STAMFORD HOSPITAL
The Regional Center for Health

EMPLOYEES: 2,700

INDUSTRY: Healthcare

PRODUCTS:
Workforce Timekeeper
Kronos scheduling
- Workforce Target Intelligence™
- Workforce Workload Manager™

Stamford Hospital in Stamford, Connecticut, is a 305-bed, not-for-profit hospital that provides residents in Fairfield and Westchester counties with access to the latest medical technology, as well as a compassionate, patient-centered approach to care. The hospital's particular areas of expertise include cancer care, heart services, orthopedics, and women's health. Stamford Hospital is an affiliate of the New York-Presbyterian Healthcare System and is a major teaching affiliate of the Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons. The hospital employs 2,700, including medical and support staff.

CHALLENGES

- Patient census volatility and declining patient numbers required greater accuracy in quantifying demand in order to staff cost-effectively
- With patient census and workload intensity information reported only at the end of each month, units missed their nursing staffing targets
- Lack of real-time patient census and acuity data didn't allow managers to adjust staffing to reflect this information or to meet budget

SOLUTION

- A Kronos scheduling, staffing, and workload that provides real-time patient data that helps nurse managers and leadership adjust staffing to mirror patient census and workload intensity

"Kronos workload, productivity, and scheduling systems provide the tools to better match staffing resources with rapidly changing patient needs."

**Harold jacobson,
Business Operations Manager
for Patient Services
Stamford Hospital**

BENEFITS

- Nurse leadership has real-time patient census and acuity data for accurate, cost-effective staffing decisions every shift, even as patient volumes change
- Nurse managers can evaluate their staffing performance within 24 hours and make timely staffing corrections
- Systematic sharing of staffing data across units creates cost-effective options for filling staffing needs throughout the hospital
- Hours and dollars paid correspond to volume-adjusted FTEs, saving nearly $500,000 in just the first quarter
- Nurse leadership feels confident that the right staff is working at the right time to provide high-quality patient care

THE STORY — STAMFORD HOSPITAL

A leadership change at Stamford Hospital brought a new perspective on workforce performance. The chief operating officer (COO), a nurse herself, took on the role of interim chief nursing officer (CNO), bringing her awareness of the organization's financial and operational challenges to the position. She understood the need for greater accuracy in quantifying staffing demand and the importance of doing this in real time. She also appreciated this could be a challenge for frontline nurses and managers faced with staffing for a volatile and sometimes declining patient census.

The hospital chose Kronos® as the heart of its initiative to help nurses understand the need for and achieve more accurate staffing and scheduling. After implementing the solution across its 13 units, Stamford Hospital turned to Kronos to first analyze how the units were performing against their budgets and productivity targets. The results showed that units had been missing their targets, but with information reported only at the end of the month, managers and leadership had no opportunity to adjust staffing to get back to budget. After the first quarter of full implementation of Kronos, the hospital had reduced variances, per diem hours and costs, and volume-adjusted FTEs, saving nearly half a million dollars.

Real-time access to accurate patient and staffing data

"Kronos workload, productivity, and scheduling systems provide the tools to better match staffing resources with rapidly changing patient needs," says Harold Jacobson, business operations manager for patient services. "Its ability to create a real-time feedback loop between the staffing decisions and budget impact served as the foundation of a program to drive accountability for meeting budget and productivity targets."

New processes leverage the information and support nurses in making the right staffing decisions daily. A spreadsheet outlining daily projected and actual staffing values by shift is emailed to all clinical managers and directors. Managers can see, in detail, their performance within 24 hours, enabling them to make timely staffing corrections.

Utilizing patient data for more appropriate staffing

In the ICU, for example, Kronos reports frequently showed higher actual hours than budgeted. Although the unit budgeted for one open-heart surgery per shift per day, it often had two. Kronos patient classification factors also revealed that during the first hours of an open-heart surgery patient's stay in the ICU, the patient required a 2:1 nurse-to-patient ratio. These data allowed managers to deploy — and justify — the right staff at the right time in the ICU.

Increased staffing oversight and accountability

A cumulative weekly spreadsheet of projected and actual staffing values is sent to the COO/CNO. Early on she saw a need to communicate clear, strong expectations for meeting budget targets while continuing to provide high-quality care. Her mantra became "Kronos is your budget." Clinical coordinators, for example, must staff according to their department's volume-adjusted budget. Deviations require an explanation to the unit manager and director and are part of the COO's weekly summary.

Sharing real-time data improves staffing decisions

Recognizing the significant demands they were placing on nurses to take ownership of their budget and productivity targets, leadership designed processes to support nurses in using the data to make the best staffing decisions. One successful tactic has been Flash Rounds at 5 a.m., 11 a.m., and 5 p.m. daily. Clinical coordinators from each unit bring their unit's Kronos data of projected and actual hours to these meetings with the hospital staffing coordinator and house supervisors.

"They use the Kronos data to assess how they are tracking to budget, as well as project census and staffing needs for the upcoming shift," shares Jacobson. "In sharing data across units, they can discuss cost-effective options for filling staffing needs across the hospital."

Q1 labor cost savings approach $500,000

During the first quarter of using Kronos, Stamford Hospital saw steady improvement in budget performance as nursing teams became comfortable using and sharing their Kronos data. By understanding each nursing unit's workload more accurately — and more quickly — nursing managers can make better projections and real-time course corrections. The result has been dramatic declines in hours and labor costs, as well as a reduction in volume-adjusted FTEs from negative 29 to less than negative one. In the first quarter alone, the hospital saw labor savings of $487,617 through rigorous use of the Kronos data and increased accountability for staffing.

Now, nursing leadership feels confident they are staffing appropriately for patient census and workload intensity each shift while providing patients with high-quality care.