Perfecting the Patient Process
How Sanford Health Leverages Operational Intelligence to Optimize Care for Patients and Workflow for Staff

The Objective
Sanford Health, the nation’s largest rural healthcare provider, implemented an RTLS-enabled operational intelligence solution in 2014 to help improve operational efficiency, quality, and patient experience. The solution supports Sanford Health’s objectives to decrease operational costs, reduce delays in patient care, along with increasing clinical efficiencies and staffing productivity. The solution delivers real-time, in-the-moment information to help staff throughout the patient care experience.

The Selection Process
The selection of the system was based on extensive evaluation of the software and hardware capabilities which would be needed to meet Sanford Health’s desired use cases – both initial use cases (asset management, temperature monitoring and ambulatory workflow) and future use cases, such as OR workflow and ED workflow.

Other requirements for the solution included the ability to aggregate and process data spanning multiple hospitals and clinics, across the entire healthcare system, in order to provide real-time operational intelligence from the department level to the IDN level. In addition, Sanford Health was looking for a solution with open application programming interfaces (APIs), promoting system interoperability through allowing them to build other integrations to fully leverage their location information and operational data.

The Use
In the clinic setting, which was implemented as the initial use case, the solution enables delivery of “patient-centered care” where patients bypass the waiting room and go to assigned exam rooms. There nurses and physicians come to the patient, eliminating the need to make their way around to different service locations. This technology enables this flow to occur smoothly in the clinic. For example, the software provides real-time snapshots of the Provider Pod status, showing provider name, number of patients with care in progress, number of patients waiting to be seen by the provider, along with the last appointment time. This helps patient access staff in determining which rooms can be assigned to patients, allows clinical staff to see what is in their queue, prioritize the rooming of patients, and determine if a patient has waited longer than a pre-defined threshold.

The Benefits
With reports such as the Room Occupancy Report, Sanford Health can further improve their patient workflow and staff efficiency as they can identify the percentage of time that the exam room is occupied by a patient and the percentage of time the exam room has a patient and provider in the room together. With an RTLS-enabled Business Intelligence solution, Sanford Health has plans to identify areas of improvement in patient care workflows and is standardizing processes for a consistent and repeatable patient care experience.

Our use of operational intelligence is to help us predict workflow, which allows us to proactively respond to patient needs thus improving our staff efficiency and patient satisfaction.”

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