IPeople Offline Case Study

A Game Changer in Uninterrupted Patient Care

DCH Health Systems

It goes without saying that reliable data is vital to the delivery of quality healthcare. Access to critical patient data -- test results, drug allergies, treatment history, and prescriptions -- allows medical professionals to administer care and make potentially life-saving decisions. When seconds count, hospital staff needs to be able to count on their data.

So what happens when access to data is interrupted? With today's Electronic Medical Records (EMRs) stored in a healthcare information system (HCIS) database, such as MEDITECH, downtime planning is a necessity. In fact, with the latest version of MEDITECH, monthly scheduled maintenance downtime can last for several hours. Data continuity provides reliable data access at all times to ensure continuous patient care during planned or unplanned downtime, scheduled maintenance, data migration or a network outage.

Risks and Repercussions

DCH Health System has been providing quality and compassionate healthcare in West Alabama for more than 90 years. Today, DCH operates three medical facilities offering a range of services that include cancer care, cardiology, surgery and the region's most advanced trauma center.

Like many other healthcare professionals, the DCH hospital staff relied on a manual process to recover and enter admissions information into MEDITECH after system downtime. Personnel were challenged to update individual patient information in the online medical records as quickly and accurately as possible. Any delay in getting patient information to the hospital floor presents a risk and disrupts the ability to deliver the quality care that patients have come to expect from DCH Health System.

In order to admit patients during a MEDITECH downtime, personnel followed a manual process to generate medical record numbers and account numbers while trying to collect the pertinent registration information needed. During just one hour of downtime, 100 patients were registered, according to DCH data assessments. Once MEDITECH was back online, entering the information back into the system required six employees for a total of 21 man-hours, not including time spent auditing the data.

"We struggled with missing information and data entry errors; a typical hazard of human intervention," said Kim J Ligon, CIO - Retired, DCH Health System. *"We quickly recognized that DCH needed a solution that was more timely and precise to reduce the clinical risks and financial overhead associated with our downtime registration procedures."*

After reviewing a number of vendor solutions, DCH Health System tapped Interface People (IPeople) to deploy a Data Continuity system for their network of hospitals, which includes the DCH Regional Medical Center, Northport Medical Center and Fayette Medical Center. The IPeople Offline Data Continuity suite offers a seamless transition between routine access to MEDITECH data and an offline solution.

IPeople's Offline Data Continuity solution is a simple to use system that eliminates the need for paper reports and special "back-up" procedures. The full suite includes Web Views, Downtime Registration, Scheduled MAR Reports and the Network Down solution that provides a layer of redundancy by replicating data to standalone PCs, allowing personnel to do their jobs while the network is down.

Continuity of Care

Based on the success of previous collaborative projects, IPeople had proven to DCH their understanding of hospital workflow needs and appreciation for the importance of accurate patient data. As a result, DCH chose to implement two solutions from the IPeople Offline Data Continuity suite: Downtime Registration and Web Views.

With the IPeople Downtime Registration solution, hospital staff now can easily capture essential admissions information in real time, even when the MEDITECH system is down. This enables DCH to safely admit, discharge and transfer patients while maintaining the integrity of the registration process and reducing the risk of generating duplicate Medical Record Numbers. Once the system is back online, the intelligent IPeople software quickly and accurately loads the information back into MEDITECH, allowing personnel to focus on other aspects of closing out downtime procedures.

"We saw an immediate positive impact where a manual process that averaged 21 hours was reduced to about an hour, with full auditing and reporting automatically produced in the end," said Kim J Ligon. *"For my team, IPeople Offline Downtime Registration is an absolute game changer."*

In addition, DCH selected IPeople's Web Views solution for an easy-to-use, web-based view of critical patient data, such as visit history, allergies, nursing interventions, orders and results, scheduled appointments and home medications. The Web Views solution eliminates the need for paper charts or aged NPR Reports during MEDITECH downtimes.

"Before IPeople, our workflow consisted of downloading NPR reports. The files are humongous, but with the IPeople solution we can pull a subset of data into a smaller database," said Kim. *"The ability to parse out data has been extremely helpful, and the IPeople scripting solution is much more fluid than our previous system, freeing up valuable staff resources."*

Without a robust data continuity plan, hospitals risk the very real prospect of compromising quality patient care, staff productivity, integrity and reputation during planned or unplanned MEDITECH downtimes. IPeople has helped DCH Health System significantly minimize the disruption of downtimes, providing their staff with uninterrupted access to reliable data, and enabling the delivery of continuous quality care for their patients.

"IPeople Offline Downtime Registration allows us to easily capture essential admissions information real-time even though we are 'down'. When MEDITECH is back online, the system is intelligent enough to quickly and accurately load the information back into our EMR. The reduction in the risk of generating duplicate Medical Record Numbers is just one of the many advantages that the IPeople Offline has given DCH. We saw an immediate positive impact where a manual process that averaged 21 hours was reduced to about an hour, with full auditing and reporting automatically produced in the end. For my team, IPeople Offline Downtime Registration is an absolute game changer."

- Kim J Ligon, Retired CIO, DCH Health System

Case Study Breakdown

THE CHALLENGE	THE SOLUTION	THE BENEFITS
■ Dependent on manual processes for the recovery and entry of admissions information into MEDITECH after an HCIS downtime ■ Easy access to critical patient data, such as visit history, allergies, nursing interventions, orders and results, scheduled appointments and home medications	✓ IPeople Offline with web-based views of critical patient data and downtime registration allowing capturing of essential admission information	✓ Reduction in the risk of generating duplicate Medical Record Numbers ✓ Manual processes that averaged 21 hours was reduced to about an hour ✓ Full auditing and reporting ✓ No workflow disruptions due to downtime ✓ Elimination of the need for NPR reports ✓ Patient safety is not compromised

About Interface People, LP

Interface People (IPeople) is an integration company providing the healthcare industry with innovative solutions and professional services to simplify the interaction between users and their data. Committed to increasing work efficiencies, while offering layers of flexibility in their products, IPeople supplies the healthcare industry with tools to assist both technical and non-technical users.

At IPeople our mission is to build innovative software and services for the healthcare industry, so that care providers can focus on working more efficiently to improve the quality of patient care. We work with determination, resilience, and respect, striving to always delight our customers. For more information, visit www.ipeople.com.