

At a Glance

Organization

Spartanburg Regional
Healthcare System
Spartanburg, S.C.

- Two hospitals, 730 beds
- 1,350 nurses systemwide
- 513 physicians on staff

Solution Spotlight

- eShift

Critical Issues

- Costly agency use
- Dissatisfaction among staff nurses
- Declining patient and physician satisfaction

Results

- Slashed number of agency nurses from 57 to 7
- Saved \$2,463,266 in annual agency expenditures
- Reduced one-year turnover rate from 6.95% to 4.64%
- Improved employee satisfaction

Spartanburg Regional Medical Center Reduces Nurse Agency Usage by 88% with eShift

When a hospital becomes too reliant on agency nurses, it often faces challenges. Spartanburg Regional Medical Center nearly caused a crisis when its overuse of an agency contract created a huge disparity in pay and work assignments between staff nurses and contract nurses. Staff satisfaction deteriorated and budgets were squeezed. To solve the problem, Spartanburg pioneered an eBay-like, Web-based solution that automated bidding for open shifts — known today as McKesson's eShift. The shift auctioning innovation reduced the number of agency nurses from 57 to seven, saved almost \$2.5 million in annual agency expenditures, and substantially increased employee satisfaction.

Challenge

Spartanburg Regional Medical Center serves the healthcare needs of South Carolina's upstate population with world-class facilities, caring and dedicated professionals, advanced technology and specialized treatment options. However, staffing shortages were making a major impact on the organization's bottom line. Nearly five dozen agency nurses were earning agency rates, overtime and crisis pay of \$10 to \$20 extra per hour, averaging more than \$748,000 per quarter.

Staff nurses were unhappy that agency nurses made higher hourly rates for the same work. And

because agency nurse competencies were tied to contracts with often specified patient ratios, staff nurses had to take on more or sicker patients. When patient census dropped, staff nurses were sent home because agency nurses had to be paid whether they worked or not.

"As you might imagine, staff satisfaction scores quickly declined," explains Darby Douglas, staffing manager, Spartanburg Regional Medical Center. "Patient satisfaction scores followed, and physicians became concerned."

Answers

As one of the nation's "100 Most Wired Hospitals and Health Systems" and a long-time McKesson customer in the areas of supply chain management and document imaging, Spartanburg looked to technology for the answer. Knowing its tech-savvy staff would embrace a Web-based, shift-bidding solution, leadership tasked Douglas to create it. The resulting system can be self-taught and gives staff nurses a voice in where and when they worked. It also includes an automatic notification system, and gives managers total access to the system without permitting staff nurses to see other bidders or who won.

"In the beginning, our primary use of eShift was to handle open-shift auctioning," Douglas says. "However, the system proved so

Case Study

“eShift has helped us build a more cooperative spirit in nursing. It works for both staff and managers — helping us foster an environment of trust and support.”

Darby Douglas, RN
Staffing Manager
Spartanburg Regional
Medical Center

flexible that it continues to meet our changing needs for scheduling and bidding.”

Using the solution, as well as adjusting it to accommodate different types of employees, is fast and easy. Today, access to eShift is a privilege reserved for inpatient staff nurses who have been on board for at least a year. Nurse managers can grant access to individual nurses with good performance on a specific unit without rolling it out hospitalwide. Write-ups, tardies and other problems can cause suspension of eShift privileges, while performance issues can cause nurses to be blocked from open shifts on particular units.

Spartanburg is currently using eShift for RNs only, but the system works equally as well for patient care associates (PCAs), patient care technicians (PCTs), licensed practical nurses (LPNs) and emergency department technicians.

Results

In its first year of use, eShift helped Spartanburg Regional Medical Center save \$2,463,266 in annual agency

expenditures. It also gave staff nurses reason to celebrate. “eShift gives nurses a wonderful opportunity to earn more money by picking up extra shifts,” says Danielle Rill, RN, clinical unit educator. “It’s like having an extra part-time job when you need it without a commitment when you don’t.”

The solution also succeeded in reducing the one-year turnover rate from 6.95% to 4.64%. Other employee satisfaction indicators, including communication and decision input, continue to climb while burn-out rates fall.

With eShift, all nursing units at Spartanburg now schedule shifts autonomously and assume responsibility for staffing their own needs. Even the emergency and hospice departments use the solution, and the float pool is entirely scheduled by eShift. Every six weeks a new schedule is available with approximately 2,000 shifts.

Douglas concludes, “eShift has helped us build a more cooperative spirit in nursing. It works for both staff and managers — helping us foster an environment of trust and support.”

McKesson Provider Technologies

5995 Windward Parkway
Alpharetta, GA 30005

<http://www.mckesson.com>
1.800.981.8601

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