

Case Study



At a Glance

Organization

Affinity Health System
Menasha, Wis.

- Three hospitals: St. Elizabeth Hospital, Mercy Medical Center and Calumet Medical Center
- Network Health Plan — approximately 90,000 members
- Occupational Health & Wellness of Wisconsin — serves 2,800 corporations and their employees
- 22 multispecialty clinics with 220 physicians

Solution

- CareEnhance® Call Center

Challenge

- Higher than national averages for tobacco use by adults and teens
- Cost of care
- Physician referrals for tobacco cessation
- Community education on tobacco use

Results

- Reduced tobacco usage rates among adults by 5% and among teens by 16%
- Surpassed national averages for tobacco quit rates
- Improved physician referrals to Call It Quits from 67% to 80%
- Garnered a 92% satisfaction rate for Call It Quits program

Affinity Health System Helps Patients Quit Tobacco with Call Center Solution

Tobacco use affects more than 46 million Americans and is the most preventable cause of premature death in the U.S. Alarmed by high usage rates among adults and teens in its community, Affinity Health System sought to help tobacco users quit. Affinity turned to CareEnhance® Call Center, a solution from McKesson powered by RelayHealth®, to support its tobacco cessation program. As a result, Affinity has achieved greater than national average quit rates with high patient satisfaction.

Challenge

Affinity is a regional healthcare system serving northeastern Wisconsin through its hospitals, clinics and health insurance plans. Twelve years ago, tobacco use in Wisconsin was 24% among adults. Also alarming, 37% of Wisconsin teens, ages 14-17, were using tobacco.

Affinity wanted to reduce tobacco-related healthcare claims and improve the health of its community by offering cessation assistance. The provider needed to integrate all patient information into one system to identify and manage patients seeking long-term cessation solutions.

While attending a conference, Rita Svatos, RN, BSN, director of the 24-hour Affinity NurseDirect call center, learned about another organization's success in helping

patients quit tobacco with a legacy RelayHealth solution. Now known as CareEnhance Call Center, Affinity was already using the system to manage its NurseDirect triage call center and physician and class referrals.

"I realized we already had a very versatile software tool with much more potential," notes Svatos.

Answers

Svatos turned to Annette Hovie, LPN, supervisor of Affinity NurseDirect, to expand use of the software by creating the Call It Quits Tobacco Cessation Program. Its focus was to help patients, employees and community members become tobacco-free. Goals included: increasing the number of physicians advising patients to quit tobacco; offering tobacco-using patients at Affinity hospitals tools to quit (bedside intervention, physician interaction, pharmaceuticals, counseling and telephonic follow-up); benchmarking participants who are tobacco-free after one year against national averages; and educating teens about the negative effects of tobacco.

As Hovie worked on programming CareEnhance Call Center, RelayHealth professionals were there to assist.

"As we began to adjust the system, I saw the power of the tool and how it could enhance our efforts even more," adds Hovie.

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“CareEnhance Call Center enabled us to create a tobacco cessation program that gives everyone a personalized quit plan.”

*Kristy Hartman-Begun, RN, BSN
Coordinator of Call It Quits,
Affinity NurseDirect
Affinity Health System*

The program leveraged tobacco users’ “teachable moments” and provided cessation information through the disease management, survey, education and class registration modules in CareEnhance Call Center. Affinity also added the customer relationship module to flag patients for routine outbound calls at key cessation intervals. NurseDirect staff was on call 24x7 to offer support. Uplifting messages were recorded in the voice response library to play when nurses were assisting other callers. Community bulletins, brochures, training classes, and lunch-and-learns were created to spread the word among Affinity practitioners, work sites and the community.

Results

When the Call It Quits program began, 67% of Affinity physicians were advising patients to quit tobacco. In 2008, more than 80% of physicians recommended quitting.

The NurseDirect team also partnered with Affinity’s Cardiac Rehabilitation Department and the Nursing Documentation Team to identify tobacco users admitted to Affinity hospitals. In 2008, 1,584 patients were referred to the Call It Quits program, with 410 enrolling. Additionally, a work-site tobacco cessation program offering pharmaceuticals paid for by employers has yielded quit rates of 30% to 59%.

Affinity partnered with law enforcement officials to implement an educational course for teens cited with tobacco possession. Upon completion, 98% of graduates say they will reduce or quit tobacco usage.

Affinity’s initiative has yielded excellent results. Adult tobacco use in the service area has decreased from 24% to 19%, while tobacco use among teens, ages 14-17, has decreased from 37% to 21%. The Affinity quit rate is 72% at three months (compared to a national average of 45%) and 66% at one year (compared to a national average of 42%). Notably, 92% of participants report high satisfaction with the program.

Kristy Hartman-Begun, RN, BSN is now coordinating Affinity’s Call It Quits program and sees ongoing use of the technology.

“CareEnhance Call Center enabled us to create a tobacco cessation program that gives everyone a personalized quit plan,” says Hartman-Begun. “We plan to further customize the system to support other high-risk patients – including tobacco use during pregnancy and smokeless tobacco dependence – as well as broader wellness programs.”

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