



Case Study

The Power of Electronically Managing Patient Safety Data A Business Case Study for Small and Rural Healthcare Providers

Waverly Health Center (WHC) is a 25-bed critical access hospital in Waverly, Iowa. It serves a three county area with an estimated population of 51,000. WHC has developed a whole series of services to meet the diverse needs of this rural population and pays close attention to its Mission ... *To provide the highest quality, patient-focused health care.*

WHC is also committed to better understanding its customer base. Management recognizes that it must use business methods to best serve its constituents and to stay true to its Mission. The melding of high quality healthcare delivery and solid business operations is where the story of strategically managing patient and organizational data electronically begins. We spent some time with Ms. Iris Vering, Director of Quality Services for WHC, and talked about their situation and the solution they found.

The Need

WHC wants to keep continuous improvement top of mind for all staff. To do this requires data ... real time data. Traditionally, events and situations that needed follow-up from a risk-quality-safety perspective were reported on paper and sent to Ms. Vering. She did her best to keep track of these data on an Excel spreadsheet, some of which WHC is required to report to external agencies, but this soon became cumbersome and ineffective. In addition, certain staff are assigned to complete investigations and provide recommendations to prevent untoward events in the future. Staff time is precious and finding the time to continue the paper chase was getting even more cumbersome. From a business perspective, money and staff resources were being allocated to support a system that was inefficient and ineffective. From the patients' perspective, data were needed to help accelerate appropriate decision-making to create positive change. A solution needed to be found!

The Solution

WHC looked at several electronic systems and chose the **Healthcare SafetyZone® Portal** created and supported by Clarity Group, Inc., Chicago, IL. The key elements they sought were an ability to streamline the data collection process with a simple user interface, the ability to get information quickly to key persons who need to know, the ability to create analytical reports for many different stakeholders, and all at a price point that was affordable. The Portal met all these criteria and more.

The Portal gave WHC the flexibility to create their own data collection templates, which allowed them to expand the use of the Portal beyond a simple event management tool for incident reports, an essential element for a small healthcare system with many services and outreach facilities. “The ability to use the Portal for so many of our data collection needs, including patient satisfaction and employee safety, enabled us to gain much greater insight into our operations and save staff time in both reporting and follow-up. The Portal has been well received by staff because of its simplicity and physicians have begun to use the functionality for quality monitoring and peer review,” stated Ms. Vering.

Data Collection Templates Created by Waverly Health Center

- Variance/Occurrence
- Employee Safety
- Record of Opportunity (R.O.O)
- Infection Report
- Facility Event
- Case Screening Form
- Surveys: Patient Satisfaction; Code Blue Evaluation; RRT Evaluation
- OPPE Initiation Form
- Case Screening Form

The Impact and Business Case

“Efficiency across the board! Staff get information quickly and follow-up has become more effective and timely. For example, we are able to bring Portal reports directly to the Medication Error Reduction Committee and we are also able to run reports for the floor so they can be shared with staff. The Portal is the tool that helps us to know what to do and provides a collaborative way to make change happen because all necessary staff are apprised of the situation simultaneously and can have input on what needs to be done,” stated Ms. Vering

“We are a small organization without a lot of staff, so we needed to prove that a return on investment (ROI) could be made quickly. Based on our calculations, we were able to realize our ROI on the **Healthcare SafetyZone® Portal** within one and a half years. We have more than made up our cost for the system in time-savings alone, but more importantly we have re-engineered processes, accelerated changes and enabled our clinical staff to focus on sustaining high quality patient care instead of chasing paper. We have more than 10,000 events in the Portal now and the richness of that data base gets better every day,” continued Ms. Vering.

A Nice Unintended Outcome

One other point made by Ms. Vering ... “We were beginning to implement an electronic medical record system when we were in the selection process for this system and were hesitant to do too much too fast. Working with the professional staff at Clarity Group enabled us to have a very smooth integration of the Portal with little on-site IT support needed so our IT staff could focus on the EMR implementation.”

Results Realized by WHC with the Use of the **Healthcare SafetyZone® Portal**

- Re-engineered processes
- Real-time data and reports that have led to more effective follow-up
- Moved beyond ‘incident reports’ to gathering data for many activities important to patient, staff and visitor safety
- Enhanced communication and collaboration on necessary changes
- Realized ROI on implementation cost in one and a half years

For more information on how the **Healthcare SafetyZone® Portal** can bring benefit to your organization, please visit our website at www.claritygrp.com or call Nick Hajek at 773-864-8280.



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