



IMPROVING COMPLIANCE AND CARE QUALITY WITH A MEDICATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM WITH CDS



Contributor:

Bonnie Lawrence
Corporate Director of
Clinical Informatics

Category:

Impacts and Benefits of:

- Medication Ordering
- Medication Management Clinical Decision Support Systems
- Medication Administration
- Analytic Tools (e.g., Medication Error Reporting, and Quality Reports)

Organization Name

Consulate Health Care

Organization Type

Post-acute, Skilled Nursing

Organization Description

Consulate Health Care is a national leading provider of senior healthcare services, specializing in post-acute care. Operating more than 200 centers nationwide in 21 states, they offer services ranging from comprehensive short-term transitional care to Alzheimer’s and dementia care. They began as a small provider with a strong focus on patient needs, which has strengthened their family and allows them to sustain jobs in many communities, create rigorous systems of care, and deploy technology that makes it easier to understand patient needs. Even as they have grown to become the sixth-largest provider in the nation and the largest in Florida, Consulate remains committed to their mission of “Providing Service with our Hearts and Hands” and a patient-first approach to care.

Project Description

Consulate Health Care recognized an opportunity to replace its medication management system resulting in:

- More effective ways to ensure safe medication administration
- Pharmacy cost savings on medications
- Additional improvements in care quality based on adherence to best practices
- More efficient regulatory and physician order compliance



For more information contact:

Zohra Sirat, Programs and
Operations Administrator, CAST
zsirat@LeadingAge.org
(202) 508-9438
LeadingAge.org/CAST

Implementation Approach

In 2012, Consulate Health Care began the search for a new medication management provider to achieve consistency across the continuum of care with the safe transfer of data, reduction in pharmacy costs, and improved regulatory and physician compliance. They intended to do this while also leveraging an electronic medication administration record (eMAR). After an extensive search, Consulate chose the SigmaCare medication management system due to its extensive analytics, flexibility and the company's hands-on customer service approach.

SigmaCare teams were deployed to Consulate care centers to conduct training, input orders into the system and confirm employees could effectively pass medications using the eMAR system. The training team worked hand-in-hand with the Consulate staff to ensure they received clear documentation on how to operate the system and was available to answer questions and troubleshoot any problems that arose.

Outcomes

After implementing the medication management system, Consulate experienced several positive outcomes, such as increased regulatory compliance, pharmacy cost savings, physician order compliance, gatekeeper capabilities and time savings.

Regulatory Compliance: Consulate has configured its medication management system to increase compliance with policies, best practices and regulatory mandates. Checkpoints within the system force users to enter diagnoses and proper documentation.

Pharmacy Cost Savings: Since adopting the medication management system from SigmaCare, pharmacy savings have increased significantly over a period of two years. This, in part, is because Consulate has been able to integrate information from a patient's insurance program. The medication management system automatically reviews whether a prescribed medication is on the formulary for a patient's insurance and recommends an alternative – in real time at the point of entry.

Physician Order Compliance: By the end of Q1 2014, less than 24 months after rolling the program out, they were able to report a decrease in the number of pending signatures by 23%. In the past, securing physician signatures could be a time-consuming process for the staff, but by doing this electronically, Consulate has increased staff efficiency and the security of the patient record.

Gatekeeper Functionality: The ability to quickly and efficiently review medication orders has resulted in more cost-effective care at Consulate care centers. A list of high-cost, high-risk medications is programmed into the system and a pop-up window appears when one of these drugs is ordered. The pop-up alert reminds the staff member that the drug requires approval from the director of nursing prior to placing the order with the pharmacy. Even if the director of nursing is out of the building, he or she can access the medication management system remotely to approve or disapprove the order and seek out a more cost-effective or lower risk medication. The system also brings up a Black Box warning for specific drugs, forcing the nurse or physician placing the order to acknowledge the warning and explain the override.

Maintaining Best Practices: Using SigmaCare's robust medication management system, Consulate has developed order sets based on best practices, including:

- Foley order sets to ensure the facilities are compliant with current best practices that recommend not changing the Foley every month. This reduces the risk of infection and improves the patient experience.
- Coumadin (warfarin) order sets allow timely review to prevent errors, ensuring the drug is being administered according to best practice.
- Order sets are created around tube feedings and other procedures that require physician documentation in order for the organization to receive payment.

Advice to Share with Others

Consulate has experienced several lessons learned during the selection and ongoing operation of its medication management system.

- **You can't go back to paper:** As Consulate examined its options in switching eMAR providers; it became apparent that it was not feasible to go back to a paper system. Not only were existing staff not trained on using a paper system, but new hires were not accustomed to working in a paper-based environment.
- **Create internal experts:** In order to better manage system training internally, Consulate created champions in each building as the first line of contact, with two data analysts on staff as backup. When those resources were unable to address an issue, they contacted SigmaCare representatives who worked closely with Consulate's clinical informatics and IT departments to address any issues.

- **Encourage adoption by key stakeholders:** The ability to access records from anywhere, at any time, has given their directors of nursing unprecedented insight into care center operations. They can re-distribute workloads as needed, ensure best practices are being followed with specific drugs, and encourage staff to fully adopt and utilize the system.
- **Tailor the system:** Consulate has worked to develop processes specific to its organization that improve compliance and quality of care. For example, while Consulate frequently uses alerts to remind clinicians of processes, requirements such as documenting a patient's blood sugar make it mandatory for certain activities to take place, ensuring best practices in delivering quality care.

Today, Consulate Health Care will continue to work closely with technology partners, like SigmaCare, to ensure that the transfer of information is consistent across the continuum of care. The result is more efficient regulatory and physician signature compliance, a focus on care giver best practices, and the achievement of improved clinical outcomes.

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