

Performance Strategies



Empower Nurse Staff with Workforce Management Tools

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Sharp HealthCare Reduces Costs, Improves Care with Centralized Staffing



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Optimize Staffing Resources

The struggle to maintain adequate staffing ratios without exceeding the budget is a balancing act for any hospital, regardless of size. With four acute-care and three specialty hospitals, the balance was especially difficult to achieve at [Sharp HealthCare](#), San Diego's largest integrated regional healthcare system. By using a centralized staffing office with automated staffing, we are optimizing our resources so effectively that we have been able to decrease our usage of agency staff in the highly competitive San Diego market.

Decrease Staffing Costs

In the old days, our units and hospitals rarely communicated for last-minute staffing changes. The decentralized staff scheduling systems deployed at each hospital made it difficult for staff managers to quickly react to changes in patient demand across the enterprise. When our seven hospitals merged under the Sharp HealthCare name in the mid-1990s, we recognized the need for a complete, automated solution that could effectively manage, allocate and share staff at the enterprise level.

In 1996, we began using [ANSOS One-Staff™](#), McKesson's enterprise productivity management solution to provide Sharp's centralized staffing office with a bird's eye view of current conditions across the enterprise. Based in Human Resources, our centralized office functions as a sort of neutral zone between Sharp's seven hospitals and three medical groups. According to current needs, the staffing office pulls staff from areas with excess staff members and reassigns them to the units that need them most.

By optimizing our float pool of 1,100 employees (we have 350 nurses in the float pool, and the rest are other skills), we ensure that our staff is deployed in the most cost-effective manner possible. During our first year of centralized automated staffing, we saved \$3.5 million by avoiding overtime costs and the use of outside registry personnel. Those savings have only continued to rise. In the last three years, Sharp HealthCare has avoided \$16.5 million in costs by using our own employees rather than contractors. Our patient care has also benefited, because we are able to ensure patients receive continuity of care by using hospital caregivers instead of external agency staff.

Improve your Patient Care

In the highly regulated environment of southern California, Sharp must maintain strict compliance with nurse-to-patient ratio laws. Our comprehensive staffing system enables us to achieve the correct mix of daily staffing, ensuring that all staff members have the necessary credentials for their areas. In order to meet staffing ratios and provide the highest quality of patient care, we assigned nursing resources to float between units, filling holes and providing consistent coverage for their colleagues' break times.

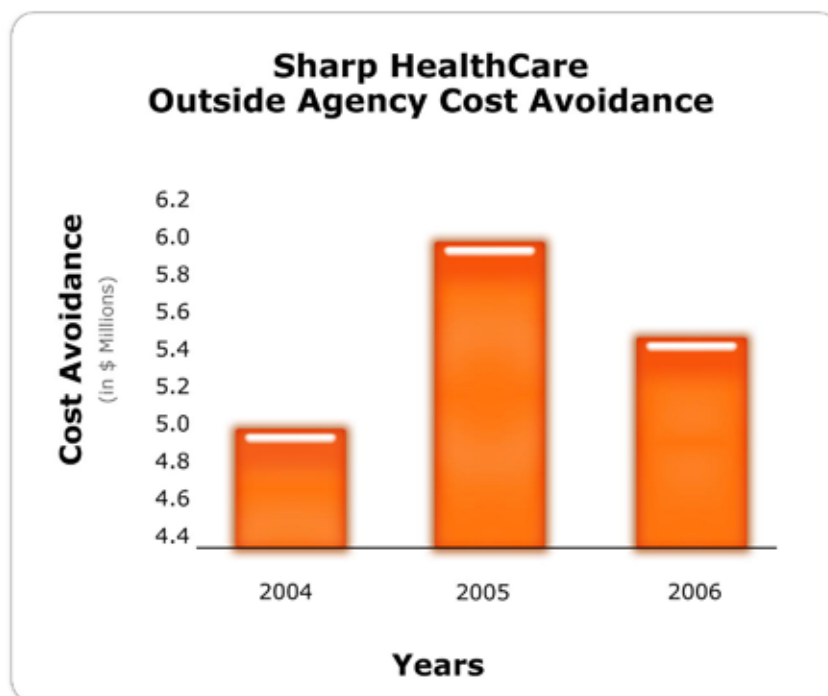
With the exception of a few outlying areas, Sharp schedules the entire nursing enterprise via ANSOS One-Staff – which consists of 3,600 nurses, all 1100 float pool staff and several ancillary departments – from the centralized staffing office. Managers use the system to pull reports for performance appraisals and unit monitoring, as well as for trending analysis and future planning. But our managers are most pleased with being freed from the long hours and tedium of scheduling. After witnessing success in nursing and ancillary areas such as Pharmacy and Radiology, other ancillary areas are clamoring to get on board.

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Sharp HealthCare Reduces Costs, Improves Care with Centralized Staffing (Cont.)

Having a standardized source of data proved invaluable during the application process for our latest accolade — the prestigious [Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award](#). Sharp is one of five organizations to receive the nation's highest Presidential honor for quality and organizational performance excellence in 2007. Our commitment to equitable staffing and our ability to streamline staffing processes on such a large scale were instrumental in winning this award. As we continue to incorporate additional ancillary areas into our integrated system, our focus will remain on achieving the highest quality of patient care — through the highest quality of operational performance.

Anne Davis, RN, is vice president of Workforce Support Services at Sharp HealthCare in San Diego, Calif. With a background in critical care nursing, Anne Davis joined Sharp in 1980 and has held various leadership positions throughout her career at Sharp. Workforce Support Services encompasses Sharp's Staffing Resource Network, Employee Health, Safety, Security and Workers' Compensation departments.



Learn More

[AHRO Report on Nurse Staffing and Quality of Patient Care](#)

[AONE Policy Statement on Mandated Staffing Ratios](#)

[IOM: Crossing the Quality Chasm, Keeping Patients Safe](#)

[ANA Principles for Nursing Delegation](#)

[Spartanburg Reduces Agency Usage by 88%](#)