

CASE STUDY



Category: Healthcare

Employees: 3,200

Products:
Workforce Timekeeper™

BENEFITS

- Automated solution creates more accurate, efficient payroll process
- Timely workforce oversight boosts overtime savings
- Accurate work and pay rule application minimizes compliance risk

Kronos for Healthcare Helps Erie County Medical Center Achieve Productivity Gains, Reduce Overtime Costs

Erie County Medical Center in Buffalo, N.Y., is a leader in numerous medical specialties, operating the region's only Level 1 trauma center and burn treatment center, as well as a spinal cord injury unit and a 24-hour angioplasty program. The organization's 3,200 employees work at the medical center's main facility, its skilled nursing facility, and 40 outpatient specialty care clinics.

Tracking time and attendance for this number of employees with the organization's manual system was a logistical nightmare that took six payroll staff three days to complete. With three unions representing nearly all employees, accommodating the various work and pay rules with the paper-based system added to the stress. Manual calculation of timecards and manual data entry made errors impossible to avoid, requiring a number of revised checks to be issued each biweekly pay period. In addition, the process made payroll staff rather than unit supervisors responsible for tracking staff time and approving timecards for paycheck processing.

Eager to streamline the payroll process, pay employees accurately, and improve workforce management, Erie County Medical Center implemented the Kronos® Workforce Timekeeper solution throughout the organization. "We do so much with our Kronos solution that it's amazing," says Carol Jarczyk, payroll processing manager. Using the automated time and attendance solution, the organization has improved productivity, controlled labor costs, and mitigated its risk with easy tracking of its compliance with assorted work and pay rules.

Automated solution improves payroll accuracy and efficiency

Payroll Monday was pandemonium before, notes Jarczyk, with manual time-off/overtime authorization sheets being dropped off by departments, while emails and the fax machine delivered a continuous stream of employee time and attendance data from the medical center's departments and off-site facilities. Payroll staff worked Sunday through Tuesday to input employee time — which was not mandated for review or approval by department supervisors — into the payroll system. After checks were printed and distributed, payroll staff had to set other work aside as numerous employees quickly lined up for paycheck corrections.

With employee time and attendance information now collected at Kronos 4500™ badge terminals and transferred into Workforce Timekeeper, compiling and reviewing payroll information takes just a few hours, and the responsibility for timecard information is now with department heads rather than payroll.

To help department heads quickly review the accuracy of their employees' timecard information before sending it to payroll, Jarczyk created a HyperFind™ that shows the total base hours of each employee. "With one click they can now glance through the list to see which employees don't have 80 total base hours for the pay period and quickly fix any errors, such as if someone forgot to enter a personal or sick day," she explains. Manual check corrections are now minimal.

The more efficient payroll process has also allowed Erie County Medical Center to eliminate payroll staff overtime during payroll weeks and reduce the team size to three.



"HyperFinds and Genies are both tools that allow staff to access data with ease, so managers reduce payroll error and control labor costs."

Ann Gebhard,
Payroll specialist

Better oversight of overtime trims labor costs

Its Kronos solution has helped the organization realize overtime savings across the board. Overtime was "like a runaway train before," says Jarczyk, as department heads could not see who was approaching overtime or who had worked unapproved overtime. With Workforce Timekeeper, they now have this information at their fingertips to better manage their employees.

Jarczyk also set up a Workforce Genie® that automatically creates and emails reports to the executive and senior management team, detailing the overtime and unapproved overtime of each employee in a department. "This information helps them better manage their departments and see who has unapproved overtime that might have been missed," she notes. Use of in-house float staff is more efficient, and use of agency staff — whose time is also tracked with Workforce Timekeeper — has decreased significantly. Increased oversight of employee time and adherence to a six-minute rounding rule when employees punch in and out "helps reduce labor costs," she adds.

Although many unit supervisors were reluctant at first to be responsible for their employees' time and for approving overtime, seeing the benefits of real-time workforce information has increased their buy-in. Now most are actively involved in using this information to better manage their staff. "HyperFinds and Genies are both tools that allow staff to access data with ease, so managers reduce payroll error and control labor costs," says Ann Gebhard, payroll specialist.

Automated pay and work rules streamline compliance

Maintaining compliance with the numerous work and pay rules of the three union contracts is far easier with an automated time and attendance solution. For example, managers and payroll staff used to manually change a work rule to calculate overtime pay after a union employee reached the maximum for his or her compensatory time, a process that took hours to complete.

Now, Jarczyk says, the Kronos solution takes less than three minutes to run through the comp time balances of employees with a comp time option, unsign their timecards, recalculate the cards, and re-sign them. "We still double-check the balances, but it's always been perfect," she says, noting that the Kronos solution easily applies and tracks 130 pay rules and 280 work rules, far more than the prior system that handled only 42 pay rules with the same union contracts in place. Now there is increased confidence all around that employees are compensated correctly.

Exploring further benefits of timely workforce information

Moving forward, Jarczyk sees managers taking increased interest in leveraging Erie County Medical Center's Kronos solution — including potentially adding the absence management module — to more effectively manage employee productivity and maximize labor cost savings.



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