Compass Pointe Healthcare System

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   RN, BSN, MIS and Director of Informatics

BACKGROUND: Vision for future included secure EMR system

Headquartered in Baltimore, MD, Compass Pointe Healthcare System offers a full continuum of professional consultative and management services at more than 70 ALFs, SNFs, ILFs and LTPAC hospitals in 16 states.
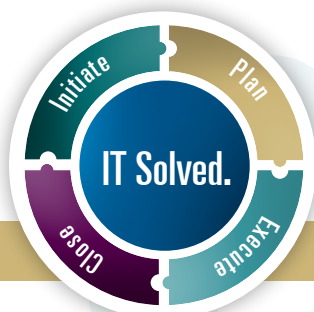
In 2009, prior to becoming Compass Pointe, the company began implementing an Electronic Medical Records (EMR) system with in-house resources. A robust, secure EMR system is essential to support Compass Pointe's dynamic vision and strong, growth-oriented market presence. However, in-house planning and management proved disjointed and was not a cost-effective use of staff's time and capabilities.

CHALLENGE: EMR implementation needed strong management

"Developing a successful EMR is a huge effort," said Patty Kimball, RN, BSN, MIS, and Compass Pointe's Director of Informatics. "I joined the company shortly after they began implementing EMR in-house and quickly discovered there was little EMR standardization across their facilities, systems weren't being used efficiently and reimbursement goals weren't being met. In fact, the in-house EMR process was costing the company money rather than generating income. That's when we turned to VCPI for help."

The company had been partnering with VCPI for core IT services since 2000. They asked for VCPI's guidance in managing an EMR project that would provide the secure technology and financial ROI they desired. Kimball and Ellen Darling, VCPI Account Manager, put together a list of tasks, requirements, and resources which would ultimately serve as a prequel to the complete project plan. The resource demand and task list provided justification for hiring an external Project Manager. "The key was hiring the right Project Manager," Kimball said, "one who has the experience and expertise to involve and coordinate multiple vendors, facilities and disciplines throughout the EMR project's stages. We made the business case that designating VCPI as Project Manager was an investment that would be cost-justified over time."

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SOLUTION: Staley Technologies, VCPI and Compass Pointe became the EMR team

Planning and Implementation

Compass Pointe teamed with VCPI for the project management and technology. VCPI's Project Manager maintained the project plan, coordinated the various teams, scheduled vendor resources, obtained quotes and approvals, submitted hardware orders and led communications efforts, including weekly status updates and conference calls.

VCPI brought in Staley Technologies for the onsite surveys, wireless, electrical and Ethernet cabling. "With Staley, we knew we'd be getting a partner we could trust who would complement and support our core services," said Darling. "Staley has technicians across the country who are all held to the same high standards, regardless of their location." Chuck Allen, Staley Project Manager, added, "Since our client base is broader than just LTPAC, working with a quality technology provider like VCPI for health care client requirements is imperative. We provide the engineers, certification, software knowledge, and experience to create a working wireless network that is most productive for the facilities. Our technicians have worked around health care providers, patients and visitors so they know how to enable a worry-free, seamless transition that is minimally disruptive to the LTPAC environment."

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The team developed an extensive scope of work and project plan with detailed line items. The project plan spelled out every aspect of the EMR implementation process, from initial walk-thru to go-live and training, developing standards across the facilities. "While VCPI is the strategic lead with Compass Pointe, they rely on us to also provide best-practice recommendations from a technology standpoint," Allen said. Compass Pointe determined the type and amount of equipment to install and VCPI, together with Staley, identified each building's design issues to be addressed and how best to install the equipment. Data needs and wireless surveys by Staley determined, among other items, the best place to install wireless access points. The plan even specified that Staley take before-and-after photos of the network closets so that corporate officers could better track progress and the clearly labeled closets could aid maintenance and technicians in identifying and troubleshooting potential problems in the future.

The project plan was structured to be workable regardless of where the current facility was in their implementation phase. "It allowed me to meet ahead of time with the facility CEO, Administrator, DON, Maintenance Director and others on an EMR kick-off call before they met with VCPI's project team, getting them primed on their phase of the plan and key milestones," said Kimball. "Ultimately, the EMR system is theirs, not mine. VCPI recommended the strategy for them to be on the weekly calls, regardless of what phase they were in, to listen and learn what's coming up next and how to avoid issues that other facilities were facing. Facility personnel got to know the vendor names and delivery schedules. They were better prepared to have Staley onsite. By getting them involved, the project has been more successful because they know what to expect."

"VCPI and Staley work very well together and were instrumental in helping us come up with the best solution," Kimball said. "Staley's follow-through with the physical facility needs and VCPI's ongoing management and field services support is fantastic. By involving Staley and VCPI in the decision-making and planning, we didn't have to worry about warranties, permits, regulations, insurance, etc. It's all professionally managed and Staley and VCPI stand behind their work. We know what we're getting."

Wireless

Part of the implementation included creating or improving wireless communications throughout the facilities. "EMR and wireless go hand in hand," said Allen. "Some of Compass Pointe's facilities already had wireless, but usually it's rolled out together with an EMR project."

The wireless in the facilities is managed by VCPI and is HIPAA compliant. The configuration is fairly sophisticated. "Compass Pointe is on the cutting edge of rolling out EMRs and installing wireless across the board," Allen said. "Though it's showing up more frequently, it's not something we see every day. It shows the degree to which they care about their resident and visitor experience, and we're happy to be a part of it."

Training

"Training and follow-through are as important as implementation," noted Kimball. "Part of Compass Pointe's success is in giving our people the tools, training and monitoring to do their job better." Initial training involved four hours for each nurse and one hour for the CNAs. They then developed a *super user* program to provide refresher training for current employees and six hours of training for new hire nurses, one hour for new CNAs. The plan also called for Compass Pointe to hire a full-time EMR resource and trainer in-house rather than relying on the system vendor for ad-hoc training. "Having a dedicated resource who can oversee the system internally was important to guarantee that everyone was utilizing the EMR to its fullest extent," Kimball added. "Our Manager of Informatics was instrumental in the initial set up of the EMR prior to go-live. She also created a Complete Training Guide, writes our quick-tip guides and ensures proper and continuous training via webinars and on-site training."

RESULTS: Increased reimbursements and better records are only a few of the benefits realized

Compass Pointe's EMR is more than just a data entry system. "As facilities go-live, we go beyond simply capturing ADLs," Kimball said. Nursing documentation is completed in the EMR, including wound care management, a complete Admission Nursing Comprehensive Evaluation and various other nursing evaluations. "We also capture other real-time information, from bathing to any changes in a resident's condition," she noted. "A resident's relative, for example, can call and speak to the facility CEO with a question or potential issue and the CEO can pull up an accurate and real-time report on the resident. The Director of Activities loves that daily activity participation is captured on touchscreens, which then creates Activity Participation logs electronically, eliminating hours of paperwork. With the EMR, we can provide more precise and thorough documentation to staff and management; which promotes more accurate ADL capture, better resident care and better business outcomes."

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Emphasizing that point, Kimball noted that in the first 8 months Compass Pointe saw an increase in reimbursements of $300,000. "Reimbursement numbers drive our business and we saw tangible ROIs, especially in case-mix states," she said. "Additionally, MDS coding is much more accurate and we were also able to lower our ADLA costs. In fact, over a seven month period we saved approximately $32,000 in one facility alone."

EMR improved the accuracy and efficiency of documentation such as nebulizer treatments administered by nursing staff. "It's often hard to accurately capture treatment minutes," noted Kimball, "but our system is set to prompt nurses for responses to questions and the minutes flow into the MDS record." This information helps increase reimbursements as well." Furthermore, outsourced rehabilitation data interfaces with software so that all modalities of rehab and therapy are also captured by the EMR system and MDS records.

The wireless component of the EMR system has proven invaluable to Compass Pointe's marketing as well. "Our marketers use the EMR module to leverage and record referrals," Kimball said. "One facility created a brochure touting their ability to provide HIPAA-compliant wireless access. The response was immediate. If a facility has wireless that is professionally installed and managed, visitors and residents can access emails and the Internet from anywhere within the facility. Good customer service is priceless, and the EMR system adds to our success and value."

LOOKING AHEAD

Compass Pointe will continue to work with with VCPI and Staley to wrap up remaining implementation, integration and onboarding projects. "We will be addressing our electronic medication administration record (eMAR) requirements, device imaging, mobile device management, and wireless implementation in at least twelve more facilities this coming year," said Kimball. "And we'll continue to monitor and improve our record keeping, reimbursements, increased census numbers, and other resident data."

Compass Pointe will also find ways to utilize the EMR system to improve other business processes such as community marketing, care and quality standard maintenance, patient and resident satisfaction and current and potential hospital partner relationships. "We will continue to foster our partnership with VCPI as well as consulting with other companies in the LTPAC, ALF and Independent Living environments," Kimball noted. "We will be focusing on increased data mining to track trends not only in marketing but in the clinical arena as well. This will help to better serve all populations."

Kimball confidently endorsed the professionalism and quality of work from both Staley and VCPI. "The value that VCPI and Staley have added is incalculable," she noted. "They've made the project run more smoothly and efficiently. We're handling multiple implementations at different phases and are able to keep track of each facility's status. None of this would be possible if we hadn't partnered with VCPI as our Project Manager and Staley as our onsite installation resource. They have experience, expertise and a level of comfort with these types of projects that make it very easy to work with them."

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ABOUT VCPI

Headquartered in Milwaukee, WI, VCPI's customized IT solutions solve business challenges inherent in the long-term and post-acute health care (LTPAC) industry and enable clients to focus on taking care of patients and residents. Our nationwide client base relies on VCPI (Virtual Care Provider℠) experts to deliver innovative and LTPAC-exclusive solutions. Founded in 2000, VCPI is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Extendicare, Inc.

ABOUT STALEY TECHNOLOGIES

Staley, Inc., was founded in 1951 and has evolved to include Staley Technologies, a technology deployment company, as well as Staley Electric, a comprehensive electrical service company. Staley Technologies has broadened its expertise to include structured cabling, electrical installations as well as equipment configuration and installation. Committed to providing excellent solutions with W2, BICSI-certified technicians, Staley Technologies supports the country's most noteworthy big-box retailers, health care facilities, telecommunications providers and distribution companies. Headquartered in Little Rock, AR, Staley has several offices across the country to service single-site installations up to nationwide rollouts on projects ranging from UPS surveys data centers to WLAN designs to CCTV installations.

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