Presbyterian Healthcare Services lays a foundation for innovation

The IBM Blueworks Live offering gives everyone a voice in process improvement initiatives

Overview

The need

To remain at the cutting edge of innovation, Presbyterian Rust Medical Center needed to improve the way it captured, analyzed and documented its day-to-day processes.

The solution

The IBM Blueworks Live offering enables staff to quickly discover and document existing processes to identify opportunities for improvement in daily operations.

The benefit

Employees are approximately 12 times more productive when mapping out processes with the Blueworks Live solution than they were before.

Presbyterian Healthcare Services is a not-for-profit healthcare system that has served the residents of New Mexico since 1908. It includes hospitals, a health plan and a growing medical group. To reduce the burden on one of its larger hospitals in Albuquerque and to make it easier on residents living in the western suburbs of Albuquerque to receive the services they need, the organization decided to open a full-service hospital in the community of Rio Rancho. With 68 beds, the Presbyterian Rust Medical Center will open in October 2011 and will feature labor and delivery services, intensive care, operating rooms, cardiac services, MRI and imaging, and emergency care. The center is part of the Presbyterian Westside Healthcare System.

Laying a foundation for innovation

Doug Johnson, director of innovation for the Presbyterian Westside Healthcare System and clinical project manager for the new hospital, was tasked with making the new hospital as innovative as possible. "My role is to look at how we can lay a foundation for innovation. Innovation is really about people and processes, rather than innovation for its own sake." But this task was extremely challenging, considering that a hospital setting can include hundreds of processes that must be mapped. "I've never been faced with a challenge like opening up a 68-bed hospital and designing all of the processes within that environment," Johnson says. "We need to make sure that all of our systems are going to work before we open up the facility, and we needed a way to define and standardize all of these needs."

In the past, the organization had used tools such as Microsoft Visio software to map out its processes. However, these process diagrams were often simply forgotten after they were created. They weren't updated or shared with other parts of the organization. Therefore, Johnson sought a better way to document the process flows of the new hospital. He wanted to find a methodology for documenting the current and future states of the hospital's processes and process flows; one that would analyze constraints, standardize its process flows and encourage collaboration among department managers. The organization also sought to identify performance metrics, apply them to its processes and ensure that it could meet its performance goals.

Easily creating process flows with the IBM Blueworks Live tool

Under the visionary guidance of Drew Cobb, chief applications officer, and Sam Waissman, director of systems architecture, both of Presbyterian Healthcare Services, Johnson was introduced to the IBM Blueworks Live offering, which appeared to be a perfect solution for creating and operationalizing the hospital's process flows. The Blueworks Live offering enables managers to create a process flow so they're not reliant on technical staff to do the work for them. Plus, with the Blueworks Live offering, users can operationalize the process and then make sure all the process stakeholders are reviewing it on an ongoing basis to ensure it continues to meet the needs of the hospital. Finally, the tool serves as a central repository for artifacts such as standard workflows, performance methods, and links to policies and procedures.

Getting up and running with the tool was easy. Because it's cloud-based, it can be easily accessed via a web browser. Johnson found that after just six hours of training, employees are productive and able to begin creating process flows. And once employees begin using the tool, they are dramatically more productive than they would be using other process management suites. "Using IBM Blueworks Live, employees are about 12 times more productive. The key word here is empowerment. Employees are now empowered to create the processes that they need," says Johnson. In fact, in just two months, the managers of the Presbyterian Rust Medical Center documented in detail approximately 120 process flows.

Solution components:

Software

- IBM Blueworks Live

"I'd almost say that IBM Blueworks Live has democratized process work."

—Clay Holderman, hospital administrator,
Presbyterian Rust Medical Center

Quickly identifying process gaps and conflicts

Using the Blueworks Live tool, the hospital was able to quickly identify gaps and conflicts in its processes—some of which had been causing inefficiencies for years. For example, by using the solution, the hospital was able to design a process to ensure medications were available for new procedure designs for the new hospital. It was also able to identify where gaps existed that led to mitigation activities to ensure patient safety. Further, the hospital gained the ability to discover gaps in scheduling and connect departments so that patients are transferred efficiently.

Encouraging collaboration

Each week, Johnson meets with all of the managers of the new hospital to train them on the Blueworks Live solution and to share information and experience. According to Clay Holderman, hospital administrator, the Blueworks Live offering has encouraged collaboration among the hospital's managers. "I'd almost say that it has democratized process work," he states. Many of the hospital's managers are nurses or other medical professionals who don't necessarily have a lot of experience with process design. But the managers have found the Blueworks Live tool to be approachable and easy to use. Because the tool enables the hospital to store all of its process flows in a central repository, managers can work together on their process flows and reuse process elements across departments.

Presbyterian Healthcare Services plans to expand its use of the Blueworks Live tool to other groups within the organization. "Blueworks Live is more than just a tool," Johnson says. "It does a lot of work behind the scenes to help standards, encourage documentation and set expectations with leadership and management."

For more information

To learn more about the IBM Blueworks Live offering and try the tool free of charge, please contact your IBM representative or IBM Business Partner, or visit the following websites:
ibm.com/software/integration/blueworks-live or www.blueworkslive.com

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