Paragon® helps bring world-class healthcare to rural community setting

By Jim Mattes, President and Chief Executive Officer

Grande Ronde Hospital
La Grande, Ore.
• Founded 1907
• 25-bed critical access hospital
• Seven provider-based physician clinics
• 50+ physicians and 500+ employees
• Provides 600+ telemedicine consults with remote specialists annually
• National Rural Health Association’s Top Award for Outstanding Rural Health Organization

Paragon Benefits
• Achieved 100% adoption and utilization with CPOE, physician documentation and medication reconciliation among hospitalists
• Helped improve cash flow by reducing A/R days by 30%
• Helped reduce radiology reporting turnaround time by 90%
• Automated administrative processes and enabled redeployment of two FTEs for greater efficiency

“With McKesson as our partner we are confident in our future, even as healthcare continues to evolve.”

Jim Mattes
President and CEO
Grande Ronde Hospital
I joined Grande Ronde Hospital (GRH), a critical access hospital (CAH) in La Grande, Oregon in 1984. Prior to that, I served as CEO for nine years at two other hospitals in the state. With nearly 40 years of experience, I hold the distinction of being Oregon’s longest serving hospital CEO. Throughout the decades I have seen major changes in the healthcare industry, but none as significant as those our industry faces today.

Although our industry is rapidly changing, our mission of ensuring access to high-quality, cost-effective healthcare remains the same. What may seem to be a simple, straightforward mission bears added complexity due to our geographic location. Surrounded by mountainous terrain in remote northeast Oregon, GRH is the sole hospital in its county of 2,038 square miles and 25,000 residents.

To prepare for the upcoming healthcare reform changes and keep our technologies current, we embarked on a new hospital information system search in 2006. As a CAH, we had specific criteria for our new HIS. We needed a system that offered ease of use, immediate accessibility to information, integration with other advanced technologies and support of our distinct billing requirements. I am pleased to say that Paragon has delivered on all of those requirements, and it has helped us deliver world-class care to our community!

**Value of long-term partner**

We turned to McKesson during our new HIS search because they’ve been our partner for 20 years — before Paragon even existed. Since Paragon was relatively new at the time, it felt like a gamble to move forward with the system, but our experience with McKesson gave me confidence they would provide a high level of leadership, development and commitment to the product going forward. As an early adopter, we’ve been able to pilot various Paragon applications and releases, allowing us to build a synergistic relationship with the Paragon team. I can truly say that McKesson and Paragon have been instrumental in helping GRH move forward with healthcare reform and attest for Stage 1 meaningful use.

**Easy to train, easy to use**

As a facility serving a remote region, utilizing technology is vital for us to provide a high level of specialized care. That is why we implemented a telemedicine program using virtual presence technology to bring specialists to the bedside for our patients. This program has grown into a nationally recognized remote presence healthcare network, offering over 20 specialties staffed by physicians nationwide.

“The modern technology of Paragon is so simple to use. Our hospitalists have achieved 100% adoption with CPOE, physician documentation and medication reconciliation.”

Ronald Reynoso, M.D.
Assistant Director of Hospitalist Services, Medical Informatics Executive
Grande Ronde Hospital
It was imperative to find an HIS that was easy to learn and use because our remote physicians would be utilizing it for information access critical to the treatment of their telemedicine patients. Doug Romer, CNO and executive director of patient care services, spearheads the telemedicine program and is responsible for training remote physicians on Paragon. Doug simply sends them a short demo DVD and they’re able to train themselves without much difficulty. He attributes the familiar look of Windows® and intuitive point-and-click Microsoft® technology to the rapid success of training remote physicians.

Our onsite physicians have also readily adopted Paragon. Dr. Ronald Reynoso, assistant director of hospitalist services and medical informatics executive, likes to highlight that the adoption and utilization rate among our hospitalists is 100%. He said the straightforward design, ease of use and flexibility of Paragon all helped achieve this rate.

Our operational departments have quickly adopted Paragon as well. Karli Wright, patient financial services manager, says Paragon is easy for her team to use. The automated workflow, work queues and single sign-on capabilities save her department valuable time. Parhez Sattar, CIO, director of technology and information security officer was key in the HIS selection process. He knew selecting a system with a familiar user interface would be easier for end-users to learn and adopt and the open non-proprietary database would be easier for his department to manage — and he was right. Parhez will proudly tell you that his team has never used outside help to maintain the system or generate reports. This has yielded significant operational savings since we went live on Paragon. Additionally, his team has completed all upgrades without the assistance of consultants or McKesson in the four years since implementing Paragon!

Paragon has also helped us improve medication safety via the prescribing accuracy of CPOE and barcoded medication administration. Doug is pleased with how Paragon® Medication Reconciliation allows our clinicians to better capture and to modify patients’ medication lists. With our previous manual process, only 5% of patients had complete medication reconciliation at all levels. Within 16 months after going live on Paragon that rate was up to 95% and now we’re currently at 100%.

Paragon has integrated with our existing technologies to support our telemedicine program and help improve our patient care. For example, our remote physicians providing care through virtual presence technology can simply login to Paragon® WebStation for Physicians to get real-time access to patient charts and electronic medical records. Dr. Ronald Reynoso says the immediate access to data helps physicians make quicker decisions because they no longer rely on IT for reporting or clinical decision support.

Improving patient care

Paragon has also helped us provide an increased level of safety for our patients.

Douglas Romer, R.N.
CNO, Executive Director of Patient Care Services
Grande Ronde Hospital

“The open database of Paragon makes reporting easy and puts information at our users’ fingertips without relying on IT. They can rapidly access and analyze data, make better decisions and quickly adjust to the ever-changing landscape of healthcare.”

Parhez Sattar
CIO, Senior Director Information Technology
Grande Ronde Hospital

“The alerts and rules in Paragon help us provide an increased level of safety for our patients.”

Douglas Romer, R.N.
CNO, Executive Director of Patient Care Services
Grande Ronde Hospital
Strengthening financial performance

As a founding member of the Rural Healthcare Reform Initiative, I am helping design and implement new care delivery and reimbursement models to help rural hospitals move down the path of healthcare reform. A primary reason we selected Paragon was because its open database and reporting capabilities gave us the necessary information to help us make better financial and payment model decisions.

As a CAH, we have to meet certain billing standards under the Method Two requirements of Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. Paragon has helped us meet those requirements and bill for CAH services with ease. The implementation was streamlined, and the process of setting up the system to accommodate those requirements was simple.

Paragon was also able to accommodate the billing needs of our seven provider-based physician clinics in one system. By combining billing systems, Karli Wright’s team is able to produce a single patient bill, regardless of care setting. This streamlined system helps her team file claims more efficiently, which has resulted in improved patient satisfaction, cash flow and productivity. In fact, they played a key role in reducing our A/R days by 30% since we moved to Paragon!

GRH has not let its size or location become a barrier to delivering highly specialized care. Instead, we have embraced those challenges and found technology solutions to help us deliver the best care possible. Paragon has helped us achieve our mission of ensuring access to high-quality, cost-effective healthcare by giving us immediate access to information, improved workflows and integration with other technologies. We see a level of commitment from McKesson and Paragon to do what’s necessary to meet all the upcoming meaningful use criteria, while also helping us continue to deliver world-class care in a rural community setting.

“We use Paragon as our single billing system for the hospital and all of our seven remote clinics. This has helped us reduce our A/R days by 30% and improve patient satisfaction.”

Karli Wright
Patient Financial Services Manager
Grande Ronde Hospital