KRONOS®

Genesis HealthCare Utilizes Kronos OptiLink for Staffing Productivity Gains and $2.2 Million Labor Savings

HEALTHCARE SYSTEM GENESIS

Employees: 2,873

Industry: Healthcare

Product:
Kronos OptiLink

Genesis HealthCare System is a family of healthcare and related organizations based in Zanesville, Ohio, including a flagship organization that operates a 335-bed not-for-profit two-hospital system in Zanesville. With a medical and support staff of 362, Genesis is the largest healthcare provider in a six-county region in southeastern Ohio. The organization provides a higher level of service than what is typically found in a community of its size, including open-heart surgery, trauma care, Level II neonatal intermediate care, neurosurgery, and comprehensive cancer services. This level of care has established Genesis as a primary referral center for much of the region.

CHALLENGES

- New state legislation required healthcare organizations to develop evidence-based staffing plans that determine minimum staffing levels based on complexity of care
- Challenging financial times spurred improved measurement of nurse productivity and development of appropriate productivity standards
- Justifying labor expenses to the organization's finance department required documenting the full nursing workload

SOLUTION

- An integrated workload, staffing, and scheduling solution that provides real-time patient data that helps nurse managers and leadership align staffing based on the patient's level of care complexity and patient throughput

"The improved productivity [through Kronos OptiLink] saved Genesis HealthCare $1.5 million in our first year, without compromising quality care at all."

Stephanie Conn, Director, Education Services and Professional Practice
Genesis HealthCare System

BENEFITS

- Daily staff analysis and forecasting reports give nurse managers the insight to make cost-effective staffing adjustments based on several patient census types, while maintaining high-quality patient care
- A centralized staffing coordinator ensures the accuracy and proper execution of the staffing plan
- An 18 percent HPPD decrease and improved staffing productivity saved $1.5 million in the first year and a total of $2.2 million when a 3 percent cost-of-living adjustment was factored in
- Customized reports and analyses track staffing metrics housewide, providing quantified data on staffing needs for improved communication and cooperation with finance leaders

Genesis HealthCare's migration of the institution's accrediting body from JCAHO to HFAP brought greater emphasis on accurately accessing acuity. About the same time, Ohio passed safe nursing standards legislation that requires organizations to create an evidence-based staffing plan that determines minimum staffing levels based on complexity of care.

Genesis HealthCare, a founding Kronos® OptiLink® partner, turned to Kronos OptiLink to support compliance with the new staffing and reporting requirements. Although productivity was initially a secondary concern at Genesis, challenging financial times made it a front-burner issue. Within its first year of using Kronos OptiLink to optimize cost-effective staffing, Genesis leveraged staffing and productivity information to drive down staffing costs while ensuring compliance. Hours per patient day decreased 18 percent and the institution saved $1.5 million in staffing, while maintaining high-quality patient care.

Rigorous daily management of productivity

Before Kronos OptiLink, productivity performance data — available only biweekly and based on revenue — were often inaccurate. "Now, with Kronos OptiLink, nurse managers have access to daily productivity reporting using hours per patient day (HPPD) based on several census types, including end census and contact census, and the number of patients actually cared for in the unit," says Stephanie Conn, director, Education Services and Professional Practice. "This information allows them to make course corrections to offset over- or understaffing from the prior day." Genesis set productivity standards for each unit and trained staff on leveraging critical Kronos OptiLink reports — Unit Profile, Staffing Analysis, and Staffing Forecast — to manage productivity daily.

Centralized oversight ensures accurate, timely staffing data

A single staffing coordinator also has daily transparency into productivity across the hospital, serving as an important second line of defense on precise workload management. This coordinator is the central keeper of the schedule, oversees the execution of the daily staffing plan, and performs day-to-day staffing reconciliation in conjunction with each unit's charge nurses. She ensures the schedule is accurate and up-to-date and that all information, including acuity classification, has been entered fully and correctly by each unit. She also calls the units every day at 11 a.m. and 4 p.m. if she needs to complete or clarify any of the required information. "At first she was calling a lot of units every day, but not anymore," shares Conn.

Improved productivity yields $1.5 million labor savings

As the Kronos OptiLink champion, she has worked closely with her Kronos OptiLink dedicated advisor to learn how to dissect reports to pull out and combine relevant data to construct specific metrics. She now monitors HPPD based on a flex, not fixed, budget, and tracks hours worked per unit of services and the labor cost per adjusted discharge.

Tight management to daily staffing targets has yielded tremendous results. In one year, hours per patient day declined from 17.85 to 14.57, and dollars per patient day fell from $358.50 to $347.28. "The improved productivity saved Genesis HealthCare $1.5 million in our first year, without compromising quality care at all," says Conn. In addition, with a 3 percent cost-of-living adjustment included, the savings reached $2.2 million.

Data deliver accurate nursing workload picture

As the Genesis team has gained experience using the Kronos OptiLink solution, staff has drilled down on the data for a more accurate picture of how much work nurses are doing. When nursing leaders analyzed the ADT (admissions, discharges, and transfers) data across multiple units, they identified several as noteworthy, including OB/GYN and observation. In the observation unit, the ADT index was very high, generally 75 to 99 percent, with the highest levels occurring between 11 a.m. and 7 p.m.

"Kronos OptiLink helps pull back the veil on nursing workload," says Conn. Using the solution to drill down on the census numbers, nurse leaders successfully advocated for an increase in budgeted census. They also reallocated one FTE from the night shift to a daytime "rover" position to help out wherever help was most needed, further improving workflow.

"Our ability to capture the full nursing workload with good quantitative data — and communicate it in a clear and compelling way to our finance leaders — has been the greatest benefit of implementing Kronos OptiLink," says Conn.

As Genesis HealthCare looks ahead, the organization looks forward to continuing to optimize cost-effective staffing every day, while providing patients with a high level of care.