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Integration is Everything

Logansport Memorial Hospital Improves Patient Care and Physician Satisfaction with Iatric Systems Physician Office Integration

OBJECTIVE: Logansport Memorial Hospital wanted physicians in their community to be able to use their eClinicalWorks Electronic Medical Record (EMR) to order tests at the hospital electronically. They also wanted the hospital's MEDITECH Hospital Information System (HIS) to automatically send results back to the physician EMR desktop. Additional goals were faster turnaround time for tests, improved patient care, and stronger ties with the hospital's physician community.

SITUATION: Logansport Memorial Hospital (LMH) is a not-for-profit regional medical center serving Cass County and north-central Indiana. The hospital system also includes a network of physicians in off-site offices that send patients to Logansport for testing and treatment. However, a legacy fax and paper-based approach for handling orders and results was slow, inefficient, and unreliable — and not worthy of a hospital dedicated to high-quality care and patient satisfaction.

SOLUTION: Logansport Memorial now uses Iatric Systems Physician Office Integration to provide bi-directional interfaces between the hospital's MEDITECH HIS and the eClinicalWorks EMR system used in physician offices. Physicians send lab and radiology orders from eClinicalWorks directly to the registrar's desktop where an advanced Work List streamlines the registration process. When testing is complete, results are sent back automatically to the physician's eClinicalWorks desktop.

RESULTS: Electronic sharing of orders and results helps physicians, patients, staff, and the hospital as a whole. The streamlined, automated workflows between outside physicians and Logansport allow more reliable ordering and faster turnaround, with no faxing or paper handling, and no duplicate data entry at the registration desk or in physician offices. Physicians are much more satisfied with their hospital testing, which gives the hospital a significant competitive advantage over commercial labs in the area. Other benefits include the ability to demonstrate the electronic exchange of structured data required for Meaningful Use.

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>   Chief Information Officer
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Logansport Memorial Hospital is an 83-bed acute-care hospital serving rural north-central Indiana. Hospital management knew that allowing its community-based physicians to order tests and receive results electronically would improve care and productivity in ways that could never be achieved by faxing. Iatric Systems Physician Office Integration brings their vision to life. Orders and results now flow instantly between the hospital's MEDITECH HIS and the eClinicalWorks EMR used in physician offices, saving time, reducing stress, and improving the delivery of care.

How It Works
Physicians enter lab and radiology orders from their eClinicalWorks EMR to the registrar's desktop, where they reside on a Work List until patients arrive. One of the innovations of Physician Office Integration, the Work List, sorts and manages orders from different caregivers, and is customized to provide the information the hospital needs. "Besides getting results to the doctor faster, the Work List is one of our main perks," says Tom Adams, Information System Analyst at Logansport.

When testing is complete, results automatically flow back to a physician's eClinicalWorks desktop, where the eClinicalWorks "Jellybean" alert bubble illuminates to indicate that results have arrived. (The Jellybean turns a different color to indicate an abnormal result.) "Getting the results back electronically is not only much faster; it makes results available as structured data that physicians can graph and trend — an approach they much prefer," notes Beth Jump, Chief Information Officer at Logansport Memorial Hospital.

The two-way electronic workflow provides many other benefits. Physician Office Integration automatically logs all orders so any issue can be traced and corrected. There are no more lost orders, and no more finger-pointing between registration staff and physician offices when patients show up for a test unexpectedly (and no more furious physicians that are certain they faxed the order days ago.) Patients benefit because the doctor gets their results faster and also because results appear faster in the eClinicalWorks patient portal. There's even a competitive advantage, with fast ordering and results giving Logansport an edge over area labs that have slow, unreliable paper processes.

One key reason for the project's success was the Iatric Systems expert who built it, as Tom explains. "Derek McKee spent a lot of time with us to fully understand how we wanted the integration to work. He also showed us capabilities of Physician Office Integration that we didn't know existed. Derek gave us a solution that works exactly the way we wanted — and in some ways, even better than we had imagined."

What's Next
Logansport is now considering expanding the solution to independent physicians who send patients to the hospital for tests (and use many different EMR systems.) Integration with long-term care facilities is another future possibility. "Physicians also want to send orders electronically to our patient registration desktop and get results back as structured data to their EMR systems. I know they would appreciate that," Beth adds.

"Everything is so much better than chasing patients on the phone and trying to find results off the fax machine," Beth concludes. "For faster throughput, reduced workload, and improved care, for the ability to meet Meaningful Use standards for automation and structured data, and for the satisfaction it brings to physicians, patients and hospital staff, Physician Office Integration is a win for everybody."

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