

Dell Services Helps Swedish American Hospital Ensure Physician and Hospital Alignment for Implementing Their Computerized Provider Order Entry (CPOE) System

Introduction

In the spring of 2010, Swedish American Hospital launched its Electronic Health Record (EHR) initiative that included plans to implement electronic signatures, Computerized Provider Order Entry (CPOE), and clinical documentation within a two year time frame. In addition to moving closer to their goal of demonstrating meaningful use of EHR, their ultimate vision was to provide their patients with a higher level of care by improving quality, efficiency, and safety through the use of computerized technology for providers and hospital staff. Dr. Pam Wetzel had recently taken over as Chief Medical Information Officer of the hospital, but she and her staff had little experience in launching such an ambitious project. Dr. Wetzel decided to engage Dell Services' Physician Consulting Services to help establish the physician governance and leadership structure that would be needed to guide her and her team through the major clinical transformations that would occur as a result of the project.

The Challenge

Swedish American Health System is a not for profit, locally governed healthcare system, headquartered in Rockford, IL, serving 12 counties in northern Illinois and southern Wisconsin. The hospital is running MEDITECH's Client/Server platform. In the spring of 2010, Dr. Wetzel, Swedish American announced a comprehensive program, branded as e-Care, to expand to a fully functional electronic health record that would include CPOE and clinical documentation.

"Our e-Care vision was to bring computerized technology to providers and staff so that we could provide our patients with a higher level of care through improved quality, efficiency and safety," said Dr. Wetzel.

The projected goal was to go-live with CPOE on March 29, 2011 followed by clinical documentation later this year. Dr. Wetzel and her staff had many questions as to how to move forward in the most efficient manner to achieve their goals. How would they get their community-based physicians to adopt CPOE? How should governance be structured and what change management strategies would be required to be successful? How would they sustain these significant changes?

"We were starting with a blank slate and we really needed some guidance as to where to begin, what we should expect, and things to look out for during the process," said Dr. Wetzel.

The Solution

After hearing MEDITECH Dell Services' consultant, Dr. Charlotte Hovet, speak at MEDITECH's Physician Workshop, Dr. Wetzel decided that a knowledgeable consultant like Dr. Hovet could provide her and her staff with the guidance they needed to plan and implement their e-Care program. Hospital executives agreed to engage Dr. Hovet and Dell Services' Physician Consulting Service to provide coaching and guidance on physician engagement, leadership, and adoption of EHR, particularly as they related to CPOE and clinical documentation.

Dr. Hovet became an integral part of Dr. Wetzel's CPOE planning and implementation team. "First off, Dr. Hovet completely changed our mindset about the project, making us understand that it was well beyond an IT project, but rather a complete clinical transformation that would reshape the way that we practice medicine," she said. "And, as a physician herself, she brought

credibility and could relate to our physician champions on their level. Charlotte could talk the talk and walk the walk.”

“Involving physicians and asking them to change the way they practice medicine is a big challenge and difficult hurdle to overcome,” said Dr. Hovet. “It is critically important that they stay engaged during the project to ensure the necessary physician hospital alignment.”

With Dr. Hovet’s help, Dr. Wetzell layed out a governance structure and implementation plan that addressed change management, physician adoption, clinical transformation, and sustainability. She recruited physician champions and other key clinical personnel to lead and participate in subcommittees in 5 key areas:

- Workflow and devices
- Communications
- Training and Support
- Metrics
- Order Sets

They established charters for each subcommittee and defined the roles and responsibilities of participants to lead the clinical transformations, and developed metrics for each group.

“Charlotte helped us recognize that the changes and adoption concerns were not solely focused on physicians, but needed to take into account our nurses and ancillary staff as well. We then created a Multidisciplinary Informatics Committee (MIC) comprised of nurses and ancillaries, to be sure that everyone who would be impacted by the change would be engaged in the project,” said Dr. Wetzell.

Dr. Wetzell also hired a Clinical Informatics Director to lead the MIC subcommittee and begin laying the groundwork for the provider documentation phase of the project which will occur within a year of going live with CPOE.

Results

In the final weeks leading up to the go-live date, Dr. Wetzell and her team completed the creation of the order sets and entered them into the MEDITECH system. They also identified and trained additional support staff so that physicians would have adequate support on the floor when they were ready to go-live. The hospital successfully launched CPOE on March 29, 2011 as planned.

When asked to provide advice to other CMIOs who are about to embark upon a CPOE project, Dr. Wetzell offered:

- Take a close look at your staff – identify the skills sets that you need and determine where you might be lacking.
- Find physician leaders to engage other physicians. It is critical to get them involved and participate in decision making along the way versus pushing CPOE out to them.
- Don’t be afraid to hire an experienced 3rd party consultant to help along the way. Their knowledge and support is invaluable.

“We couldn’t have done it without Charlotte as part of our team. She has been a personal mentor for me as far as coaching on leadership skills and I’m able to pass that along to the

champions and other staff. In the end, it all comes down to the patient and improving the patient experience,” said Dr. Wetzel.

About Swedish American

A subsidiary of Swedish American Health System, Swedish American Hospital is a -bed, full-service, non-profit hospital serving the greater Rockford region, northern Illinois and southern Wisconsin. Swedish American has an exclusive affiliation with W Health and is a teaching hospital that hosts the University of Illinois College of Medicine’s residency program. Founded in 1911, Swedish American Hospital has earned a reputation for its commitment to quality healthcare, including clinical excellence, outcome measurements and placing the needs and concerns of its patients first.