



Elevating Women’s Healthcare Through Community and Collaboration Online



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Ob Hospitalist Group was founded in 2006 with a vision to elevate the standard of women’s healthcare. We do that by ensuring every expectant mother in the hospital receives consistent and unconditional medical care from an experienced clinician. We lead the nation in developing and managing customized, financially viable OB/GYN hospitalist programs featuring an Obstetric Emergency Department (OBED) staffed with Board-Certified physicians 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. In the last year, we’ve impacted the lives of nearly 385,000 patients. If that’s not enough motivation to get you out of bed every day, nothing is.

When I first joined **Ob Hospitalist Group** in 2016, the organization had an idea to tap into collective knowledge that we now know more commonly as “crowdsourcing”—but for physicians. They wanted to build a platform that allowed our more than 600 clinicians to work together to solve medical problems and share knowledge through improved communication and collaboration across all aspects of patient care.

This combination of brain power broke down further to doctors, midwives, and others, all working across the U.S. in Obstetrics. I was brought in because my background as a journalist taught me how to communicate and do research—two tools I’d need at the ready in my new role.

Discovering the right platform

The idea at first was straightforward: build a one-stop website where clinicians can come together, exchange information, and access online tools. The connection side of the equation was out of necessity, since clinicians work disparate shifts. They see each other in passing, or maybe talk during a phone conference, but it’s extremely challenging to get people to sit down and discuss core issues for an extended period of time. We wanted to give them that communication without competing with shift schedules.

A social platform made sense. Designed right, we assumed it would take off virally like so many other social tools have done already. Our platform would focus specifically on OBHG clinicians versus the general public.

But we didn’t go blindly into the venture. We used focus groups with clinicians who could share their needs and vision, and we found bountiful information about what would work—and what wouldn’t. The comments clearly indicated the desire for a community of peers with specific features and tools to enhance their communication.

Any new system we chose had to be a multi-purpose platform. It needed to provide the ability to access training, message, post discussions, access tools, provide sharing resources, and create a living team history for our hospitalists.

Interestingly, I found it took a lot of work searching to find a vendor who could help us build our dream digital workplace. Most of the options out there just couldn’t cover everything we needed. But, after reviewing multiple options, we came across **Igloo**.

The first thing that captivated us was that

“**Igloo’s product was aesthetically pleasing. It had a real visual finesse to it. Then came the basic user test; Igloo’s platform was exceedingly easy to use.**”

The features were intuitive and simple to learn, which mattered a lot, since our clinicians represented all ages and had varying degrees of technical knowledge. We had some folks who were quite tech-savvy and others who struggled. We knew Igloo was the best platform because it would help staff at any level collaborate and engage with each other.

Once we decided to go with Igloo, we wanted to soft-launch the platform with a small group of clinicians. This would allow us to gather feedback and improve the platform before we released it to everyone. Right away, our users told us how much they loved the simplicity of the new system. They instantly saw the value our new digital workplace would provide. When we saw how well our clinician test group took to the platform, we had all the reassurance we needed to roll it out to everyone.

Real-time engagement

We knew our new digital workplace—called Ob Exchange—was a hit when we saw people begin to naturally share clinical information with each other. They began adapting to the system instinctively. “How do you do this? What is your procedure? How does your hospital do this sort of drill?” Those kinds of discussion questions went beyond just a formal statement or a simple concurrence. Members were now engaging in real time with genuine and collaborative experiential information.

But this wasn’t an effortless success. It took a lot of awareness, education, and promotional work among our hospitalists over time. We wanted to make sure everyone found value from the system, not just the outspoken types. One of my top goals was to bring connection to those who may have otherwise felt professionally isolated due to the nature of their work.

I used everything from email campaigns and newsletters to feature alerts, to drive engagement. And we did big launch promotions as well. We even used traditional marketing postcards to build awareness when we first kicked off Ob Exchange. Given all the effort put into building awareness, Ob Exchange is now one of our most-used online destinations. And Igloo continues to help us reinvent the platform for even better results. We constantly improve the system to give our members even more value.

With the success we’ve seen with Ob Exchange, we’ve transitioned our OBHG University over to Igloo. The university existed previously on our public website as a place for clinicians to learn about best practices and updates. The transition to Igloo was a massive project, but went smoothly because of the versatility of the platform.

We’ve put required webinars in the university, so it’s often the first place clinicians come when they join our team. They gain valuable information about topics like ectopic pregnancy and postpartum analgesia opioid reduction, which is a hot issue these days. Today, OBHG University is our second-most trafficked area on Ob Exchange.

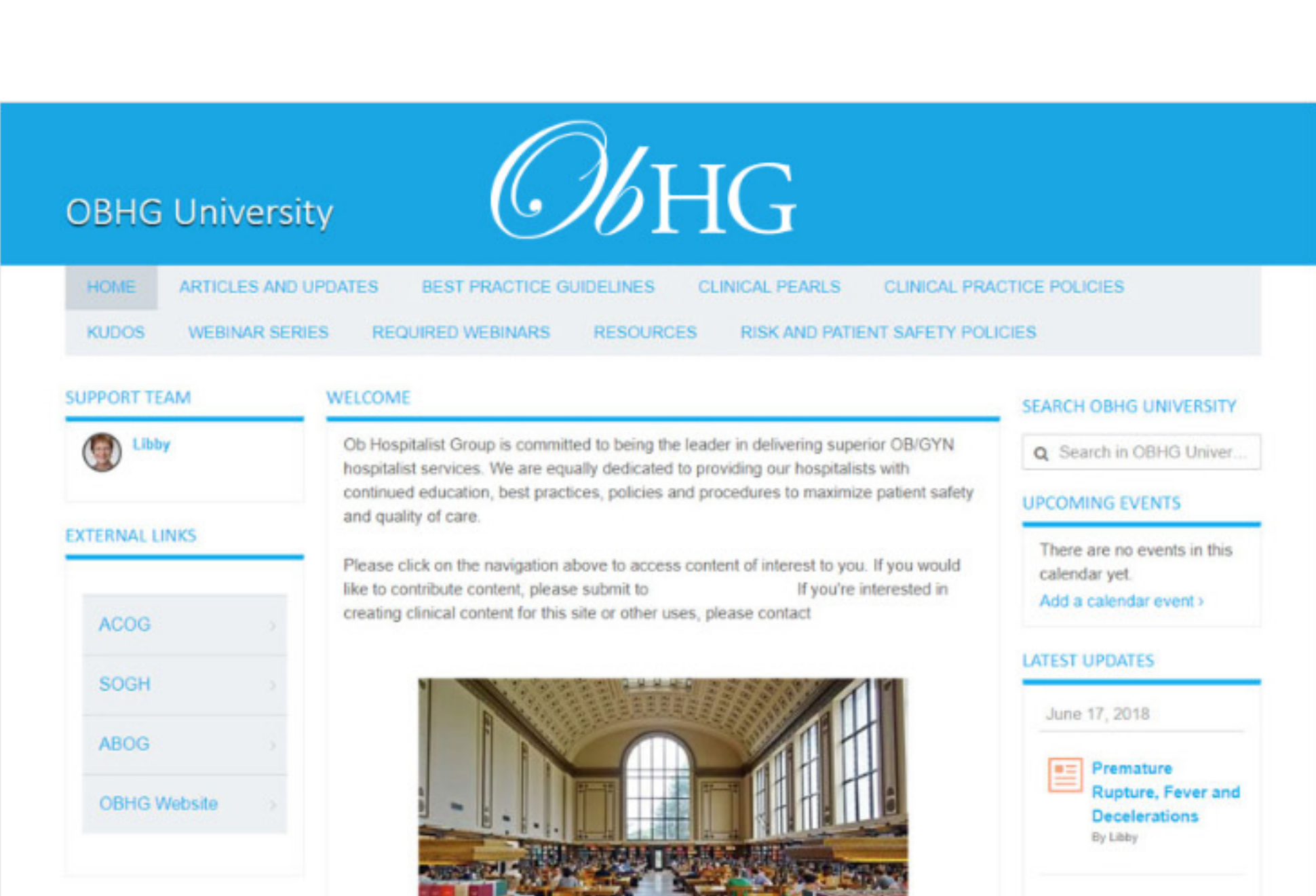
More than anything, Ob Exchange and OBHG University provide a community and an educational resource for our clinicians in a format that’s just like how they work: 24/7. Someone may have a few minutes to spare at 3:00 a.m. on their shift, so they can pop into the university to learn more about a topic or start a discussion with colleagues. It allows clinicians in our network to become better at their job, which ultimately saves lives.

“**The engagement rate with our clinicians has been incredible. We’ve seen 80% of our full-time users log in to the digital workplace within the last month.**”

Seeing numbers like that reaffirms that what we’ve built truly provides value to the people we serve.

A connected community

With the success of Ob Exchange and OBHG University, we decided to even develop a digital workplace for our non-clinical teams. This was driven by our support teams, who requested collaboration spaces on Ob Exchange. Initially, we weren’t sure how to accomplish this goal because it was our clinician-focused tool. But we developed a place just for them with news, discussions, and more. While most of our team is here in South Carolina, we have multiple support team members working across the country. This new digital workplace serves as a tool to connect everyone nationwide.



The response from our support teams has been phenomenal. We’re seeing even better engagement than with our clinicians, which is truly amazing.

Ob Exchange has now become the primary location for professional connections, collaboration, and community support. Ob Exchange is our stellar, one-stop shop for our clinicians and support teams to develop and grow with each other.

On a personal level, it’s incredible to see the success of this platform because of the impact it will ultimately have. We’ve built a community that helps tap into the powerful, collective knowledge of our nationwide network of clinicians. By bringing these teams together, they’re able to solve problems and take better care of patients. Our mission is to elevate the standard of women’s healthcare, and both education and collaboration are instrumental in fulfilling that mission.

When I think of the thousands of lives we’ll touch in the future, it’s comforting to know our patients are in better hands than ever before.

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