

SUCCESS STORY

Sturgis Hospital Saves Time, Provides Great Service, and Complies with Meaningful Use with Iatric Systems Patient Portal and Engagement Expertise



OBJECTIVE: Sturgis Hospital needed to comply with the Meaningful Use Stage 2 Objective that hospitals provide a web portal for patients to securely access their health information online. Hospital leadership also recognized the importance of improving patients' control over the management of their healthcare. They realized this would require more than investing in the right portal — they also had to make patients aware of the portal and convince them to use it.

SITUATION: An 84-bed acute care facility in Sturgis, Michigan, Sturgis Hospital serves Sturgis and surrounding communities with inpatient and outpatient care, and emergency services 24x7. For Sturgis, this would be their first experience offering a patient portal, and they wanted it to be a success. Their IT team would have to choose the right portal solution, and also integrate it with their existing systems and processes so that patients could access all their information in the portal. Sturgis also had to make patients aware of the portal and convince them to use it in order to meet the Stage 2 requirement, but limited resources were a constraint.

SOLUTION: Sturgis selected the Iatric Systems PtAccess® patient portal which provides Sturgis' patients with a secure, easy way to stay informed about their medical care. Using PtAccess, Sturgis patients can access their medical history, view lab results, request appointment times, pay bills, and perform other important operations related to managing their care. In addition, Iatric Systems Patient Engagement experts assessed Sturgis Hospital's available channels for promoting the portal, and then created messaging and collateral, which removed a significant burden from Sturgis marketing staff.

RESULTS: Sturgis Hospital has met the Stage 2 Meaningful Use requirement for providing patients with online access to their health information, and has surpassed the requirement that 5% of patients use the portal to view, download, or transmit data. The hospital now has a valued service that patients rely on to be more engaged and informed about their care; and it is building stronger ties between the hospital and the community it serves.

"The patient portal is a great success, and I'm very pleased that we're able to offer this service."

– Rita Denison
HIS Director
Sturgis Hospital

Sturgis Hospital is an 84-bed acute care facility in Sturgis, Michigan, serving Sturgis and surrounding communities with medical/surgical care on an inpatient and outpatient basis. With a commitment to great customer service and exceptional care, Sturgis set out to give patients online access to their personal health information and thus improve their ability to manage their care. The hospital also needed to meet the Stage 2 Objective for Meaningful Use requiring that patients be able to securely access their health information online — *and* that they would actually do it. They turned to Iatric Systems to make it work.

The solution combines Iatric Systems patient portal and Patient Engagement Services to help Sturgis comply with Meaningful Use and the improvements in care that compliance represents. "A patient portal was new to us, and we needed to know all the implications and best practices for rolling it out to the community," explains Rita Denison, HIS Director, Sturgis Hospital. "We always have been happy with Iatric Systems products and services, and we wanted to use all the resources they offered."

Keeping Patients Informed About Their Health

The Iatric Systems PtAccess® patient portal provides Sturgis patients with a secure, easy way to stay informed about their medical care. Using PtAccess, Sturgis patients can track their medical history, view lab results, request appointment times, pay bills, learn more about their condition, and more — all online. It integrates with the hospital's MEDITECH Health Information System (HIS) and electronic billing system to enable a wide range of information access and communication possibilities. PtAccess is Stage 2 certified for hospitals and eligible providers, and includes Blue Button® technology which allows patients to access their health information in a simple format that can be read, printed, or saved on any computer.

Of course, great technology only matters if people are using it. Sturgis recognized how important it was to promote the portal so that patients would actually take advantage of all the valuable information at their fingertips. Sturgis also recognized this would help them meet the Meaningful Use criteria which requires that 5% of patients view their data online, download it, or transmit it to a third party. The challenge was how to make patients aware of the portal and convince them to try it. That's where Iatric Systems Patient Engagement Services played a crucial role.

Engagement Services on Demand

Iatric Systems provided much-needed support and expertise in an environment where time and resources are in short supply. "I'm a one-person marketing department, and I knew how important it was to get the message out in every possible channel," explains Phyllis Youga, Marketing Director, Sturgis Hospital. "Mike from Iatric Systems met with us and assessed what communication channels we anticipated using for this project. After that, he provided us with marketing messages and materials tailored to our needs, which simplified our processes, and helped us share this important information with our patients more quickly. He also gave us very good examples of how other hospitals were engaging their patients."

The Patient Engagement kit of materials and marketing plan provided by Iatric Systems helped Sturgis reach out to patients in a variety of ways. "The plan was very well-written to fit our media channels," Phyllis says. "Iatric Systems provided all of the materials I could have asked for, from on hold messages to social media to CEO letters. Basically, we added our brand and ran with it. Having the material already prepared and ready to roll out simplified the task of communicating tremendously."

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– Phyllis Youga
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Sturgis Hospital

Combining the right tools with the best implementation strategy ensures a successful adoption of a patient portal. With help from Iatric Systems Patient Engagement Services, and because they inspired so many patients to use their portal, Sturgis exceeded the Meaningful Use objective of 5% of patients using the portal to view, download, or transmit data. Rita says that for many patients, there's great value in being able to access their health information from home or wherever they happen to be. "Our patient portal from Iatric Systems is a great success, and I'm very pleased that we're able to offer this service."