



WASHINGTON HEALTH SYSTEM

Expanding Successful Medical Device Integration with Capsule MDIS™

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Manager of The Washington Health System's Information Systems

The Washington Health System has a long history of medical leadership and technology innovation. The organization has long realized the benefits of top of-the-line technology to achieve the highest levels of safety, efficiency and satisfaction. So, after a careful evaluation of processes and IT systems already in place, the hospital wanted to streamline workflow and increase direct patient care by eliminating manual capture and documentation of vital signs in its Allscripts Sunrise clinical manager record. “You’d be amazed at the number of hours nurses in particular spend taking, writing down and then digitally documenting vital signs,” said Lynn Bular, RN, BSN, manager of The Washington Health System’s information systems, who has over 25 years nursing, informatics, biomed and IT experience.

Employing more than 2,300 highly trained medical professionals, Washington Health System provides health care services at more than 39 off-site locations throughout three counties. In addition to its flagship 260 licensed bed hospital in Washington, Pa., WHS recently added Washington Health System Greene, a community centered 49-bed hospital, to its integrated system of care. Washington Health System also consists of diagnostic centers, outpatient care facilities, the Wilfred R. Cameron Wellness Center, Greenbriar Treatment Center and hospice care, all seamlessly working together to provide excellent patient-and-family-centered care.

CHALLENGE

Initially, the hospital focused specifically on improving efficiency and enhancing treatment precision on vital signs flow sheets in its newly opened 26 bed critical care unit. “Obviously we wanted to make nurses happy. A happy nurse is a good nurse, and we wanted to improve patient care at the bedside,” Bular said. But physicians also wanted to move to online physiological monitor data to enable anytime, anywhere access to current vital signs. Examining its integration options, the organization assessed current patient devices to plan parameters and key elements that would build a strong foundation not only for the current project but also for future integrations. The hope was to start small without much disruption to the current workflow, and then move across the entire enterprise to enable automated technological capabilities and efficiency.

SOLUTION

The hospital started its device integration using Capsule’s Neuron mobile clinical computer as its bedside platform. In either wired or wireless environments, and adaptable for deployment at different levels of acuity and integration, the vendor-neutral Neuron with its intuitive touch screen display acquires and integrates medical device data from almost any medical device, whatever the vendor. A post-implementation survey yielded end-user satisfaction results of 4.06 out of 5. “The doctors and nurses were extremely excited,” Bular reported. “Our CCU nurses said, ‘Wow, this is easy to do! Why didn’t someone give us this sooner?’”

Word quickly spread about the success of Capsule’s technology, and all departments soon wanted vital signs processes upgraded and accessible online. Physicians reaped the benefits of timely vital sign documentation and, of course, much less paper. Without hesitation, the hospital made plans to expand the implementation. Bular continued, “As we expanded, we truly wanted to work with one vendor for both our high and low acuity units to support it across the board. So we chose to purchase an Allscripts enterprise device integration license and continued with Capsule as our hospital-wide vendor of choice.”

Over the span of a week, the hospital implemented Capsule Chart Xpress (an application running on Neuron) for periodic vital sign monitoring at the bed side. The resulting workflow was better suited for the low-acuity areas of six nursing care units that included med-surg, behavioral health and maternal health. The hospital realized many benefits from implementing Capsule technology in both settings. Improvements in charting accuracy and speed were observed; specifically, time was significantly faster from acquisition to posting in the Allscripts system and available to the end-users online. Electronic patient data also paved the way for meaningful use projects as well as CPOE initiatives for the future.

“We did see happy nurses. Our physicians are happy. Our workflow is more efficient. And we believe that we improve patient care at the bedside,” noted Bular. “We wanted the flexibility to change things as we grow and make upgrades. Capsule gave us that flexibility both today and tomorrow.”

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