

OakBend Medical Center enhances patient safety and reduces costs using R_xe-sourcesm

Pharmacy Resources

R_xe-source

Background

OakBend Medical Center is a 185-bed community hospital in Richmond, Texas, a suburb of Houston. Despite its moderate size, it is the largest and most comprehensive health care facility in rapidly growing Fort Bend county and houses the area's only Level III trauma center. Traditionally, its pharmacy was closed overnight with new nighttime medication orders handled by the nursing supervisor in consultation with a pharmacist on call.

The challenge

"OakBend Medical Center's commitment to patient safety led us to an aggressive approach to meeting the new Joint Commission standards on medication management," says Director of Pharmacy Nancy Helfrick. "We were committed not only to pharmacist review of every order, regardless of time of day, but to supporting the overnight information needs of our nursing staff as well." Despite the nationwide shortage of pharmacists, the hospital was also facing a local market where 24-hour pharmacy coverage was rapidly becoming the standard of care.

The solution

Fortunately, as a result of its size and location, and because the hospital was using Cardinal Health to manage its pharmacy operations, OakBend was one of two Texas hospitals where Cardinal Health had conducted a pilot study of its after-hours remote order entry and review service, R_xe-source.

"Although the hospital was not compromising patient safety, there was a commitment to finding a better and more cost-effective method of ensuring that medication orders received appropriate review," says Helfrick, "both for competitive and for regulatory reasons." The hospital could have hired sufficient staff to keep the pharmacy open around-the-clock, but the supply of pharmacists was tight and the additional personnel cost, estimated at

"R_xe-source is helping us protect patient safety, meet The Joint Commission requirements for medication management and satisfy the real-time drug information needs of our nursing staff."

Nancy Helfrick
Director of Pharmacy
OakBend Medical Center



more than \$200,000, was extremely difficult to justify based on the volume of overnight activity. After the pilot study ended, OakBend elected to continue to use Rx-e-source.

Today, the service is providing real-time medication order review, order entry and related drug information via a secure Internet connection. Staff pharmacists from Cardinal Health received thorough training in OakBend's pharmacy information system, and are thus able to deliver a prompt response that flows seamlessly with existing procedures and software. This training even extends to the specific cost-control initiatives that the hospital has undertaken.

The results

"Thanks to Rx-e-source, OakBend Medical Center today is doing a better job of ensuring patient safety, is in compliance with The Joint Commission Standard MM.4.10 and is saving money in two measurable ways," says Helfrick. "First, the cost of the service is substantially less than the additional staff would have cost; and second, the consultations and clarification we're receiving are saving thousands of dollars annually in patient care costs."

The nursing staff is receiving prompt and authoritative answers to questions about drug information, dosing, allergies and any other issues that they would normally direct to staff pharmacists. Furthermore, because there is no longer a backlog of overnight orders to be reviewed in the morning, the pharmacy staff is able to provide better service during the day.

According to Vice President and Chief Nursing Officer Jody Jones, the hospital's nurses have benefited as well. "Implementation was seamless and our nurses now know they have a resource for accessing pharmacy expertise after hours, which they feel definitely enhances patient safety," says Jones. "Our staff was pleasantly surprised by the turnaround time and by the ease with which the whole process supplements our pharmacy and nursing functions."

Rx-e-source can help keep your hospital pharmacy working — even when the pharmacy is closed. For more information, call 877.300.9180.

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