

Sharp HealthCare:

Growing Content Management into an Enterprise Strategy



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Cathy Fuhrman
Information Systems Manager
Sharp HealthCare

Sharp HealthCare has a reputation in the industry as being an early adopter of information technology. Named 11 years in a row to Hospitals & Health Networks magazine’s “Most Wired” healthcare systems list, the San Diego, Calif.-based not-for-profit integrated healthcare delivery system has a long history of innovation. As such, Sharp, which now boasts more than 14,000 people and 2,600 affiliated physicians, developed a lab system in the early 1970s, implemented clinical documentation in 1985 and has partnered with numerous software companies to deploy healthcare IT systems across the enterprise.

Currently, the primary focus is deploying electronic medical record (EMR) systems to Sharp’s four acute care hospitals, three specialty hospitals, and two affiliated medical groups to support Meaningful Use, according to Cathy Fuhrman, information systems manager. Sharp deployed Hyland Software’s OnBase, an enterprise content management (ECM) solution, in 2003 to address one department’s specific pain point. When Sharp began implementing Cerner Millennium in its hospitals in 2006, it soon discovered that OnBase delivered value across all departments, including enabling the EMRs to provide clinicians with a complete patient record.

Eliminating Paper in Claims Processing

Sharp initially installed OnBase in its managed care claims department to eliminate the maintenance and storage of the approximately 100,000 paper claims that are processed on a monthly basis. The deployment resulted in the reduction from three shifts of full-time employees to one shift and the conversion of the file room into a training room. Six months after the solution went live, the department estimated a savings of approximately \$70,000 a month. The 2003 San Diego wildfires, which nearly reached its data storage vendor’s facilities, also emphasized the need for an ECM solution to help protect patient information and prompted Sharp to develop a disaster recovery plan that included data protection the following year. “We understood the value of OnBase,” Fuhrman said.

Sharp’s claims shop processes a total of 450,000 claims – paper and electronic data interchange (EDI) – each month. To make matters more complex, customer service and oftentimes utilization management are involved. This past spring, Sharp implemented a paperless workflow through the managed care department. Once a claim – whether it is in paper or EDI form – is entered into the system, it is converted to an image. If utilization management needs to see the claim or any associated paperwork, the claims processor electronically moves it to utilization management’s workflow. “This (process) has eliminated thousands and thousands of pages of paper that used to float around the office,” Fuhrman said.

EMR and ECM: Complete View of the Patient



Sharp Memorial Hospital

In 2008, Sharp Memorial, the flagship hospital, replaced its old scanning solution, which was no longer being supported, and began importing images to OnBase. When Sharp commenced its five-year rollout of Cerner Millennium, Sharp Memorial’s health information management (HIM) department realized it needed to accelerate the importation of unstructured data such as images and paper-based documents to OnBase ahead of the EMR system implementation. Deploying OnBase first enabled all of the unstructured data to be linked directly to the EMR, giving clinicians the ability to access all patient information when the EMR system went live. “Memorial’s HIM department became huge champions for OnBase,” Fuhrman said, which was instrumental in deploying the ECM solution at other Sharp hospitals ahead of the EMR strategy.

Having links to the unstructured data within the EMR also helped solve an unforeseen problem. When Sharp Memorial built its new hospital next to the old one, it enlarged the patient rooms and turned them into private versus shared rooms. In order to keep the census intact, the hallways were narrowed. When informed by the local fire marshal that putting nursing and chart stations in the hallways was a violation of the fire code, Sharp decided that the new hospital would rely on the EMR system and OnBase for all paper documents. Physicians and nurses would walk the floors with “thin charts” comprising only a few days’ worth of paper – if at all, Fuhrman explained. Clinicians could refer back to the EMR system, with its links to OnBase.

The combination of EMR system and ECM solution proved to be valuable in another area. Before Sharp

implemented Cerner Millennium, runners were sent to all the hospitals' floors to retrieve medication orders for the pharmacy department. Prior to the implementation of Cerner Millennium and OnBase integration, nurses would fax the orders to the pharmacy department via a fax server/OnBase integration. As was the case with Sharp Memorial's HIM department, the pharmacy department became evangelists for OnBase, and soon other departments were requesting access, Fuhrman said. The next step is for Cerner Millennium to send pharmacy orders to OnBase to initiate workflow. Now pre-anesthesia evaluations and surgery and radiology scheduling are being processed through OnBase.

Capturing Unstructured Data in Patient Scheduling and Registration



Sharp Mary Birch Hospital

While a hospital may strive to be paperless, paper will always be a part of the system, especially in the areas of patient registration and scheduling. "There is going to be paper everywhere and fax machines are not going to go away – especially in small physician offices," Fuhrman pointed out. For radiology and surgery scheduling, the physician office must fax information to the hospital so the hospital can call the patient to schedule the appointment. One Sharp hospital's inability to manage those faxes resulted in poor customer service and the loss of referrals from a major medical group. After the hospital implemented the fax server integration with OnBase, not only did it regain the medical group's referrals but it gained new business, and business overall rose by 15 percent, Fuhrman said.

Sharp Mary Birch Hospital for Women and Newborns saw value with the ECM solution. With 20,000 babies delivered annually, Sharp Mary Birch ranks as the second busiest woman and infant hospital in the country, according to Fuhrman. OBGYNs with high-risk pregnancy patients fax in any changes to their patients' medical records so that the hospital has the most up-to-date information should the patient present in the middle of the night. Sharp Mary Birch Hospital for Women, however, had difficulty managing and tracking the faxes. Sharp integrated OnBase and ran a pilot at the women and infant hospital. Not only was 99.9 percent of all faxed medical records that were input into OnBase available when patients presented at the hospital, but physician satisfaction rose, as well.



Sharp partnered with Hyland Software, makers of OnBase, to customize an existing module for patient registration. Now when patients arrive, the admitting clerk scans their driver's license and insurance card. Patients sign off on an interactive tablet, which displays their conditions of admission in either English or Spanish. Admitting clerks print out registration packets for only those patients who request it. Otherwise, the registration process is paperless.

Sharp Memorial also offers a concierge service that enables patients who are scheduled for surgery to bypass the registration desk and be admitted directly to their rooms. The registration procedure, which has been live for more than a year, is paperless, as admitting clerks come to the room with their mobile carts and input information to OnBase.

Enabling Medical Management for ACOs with ECM

As the healthcare industry evolves, transforming itself to become more cost-efficient while providing greater quality of care, healthcare organizations are relying on healthcare IT to help them make the transformation. Sharp is looking to its ECM solution to be a core IT system for its accountable care organization (ACO) pilot. ACOs have emerged as a payment and delivery reform model designed to improve the quality and efficiency of the healthcare delivery system. ACOs tie provider reimbursements to quality metrics and reduced total cost of care for an assigned patient population managed by a coordinated team of healthcare providers. While pioneering health plans and healthcare providers have formed pilot ACOs, the concept has been launched to the national spotlight, thanks to the Patient Protection and Affordability Care Act (PPACA) of 2010. Under PPACA, ACOs are now authorized to participate – and thus have a significant opportunity to expand and thrive – in the Medicare market.

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Sharp Community Medical Group, Sharp Rees-Stealy Medical Centers and a selected group of Anthem Blue Cross of California PPO members are participating in a commercial ACO pilot in the San Diego area. The goal is for providers to deliver better coordinated care to their patients, with a focus on prevention and chronic care management. The healthcare organizations are currently working through medical management processes, which include physicians receiving authorization for referrals for their PPO member patients from Anthem. Once the workflow is in place, Sharp will need to easily exchange case, disease and utilization management information and images with Anthem, Fuhrman explained. OnBase will take images incoming to Sharp and make them available in the member's chart through an e-business application.

Having all the clinical and administrative patient information accessible to the ACO participants is crucial in order to manage the patient appropriately and effectively, and thus eliminate the potential over-utilization of services, Fuhrman said. ACO participants share the risk and manage the patient with an agreed-upon pool of money. "If we don't know that this person has chronic diseases or don't have all the images together for that person, we're not going to meet our (financial and clinical) goals," she said. "If the patient is managed appropriately, we can get the patient to the right provider." Medical management, therefore, is a critical component to ACO success, and ECM is the healthcare IT component that enables this information exchange.

The Value of ECM Enterprise-Wide and Beyond

Sharp has expanded its ECM solution for several clinical processes, but it has also delivered value for numerous departments across the enterprise. The Joint Commission, the not-for-profit organization that accredits more than 19,000 healthcare organizations and programs in the United States, requires human resources (HR) departments to maintain employee files onsite at each facility. For large integrated healthcare delivery systems with multiple facilities and corresponding HR directors, being in compliance was a challenge and resulted in HR directors from the different facilities physically meeting once a week to swap files. With employee documentation contained in OnBase, HR directors can access files electronically with a click of the mouse. Sharp's finance department uses OnBase to electronically capture all of its paperwork, Fuhrman said. The accounts payable department scans invoices and links the information to Sharp's business application, which allows authorized users to review and approve the invoices.

The integrated delivery healthcare system is gearing up to expand OnBase's capabilities to its homecare and hospice facilities and services, according to Fuhrman. The ECM solution will be integrated with Allscripts Homecare's AllDocs software, which will allow its homecare HIM department to scan paper and other unstructured data. Allscripts will synchronize patient records for the tablets, enabling nurses and aids to get on the network and retrieve records for patients they will be seeing out in the field. In the future, images – such as a patient's wound care photograph – uploaded to OnBase will be synchronized at night and available on the tablets for the following day.

Sharp, which has won the 2007 Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award, as well as the gold level award by the California Council for Excellence for the California Award for Performance Excellence program, continues to find value for its ECM solution – if the requests by various departments are any indication. Approximately 200 million documents across the enterprise – much of it unstructured information – are currently stored in OnBase, according to Fuhrman. As more departments deploy OnBase, that number will grow exponentially. While Sharp didn't have an enterprise-wide strategy in place when it first implemented OnBase, the ECM solution has become a true enterprise-level core technology. "We were able to grow organically," Fuhrman said.

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OnBase
a Hyland Software solution

About the Hyland Software solution, OnBase

One of the largest independent software vendors in the world of enterprise content management (ECM). Hyland Software is the developer of OnBase. An award-winning suite of document management and content management solutions. OnBase has a proven record of solving problems resulting from time consuming, costly and error plagued manual tasks. Today, people at more than 10,000 organizations both large and small in 67 countries have the time to do the things that really add value thanks to OnBase. Available on-premises or as software as a service (SaaS), OnBase installs quickly, cost effectively and is designed to grow with organizations.

For more information, visit www.Hyland.com/Healthcare or call 1-888-495-2638 to set up an appointment.