

Performance Strategies



Increase Physician Alignment Using IT Benefits

Vol. 3, Issue 6, 2009

Wheaton Franciscan Leverages Clinical Information Technology to Enhance Physician Alignment



*By John Oliverio
President and CEO, Wheaton Franciscan Healthcare
Glendale, Wis.*



Going Above and Beyond

Offering clinical information systems to physicians has been one of the drivers in attracting and retaining doctors at [Wheaton Franciscan Healthcare](#). But providing a pedestrian set of clinical information systems and run-of-the-mill support would only put our health system on equal footing with other healthcare providers in the area.

At Wheaton Franciscan Healthcare, we strive to lead other providers when it comes to competing for physician allegiance. That's why we are leveraging advanced clinical information systems to give us a competitive advantage in attracting and retaining the services of top-notch area physicians.

To differentiate what we offer from other providers, we:

- Provide a suite of applications to meet the diverse needs of our 3,500 affiliated physicians and more than 450 employed physicians
- Use physician leaders to lead all implementation efforts
- Perhaps most importantly, focus keenly on the needs of physician end users as we roll out the systems

Providing a Comprehensive Solution

Our [physician portal](#) helps to align physicians by tying our IT efforts together and by enabling physicians to securely access information from throughout the enterprise from any location, including both inpatient and outpatient data.

In an effort to exceed our physicians' IT expectations, we are implementing McKesson's Horizon Clinicals® suite of solutions to establish an electronic health record (EHR). Although many other healthcare providers have components of an EHR, we are one of the first in our marketplace to implement an integrated EHR that works across care delivery settings.

The technology package includes [a computerized physician order entry system](#) that enables us to provide clinicians with advanced decision support. In addition, we have developed adaptive order sets and treatment guidelines based on the role of the clinician, the patient's condition and evidence-based clinical knowledge.

Our employed physicians are using [McKesson's ambulatory EHR](#) in their clinics. McKesson's ambulatory EHR provides significant integration with the [inpatient EHR](#), providing physicians with an online patient record. The ultimate goal is to evolve to an EHR that seamlessly flows across care settings and shares the same clinical content, patient data, clinician tools and technical architecture as the inpatient solutions.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Wheaton Franciscan Leverages Clinical Information Technology (Cont.)

To meet the needs of our independent physicians, we are taking advantage of the relaxation in Stark regulations to provide them with [ambulatory EHR and practice management software designed for independent physician practices](#). So far, 10 physicians have taken advantage of the subsidized information technology offer — and many others are expected to take advantage of the offer in the coming months. Direct interfaces to this ambulatory EHR from our inpatient EHR enable physicians to seamlessly receive lab results and dictated reports from the hospital. Such ease of use encourages the participating physicians to refer patients to our sites instead of using other area providers.

Getting Physicians Involved

To truly engage our physicians, we have called upon their peers to lead the implementation efforts. For example, our chief medical officer, Stephen Cardamone, D.O., is responsible for the overall strategic implementation of clinical information systems.

While the CMO leads the overall clinical IT efforts, other physician leaders are responsible for clinical system implementation in each region of our health system. With each implementation, a committee of doctors also meets regularly to make ongoing recommendations.

As a result of this physician involvement, the systems are built to truly support clinicians in the delivery of high-quality patient care. Perhaps most importantly, we are using the technology initiatives to build consensus around clinical practice standards — and then leveraging the technology to help support the delivery of best practices. With the physicians guiding the implementations, the systems have been designed to improve workflow, which in turn increases the technologies' overall appeal.

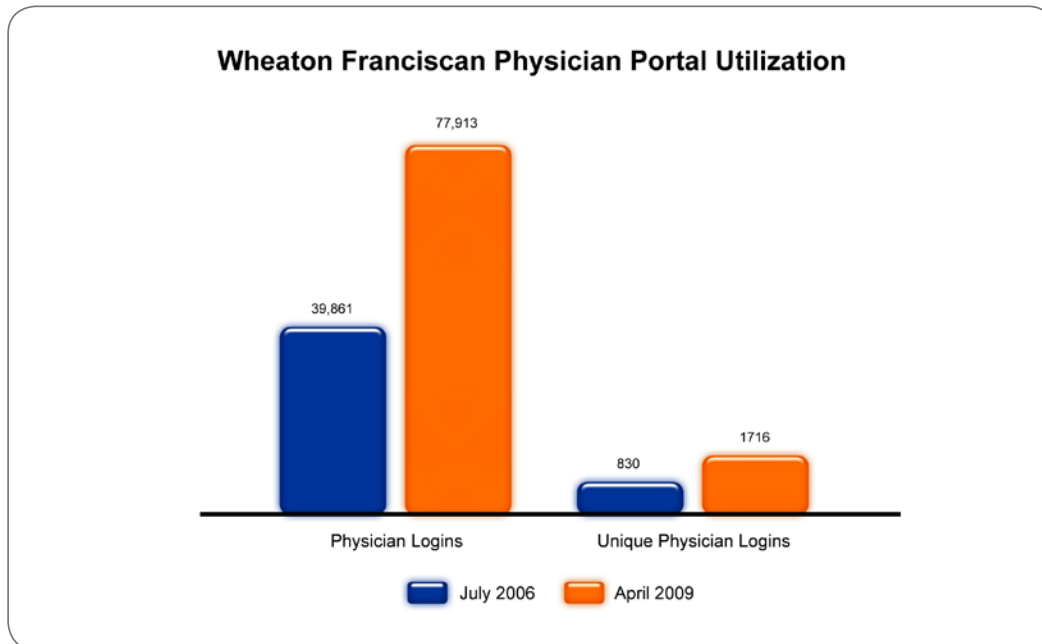
Access to clinical information on a real-time basis from any location is one of the major benefits of clinical IT, according to the physicians. This access means that doctors can make more informed decisions at the point of care and avoid delivering duplicative or unnecessary services.

The use of IT has certainly proved popular with our physicians. Consider the following: In the departments where CPOE is implemented, 100% of physicians are using it. And use of our physician portal has nearly doubled between July 2006 and April 2009.

In the final analysis, though, our physician-focused IT implementation efforts are making it possible for Wheaton Franciscan to provide improved experiences to physicians, who can then offer better care to our patients. For example, we have reduced preventable adverse drug events from 1.5 per 1,000 discharges to just 0.031 per 1,000 discharges. Ultimately, such results increase physician satisfaction as they realize that they are improving health in our community.

John D. Oliverio is the President and Chief Executive Officer of Wheaton Franciscan Healthcare, a Catholic, not-for-profit organization with more than 100 health and shelter organizations and nearly 23,000 associates in Wisconsin, Iowa, Colorado, and Illinois. Serving the organization since 1984, and President and CEO since 2000, Oliverio has led the organization's move to an integrated business model. He holds a bachelor's degree in business administration from Loyola University in Chicago and a master's degree in management from the J.L. Kellogg Graduate School of Management at Northwestern University. A certified public accountant, Oliverio serves as a board member for more than 25 organizations and associations.

Wheaton Franciscan Leverages Clinical Information Technology (Cont.)



From July 2006 to April 2009, physician utilization of the Wheaton Franciscan physician portal has seen a dramatic improvement. Total physician logins almost doubled, while unique physician logins more than doubled.

Related Solutions

[Horizon Ambulatory Care™](#)

[Horizon Clinicals® inpatient EHR](#)

[Horizon Expert Orders](#)

[Horizon^{WP} Physician Portal](#)

[Practice Partner®](#)

Learn More

[CMS: Stark Exceptions for e-Prescribing and EHRs](#)

[OIG: Rule for e-Prescribing Anti-Kickback Safe Harbor](#)

[HIMSS Analysis of Exceptions and Safe Harbors](#)

[McKesson's Achieve HIT Program](#)

[NEXT ARTICLE](#)

Performance Strategies



Increase Physician Alignment Using IT Benefits

Vol. 3, Issue 6, 2009

Methodist Peoria Leverages IT to Get and Keep Physicians on the Payroll



By Michael Bryant, CEO
Methodist Medical Center of Illinois
Peoria, Ill.



Going Against the Grain

During the late 1990s, many hospitals retreated from campaigns to employ physicians as the model started to fall out of favor. At [Methodist Medical Center of Illinois](#), in Peoria, we decided that the best way to align physicians with our hospital was to keep them on the payroll.

Certainly, employing physicians makes sense in our market, where one major employer – Caterpillar – is looking to access healthcare services for its employees through a strong integrated network. And with tough economic conditions, rising malpractice costs and physicians' desire to improve their quality of life, employment is once again an attractive option for physicians.

At Methodist, we have always held that employing physicians is the best way to align physicians with our hospital's goals and mission. As a result, the focus of our physician alignment efforts has been to make it more attractive to be a Methodist employee than work for an independent medical practice or as a solo practitioner.

Playing the IT Card

How do we position Methodist as a desirable employer? With information technology — advanced solutions that can help improve the effectiveness and efficiency of patient care.

To start, offering access to information technology such as [electronic health records](#), [computerized physician order entry](#) and e-prescribing helps to attract technologically savvy young physicians to our hospital. These doctors, who have grown up on technology, are not only comfortable with these systems, but they expect to use them in their work lives.

Information technology also helps to align physicians with our overall goal of efficiently providing the best care to our patients. With a large number of employed doctors, physician leaders at our hospital can work closely with our clinical staff to truly maximize the benefits inherent in IT, as we strive to meet our clinical and financial goals.

As a result, our employed physicians have become advanced users of McKesson's integrated electronic health record system — the [clinical suite of solutions on the inpatient side](#) and the [ambulatory solution on the outpatient side](#). In addition, we have achieved 100% adoption of its [computerized physician order entry](#) solution.

Even as we employ more physicians, we also work with affiliated groups to create closer ties to the hospital. For example, with one large orthopedic group, we developed an interface between its ambulatory EHR and McKesson's [surgical scheduling solution](#). The group can easily pass data to the hospital, making it much simpler to schedule surgeries. In addition, our [results distribution service](#) enables us to electronically distribute hospital results to physician practices, both owned and non-owned.

Getting Ready for More

As the delivery of medical care evolves, we expect our commitment to helping physicians use information technology to become even more important. For example, as consumers demand more convenient access to services, connectivity solutions will become even more important.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

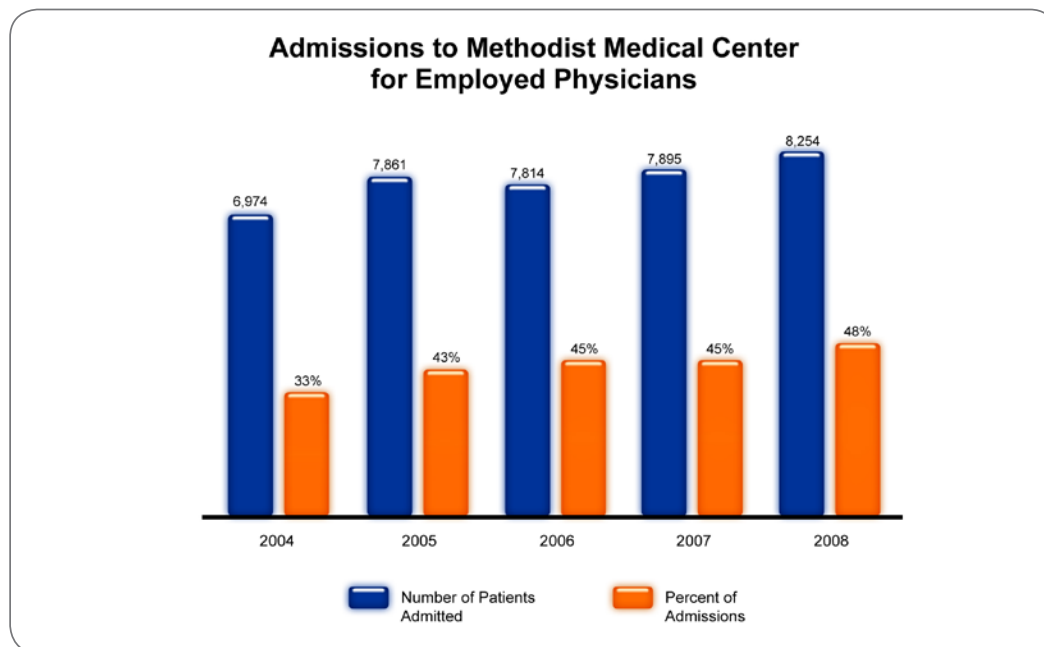
Methodist Peoria Leverages IT to Get and Keep Physicians on the Payroll (Cont.)

The ability to communicate online with patients, for instance, is becoming a “must have” for physicians. Already, some of our doctors are taking advantage of the ability to [conduct reimbursable “e-visits” with patients](#) — a practice that can meet consumers’ demands for increased convenience, improved care and reduced costs.

With IT acting as a magnet, we have moved from employing about 90 primary care doctors to employing more than 100 doctors from a variety of specialties over the past decade. Admissions from employed physicians have grown from about 33% in 2004 to about 66% in 2008. Remarkably, we have been able to achieve this growth without requiring physicians to admit their patients to our facility, but instead by forging a closer alliance with them by improving patient care.

We expect our investment in IT to drive even closer alignment in the future as healthcare reform is rolled out. Providing physicians with the ability to quickly embrace advanced IT that assists them with regulatory compliance and protects reimbursement will support our physician alignment efforts. Fortunately as a hospital, we are in the position to offer doctors access to emerging technologies that they might not be able to afford on their own.

Michael Bryant is President & CEO of Methodist Health Services Corporation in Peoria, Ill. Since July 1999, he has led an integrated health system anchored by Methodist Medical Center, a 353-bed regional tertiary hospital complemented by a network of 90 employed physicians in 32 regional sites, as well as a Provider Health Organization for managed care products. He also hosts the University of Illinois College of Medicine at Peoria (UICOMP) Family Medicine Residency site, and provides rotations in several subspecialty services. Bryant graduated from Indiana University in 1978 with a degree in business administration and a concentration in Accounting. He went on to achieve his CPA and began his career in Chicago with Peat Marwick and Mitchell, now KPMG. While in Chicago, he received his MBA from the University of Chicago and began a career in Healthcare Administration.



The percent of admissions to Methodist from employed physicians has increased significantly over the past five years. The numbers do not include skilled nursing facility admissions.

Related Solutions

[Horizon Ambulatory Care™](#)

[Horizon Clinicals® inpatient EHR](#)

[Horizon Expert Orders](#)

[Horizon Surgical Manager](#)

[RelayHealth results distribution service](#)

[RelayHealth webVisit®](#)

Learn More

[Advisory Board: Incentive Design for Employed Physician Practices](#)

[Health IT Policy Committee: Meaningful Use Matrix](#)

[McKesson Comments on Initial Meaningful Use Definition](#)

[CCHIT Issues Concise Guide to Certification Criteria](#)

[Microsoft HealthVault and RelayHealth Connects Doctors and Patients](#)

