
CALVERTHEALTH MEDICAL CENTER

Makes Major Gains in Battling the Opioid Epidemic

Results include a 94% reduction in Dilaudid® prescriptions and a 46% decrease in other opioids



The opioid epidemic hit Calvert County, MD, hard. By 2015, CalvertHealth Medical Center (Prince Frederick, MD) was rated the top prescriber for the highest amount of morphine milligram equivalents in the area — a watershed moment for the organization. CalvertHealth recognized its obligation to tackle the crisis raging in its community.

“We heard the very personal experiences of community members, including those right here in our hospital, whose families were impacted by substance abuse disorder. We saw it as a call to action to move forward and make a real change to prevent this epidemic from spreading any further,” said CalvertHealth CIO Phil Campbell.

A plan of attack

CalvertHealth responded with a multi-pronged initiative to engage all stakeholders. The organization created an opioid stewardship task force and petitioned outside entities to participate. Achieving buy-in from community physicians, pharmacists, dentists, and local support programs was crucial to fostering true stewardship. Outreach partners witnessed CalvertHealth’s leadership commitment to combating the epidemic and adopted the task force framework.

Education efforts furthered area support. For providers, CalvertHealth produced brochures outlining new hospital policies. For patients and families, the hospital created easy-to-read materials explaining what opioids do, their role in pain management, and the availability of alternative therapies.

AT A GLANCE

Located in Prince Frederick, MD, CalvertHealth Medical Center is a nonprofit, community-owned medical center with 110 beds. Part of CalvertHealth, the hospital serves approximately 420 patients daily.



MEDITECH Podcast: How CalvertHealth is addressing the opioid crisis

[Listen to the episode.](#)



Leveraging technology

By becoming a member of the Chesapeake Regional Information System for our Patients program, CalvertHealth is able to exchange data with hospitals and individual providers in Maryland and DC, alerting physicians to patient red flags, such as “doctor shopping” for opioid prescriptions. A single sign-on button available in MEDITECH’s EHR streamlines access to CRISP, enabling physicians to track prescription information outside of CalvertHealth.

The hospital also incorporated decision support within MEDITECH that prompts them to search the CRISP database before prescribing and sets reminders of appropriate CDC-recommended dosing guidelines. Standard order sets within MEDITECH were also updated to align with these guidelines.

In recognition of the hospital’s successful opioid stewardship program, CalvertHealth was awarded the Health Quarterly Innovator of the Year award in 2017. Reflecting on the program’s achievements, Director of Pharmacy Kara Harrer remarked, “Seeing our success in the ED with Dilaudid and staff education, our community providers were very impressed. Even small changes can be enough to touch one family, or save a life.”



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