

Asante Health System

Asante Health System knew seamlessly sharing patient information with affiliates would be key to better physician relationships and improved patient outcomes. They also knew they had a comprehensive patient record built with Epic and Lexmark Healthcare technology that was worth sharing. To extend their patient record to affiliate hospitals and clinics, Asante implemented Lexmark Healthcare for Community Connect alongside Epic Community Connect.

Challenge

Asante, based in Medford, Oregon, wanted to strengthen and grow its referral network through affiliations with independent physician practices and community hospitals. While looking into the Epic Community Connect® solution they realized they needed to share more than just the discrete data within the Epic EMR. Asante wanted to make the related, unstructured patient content more easily accessible to provide affiliates with a more complete view of patient medical histories. To accomplish this, Asante implemented Lexmark Healthcare for Community Connect alongside Epic Community Connect.

Solution

Using Lexmark's Perceptive Content solution for enterprise content management (ECM), Asante is able to make photos, videos, images and documents from a multitude of sources available to enterprise clinicians and administrative staff from within existing EMR and ERP interfaces and workflows. This means clinicians and administrators in admissions, registration, surgery, accounts payable, purchasing and other Asante departments no longer need to search beyond their core systems for the information they need. This capability has improved staff productivity and allowed clinicians to focus more time on patient care.

The Lexmark Healthcare solution is tightly integrated with Epic via industry standards and Epic-prescribed methodologies, bundling content management functionality with the Epic shared electronic medical record. This allows Asante to offer its community healthcare affiliates a comprehensive program for accessing and sharing the discrete data within Epic EMR alongside the unstructured patient content managed by Lexmark Healthcare. Referring hospitals and clinics gain access to an integrated, complete patient record through world-class software capabilities and workflow tools they otherwise may not be able to afford on their own.



Meet Asante Health System

As the largest healthcare provider in nine counties, Asante provides comprehensive medical care to more than 580,000 people throughout Southern Oregon and Northern California. They employ more than 4,900 employees at their facilities including:

- ▶ Asante Ashland Community Hospital
- ▶ Asante Rogue Regional Medical Center
- ▶ Asante Three Rivers Medical Center
- ▶ Asante Physician Partners

Products in use: Lexmark Healthcare for Community Connect, Perceptive Content

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John Hawkins

Manager, Ancillary Applications and Enterprise Services ITS
Asante

Creating a shared clinical workflow

Sky Lakes Medical Center, in nearby Klamath Falls, Oregon, is one of the key provider organizations that refers patients to Asante. Sky Lakes has a 125-licensed-bed hospital and more than 70 providers working at 25 clinics across the region. Prior to implementation of the Lexmark Healthcare solution, there was a significant volume of paperwork that went back and forth between Asante and Sky Lakes. Today there is a shared clinical and administrative workflow. For example, inbound fax queues within Perceptive Content now index patient content directly into Epic.

Sky Lakes converted from a competitive EMR system, migrating historical data into the new Asante-hosted EMR/ECM platform so that additional patient content is viewable. Sky Lakes has also purchased a Lexmark Healthcare back-office system for integration of its own ERP processes and content.

Partnership, adaptability drive ECM success

Asante's Enterprise Services team was able to configure and deploy the ECM software to affiliate hospital and clinic users with very little help from Lexmark Healthcare. Application Analyst, Amy Millard, and John Hawkins, Manager, Ancillary Applications and Enterprise Services ITS, who is responsible for ECM, imaging informatics, radiology and cardiology IS, lab systems and other clinical applications in use at Asante, were instrumental to the rollout and ongoing management of this program.

Hawkins and Millard attribute several key factors to the success of the Asante community project which went live earlier this year:

- ▶ Strong partnership between all hospital and clinic facilities
- ▶ Extensive preparation, including in-depth study and understanding of workflow at affiliate clinic locations
- ▶ Adaptability of Lexmark Healthcare software, resulting in re-use of existing templates and avoiding customization
- ▶ Thorough education programs and training focused on establishing self-reliance for affiliate users and support staff

“Doing a project like this correctly requires you to tap into resources throughout the enterprise,” said Hawkins. “To be successful, every area must be aware of and plugged into what is happening. I would advise anyone taking on a similar project not to approach it casually. If you prepare effectively, however, things go more smoothly.”

One of the ways Asante prepared for the project was by spending extensive time at Sky Lake clinics, learning exactly how work was performed in order to understand each user's workflow. “This knowledge was vital once we reached the software roll-out phase and had to deal with variances among departments,” said Millard. “It also let us adapt to changes that occurred after go-live because we had a clearer picture of how an end user's workflow happens in every aspect – from beginning to end. It didn't matter if we were dealing with inpatient, outpatient, ER, urgent care or other settings – we were able to put a solution in place to support it.”



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Flexibility curbs customization

“The biggest portion of our Perceptive Content software build was the delivery of capture profiles for all of the different clinics,” said Millard. “We tried to do as little customization as possible. I didn’t want to have a different profile for every single clinic. Our goal was to build a workflow that would accommodate the variance between the clinics but not require the delivery of specific workflow solutions for each clinic.”

The flexibility of the Lexmark Healthcare ECM software, coupled with the knowledge and experience of the Lexmark Healthcare team, helped Asante take existing workflows and apply them at the clinic level. For example, Asante was able to take an existing workflow model related to the inbound fax queue and apply it to the Sky Lakes workflow. “The fact we could leverage a form we already had in place was a big timesaver for me,” said Millard.

“We were able to use Lexmark Healthcare ECM software in ways that we previously did not think were possible,” she adds. “For example, one of the Sky Lakes clinics has a unique capture profile. It allows them to better leverage the HIM and medical records departments. They essentially scan documents and send them directly into the medical records queue for indexing, eliminating the need for clinic staff to manually perform this task. We were also able to set up the workflow so that end-users only see the 14 to 20 profiles they use most often. They don’t have to sift through all 600 document types that exist in the system. That helps drive better productivity.”

Results

ECM improves physician preparation, patient care

“The extended content management solution has helped Asante strengthen its relationships with the physician community,” said Hawkins. “Our clinicians are now better prepared before the patient walks in for an exam because all patient documents are accessible from within the EMR. The smooth flow of information we now enjoy has also had a positive impact on patient care. Clinic patients that travel through the Cascade Mountains to receive follow up care at Asante do not have to worry about bringing all of their information, medical histories, previous surgeries, or lists of current medications with them. It is all available to us thanks to our system interoperability.”

“When a patient moves from one provider to another, the questions they are asked can seem overwhelming, especially when there is a medical emergency,” said Millard. “It really adds stress when they have to keep up with all of that information. It helps the family and puts them at ease when they realize this step has already been taken care of.”

Content control key to future success

Interoperability and seamless exchange of patient content between providers is key as the industry shifts from volume-based delivery of healthcare services to a value-based approach, supporting patient-centric and population health management models. As an early adopter of technologies for accessing, managing and sharing patient content, Asante is well-positioned for coming demands to make patient information flow more easily to the places where it is needed to enhance care delivery and outcomes.

A forward-thinking organization, Asante is one of the first Lexmark Healthcare customers to go live on the Lexmark Healthcare for Community Connect solution. "The leaders at Sky Lakes consider the project a great success. It was a smooth implementation," said Hawkins. "The volume of business at the clinics is growing, which means the volume and variety of patient documents and other unstructured content passing between our systems will also grow. With Lexmark Healthcare's help, we will be prepared."

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