



Strategic Consulting

Client Case Study



North Kansas City Hospital

Emergency Room Automation Optimization Project

The Challenge

North Kansas City Hospital (NKCH) in North Kansas City, Missouri, had just completed a Phase 1 implementation of a software package focused on automating the Emergency Department (ED). The implementation process had been bumpy; reliance on vendor knowledge regarding processes in the Emergency room was misplaced, resulting in cumbersome documentation. Frustrations on the part of the nursing staff as well as physician staff were escalation rapidly; comments suggesting removal of the software would be best were finding their way into almost every conversation. Coupled with this on going frustration was a significant change in the physical delivery of care in the ED.

The Phoenix Solution

The Phoenix team began with high level observations of the processes in realtime. Particular attention was paid to the integration points in the software as well as the hand off points in care delivery. Recommendations regarding software redesign were discussed with the CIO and Clinical Coordinator for IT. Specific communication channels were opened with the ED Manager as well as the two Primary ED physicians. With communication channels open

and a vent given to the frustration levels, clear, concise issues came to light.

The staff vocalized frustrations with the forms supplied in the software; this was readily observed in realtime. The forms, although comprehensive, did not meet the needs of specific documentation flows in the ED. Triage forms were multipage, forcing responses gathered from an indepth assessment. Responses were not defaulted in, alphabetized, or compiled with 'most used' first. In short, the features of the automation software were not used to support the process of care. Forms had simply been 'recreated' from paper to address the need to document on line.

Revisions to the forms were begun immediately. Based on leading practices, the triage forms were simplified and the use of system features were maximized to facilitate rapid documentation. Several additional screens were placed strategically in the ED to facilitate communication regarding patient placement, wait volumes, and status. Equipment was evaluated for workflow support and placed as needed to support an efficient workflow. A visible IT presence reinforced the idea IT is a support department, not a faceless department mandating delivery of care.

Mission Success and Overall Benefits to Our Client

Phoenix Health Systems connected workflow and processes to the automation project initiated by North Kansas City Hospital. The features and functions of the software were maximized to support care, and frustrations directed at the system were greatly reduced. Communications patterns were opened using the software as a platform for discussion. Coaching regarding change management and the staff's reaction to superimposed change projects helped identify true issues. As a result, documentation is more efficient, the system is support workflow and communication needs, and the staff frustration level is greatly reduced.

About Phoenix Health Systems

Phoenix Health Systems provides an integrated set of professional, technical and business services that focuses on the business goals of all departments within the healthcare organization. Through strategic consulting, IT outsourcing and revenue cycle management, Phoenix can help any healthcare organization achieve its long-term objectives of administrative cost reduction, increased cash flow, improved patient safety, and regulatory compliance. For additional information, visit www.phoenixhealth.com.