paper

- Respond to information requests quickly.
- Talk with staff about the need to be responsive and monitor.
- Make duplicate copies of everything you provide.





3. Keep track of everything

- Public Disclosure.
- Even the best auditors lose things.
- You will need it when the report is drafted.
- It's another measure of the scope of the audit.

*Why am I always losing things?
Why do they disappear?
Here one minute, gone the next,
I'm sure I put them near.*

Lindsey Priest
English Poet

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2. Be ready to negotiate

- Engage your auditor on differences.
- The pace will quicken as the deadline nears.
- Use facts and data to back your views.

He who has learned to disagree without being disagreeable has discovered the most valuable secret of a diplomat.

Robert Estabrook
Journalist

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1. Be ready to communicate – warts and all

- Prepare a communications plan.
- Stay on message.
- Prepare for the tough questions.
- Be honest.
- Answer the phone.

Think like a wise man but communicate in the language of the people.

William Butler Yeats

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The bottom line...

- Treat a performance audit like you contracted for it.
- You will feel some pain, just don't let it keep you from seeing the gain.
- An audit can underline what you are doing right and give you the leverage to change the rest.
- A performance audit can help you meet your highest goals, in our case – patient safety.

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