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Saratoga Hospital Reduces 30-Day Readmissions Using iatricSystems™ Visual SmartBoard™

OBJECTIVE: Saratoga Hospital was eager to comply with the Readmissions Reduction initiative established by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). A provision of the Affordable Care Act, the aim is to reduce the number of patients who return to a hospital within 30 days of discharge, improve quality of patient care, and reduce cost to the Medicare program.

SITUATION: Saratoga Hospital is a 171-bed hospital in Saratoga Springs, New York, offering care in a broad range of medical specialties. To partner with CMS to reduce readmissions and help fulfill its mission of providing excellence in healthcare, the hospital recognized that it needed to move beyond static reports used for managing patient care to a real-time approach so that high-risk patients could be identified upon entry into the hospital.

SOLUTION: Saratoga Hospital chose iatricSystems™ Visual SmartBoard,™ which improves patient care management by presenting a customized view of multiple patients' key clinical data on a single screen updated in real time. At a glance, users can see the specific information they need in order to provide quality patient care and streamline their workflow. Saratoga Hospital has deployed SmartBoards throughout the hospital to early identify and meet the needs of high-risk patients in the ED and inpatient units, for infection control, care management, respiratory care, pharmacy, dietary, and more.

RESULTS: Since implementing SmartBoards, best practices, and customized action plans, 30-day readmissions at Saratoga Hospital have dropped by as much as 40 percent. Saratoga Hospital continues to roll out new SmartBoards to support additional departments and functions, providing a safer, more effective way to manage patient care that caregivers throughout the hospital have embraced.

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> –Nan Till
> Senior Systems Analyst – Information Systems Saratoga Hospital

Many hospitals struggle with how to comply with the CMS Readmissions Reduction Program aimed at reducing the number of patients who return to the hospital within 30 days of discharge. Saratoga Hospital is taking action using iatricSystems Visual SmartBoard, which presents key clinical data for patients on one screen that's updated in real-time. Hospital staff can customize SmartBoards to create an infinite number of views of patient care, displayed on large screens at strategic locations, on office PCs, and on iPads as caregivers make their rounds.

Since the SmartBoards went live at Saratoga Hospital, 30-day readmissions have dropped significantly. "Visual SmartBoard has dramatically changed the workflow in our entire hospital," says Nan Till, Senior Systems Analyst – Information Systems, Saratoga Hospital. "Rather than reviewing multiple reports that show a patient's condition at a specific time, caregivers now have a real-time view of critical information at a glance."

SmartBoards for High-Risk Patients

Two SmartBoards, one in the ED, the other for inpatients, are specifically used for high-risk patients. "Using the SmartBoards, we can identify and monitor those patients from the moment they arrive at the ED and throughout their inpatient stay. We're able to take a good look at those high-risk people, while getting updates in real time," adds Natalie Kennedy, Pharmacy Systems Analyst at Saratoga Hospital.

The ED high-risk SmartBoard identifies patients discharged within 30 days along with criteria such as age, symptoms, and medical history. "When a patient arrives, a care manager can see on the SmartBoard when the patient is back in the ED, so they can have a discussion with the patient as to what's going on," Nan explains. The SmartBoard also shows if patients qualify for a community program that helps ensure they are safe, have their meds, and can get to their appointments.

If a patient is admitted, his information flows to the inpatient high-risk SmartBoard board, where he's monitored throughout his stay. The SmartBoard identifies the patient as a 30-day readmit, and alerts the assigned nurse and the attending physician of any code status, isolation level, and other key information that caregivers need.

SmartBoards throughout the Hospital

Nan and Natalie have built many other Visual SmartBoards now used throughout Saratoga Hospital. Three Pharmacy SmartBoards show orders in progress, orders awaiting lab results and/or physician clarification, and changes to dosages/times. A Central Line SmartBoard keeps track of inpatient IV lines including when a line was inserted, when it has to be removed, and when the dressing was last changed. A Dietary SmartBoard shows, among other things, how much the patient consumed at meals, and their changing BMI and weight. Infection Control SmartBoards show patients at risk of infection, precautions taken, and lab results. Respiratory SmartBoards show patients on respiratory meds, next med due, attending provider, and similar information. There's even a Dirty Linen SmartBoard that alerts housekeeping staff when a bed needs to be changed.

Nan and Natalie continue rolling out new SmartBoards to support additional units and functions at Saratoga Hospital. "People recognize how useful they are," Natalie adds. "Since we introduced the first SmartBoard, every department wants one."

Nan Till and Natalie Kennedy

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Saratoga Hospital