Case Study

MCKESSON
Empowering Healthcare

Southwest Washington Medical Center
Reduces Diversion Hours, Length of Stays
with Enterprise Intelligence

Southwest Washington Medical Center (SWMC) has long relied on McKesson's performance analytics tools in the finance department. As pay-for-performance and other market pressures began taking hold, executives realized they needed more robust analytics capabilities to link cost-of-care to clinical outcomes. Meanwhile, ambulance diversions were eroding patient satisfaction and contribution margins, prompting the search for real-time visibility into patient flow and care processes.

Today, SWMC is leveraging McKesson's full enterprise intelligence suite to promote a culture of performance excellence and accountability that positions it for health reform.

Challenges

In January 2008, SWMC was experiencing an average of 192 hours on diversion a month, or four to six hours a day. This level of diversion was unacceptable for any hospital, especially one which had already sought to improve patient flow. Using the Six Sigma® Kaizen methodology, SWMC had mapped and streamlined nearly two dozen events, including admissions, triage and lab results. Despite these efforts, process variability around diversions flourished, along with a prevailing belief that diversions could not be avoided.

Answers

In August 2008, SWMC implemented Horizon Enterprise Visibility™, McKesson's enterprise tracking board solution in 130 days. The system uses visual controls to broadcast information – aggregated from clinical, ADT, housekeeping, transport, location and other systems – against the hospital's floor plan on large, electronic whiteboards. Real-time, at-a-glance views of patient status and location help SWMC tightly manage length of stay and mitigate risk tied to core measures and other care processes.

With electronic tracking boards mounted prominently in each nursing unit and in administrative areas, physician lounges and patient placements, everyone in the organization can see when and why the hospital is nearing divert status, and act accordingly.

"The marathon to 'no-diversion' is a million things," says COO Rainy Atkins. "Ensuring the availability of emergency service for every patient, every time, requires detailed knowledge about current patient location and status. Horizon Enterprise Visibility provides this real-time information, enabling us to implement standard processes to improve efficiencies and patient throughput."

In addition to bed reservations, room status and cleaning requests, the tracking boards display which patients have actual discharge

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orders, as well as which are ready for step down or discharge. Clinicians are alerted without logins or phone calls as soon as their patients have new stat orders, critical lab results or blood ready. Supervisors can quickly see which patients have advance directives, are fall or skin risks, or are on ventilators or restraints. Physicians can make their rounds more efficiently by checking the console to see how much longer their patients will be in surgery or imaging, while executives on call can check real-time occupancy and other indicators from home.

"It has always been difficult for clinicians to have access to real-time information they can actually use," says Trevor Jacobsen, performance analytics coordinator. "If data is more than 24 hours old, it may be useful to us on the back end, but it's not going to help them do their jobs. Horizon Enterprise Visibility is the first tool that gives them that real-time view."

SWMC also upgraded its decision support capabilities to McKesson Performance Analytics™, which aggregates retrospective clinical, financial and operational data from disparate sources, transforming it into dashboards that help guide organizations to achieve their strategic goals.

Results

After going live on Horizon Enterprise Visibility, SWMC's average diversion hours improved by 81%. The organization realized at least $4.5 million in additional contribution margins as a result. Meanwhile, thanks to myriad throughput efforts, average length of stay fell 5.4% for the hospital's Medicare Top 20 diagnosis-related group discharges and 7.7% for all others, representing a $6.3 million savings in direct variable costs.

During the same time period, SWMC experienced a 17% reduction in patient falls, including falls with injury. As part of an overall fall program, Horizon Enterprise Visibility helped frontline staff readily identify fall risk patients to prevent incidents. The hospital conservatively estimates the two-year potential cost avoidance due to fewer falls at $630,000.

As healthcare reform intensifies, SWMC is poised to use enterprise intelligence to monitor its compliance with protocols for preventing hospital-acquired conditions. Combining real-time alerts with retrospective scorecards will create a continual feedback loop.

"There is a huge learning curve for clinicians to start making connections between what they see on the floors, what they see in the reports and vice versa," says Jacobsen. "Enterprise intelligence shows a direct link between what clinicians are doing and our overall performance, which helps us begin to change the culture."