

Case Study: **Enhancing Staff Efficiency and Person-Centered Care through Technology**



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Categories:

- ◆ Discharge
- ◆ Admission
- ◆ Rehabilitation

About the Organization

LTPAC Organization Name:
Shannondell

LTPAC Main Contributor:
Dan Freed, Vice President
of Health Services

LTPAC Organization Type:
Continuing-care retirement
community

LTPAC Organization Description:
Shannondell at Valley Forge
is a leading continuing-
care retirement community
specializing in independent
living, personal and memory
care, skilled nursing, and
post-acute rehabilitation care
in Audubon, PA. Rehab at
Shannondell, a division of
Shannondell at Valley Forge,
is a 120-bed short-term and
long-term skilled nursing
community providing
comprehensive rehabilitation
services in a resort-style
environment to patients of
all ages.

Project Description

Rehab at Shannondell adopted Evoke Health's Engage+ in their 120-bed short-term rehab facility to streamline communication and digitize access to health information for patients and their families.

The ability to automatically share health information in real time and to send electronic messages via Engage+ has resulted in a 40% reduction in phone calls at Rehab at Shannondell, thus saving the nursing team an average of one hour per day, while providing families with peace of mind about their loved ones' care.

Based on this positive experience, Engage+ has been rolled out to The Meadows at Shannondell, which is a personal care community within Shannondell at Valley Forge.

Implementation Approach

Problem:

The leadership team of Rehab at Shannondell was looking for a solution to help with customers' needs for valuable and meaningful access to health information. The nursing and social services team was inundated with phone calls from families inquiring about their loved ones' progress and plans of care, and employees were frequently asked for "general updates." This was exacerbated during the COVID-19 pandemic where regular communication with families became more important and urgent, which further increased demands on the staff.

Solution:

Rehab at Shannondell chose to partner with Evoke Health due to its direct integration capability with Shannondell's existing electronic health record, PointClickCare, and Evoke Health's 2-way messaging service between staff and families. Evoke Health's Engage+ is a cloud-based web application that provides real-time access to health information to residents and/or their authorized families, and facilitates communication with the care team.

Implementation:

The implementation phase began in May 2021 with customization of the Engage+ platform based on the feedback from Rehab at Shannondell's clinical team. In July 2021, Engage+ went live at Rehab at Shannondell with the following features accessible to the patients and their families:

- ◆ Health Records
 - 24/7 real-time access to historical and current vitals, conditions, immunizations, care plans, and clinical notes from physicians and nurse practitioners
- ◆ Secure Messaging
 - Direct messaging between staff and authorized families
 - Multi-facility mass notifications and announcements
- ◆ File Share
 - Share files, documents between staff and families
- ◆ Community Newsletter
 - Share newsletter, events, activities, etc.
- ◆ Appointment booking
 - View, book, and manage visitations and appointments
- ◆ Care team member directory

The roll out of the platform was straightforward and did not involve any additional work for staff. The patients and their families who were currently at Rehab at Shannondell were automatically onboarded through "contact information" in PointClickCare. All the staff who required access to the portal were able to log in using their PointClickCare credentials. The user interface was very intuitive, and the families and staff were easily able to activate, log-in, and use the platform with no training.

Outcomes

From July to December 2021, 712 family members with loved ones at Rehab at Shannondell were invited to activate and access Engage+. Seventy percent of the families have registered for the platform so far, and 90% of those registered log in weekly for health updates or to communicate with the nursing team. The benefits have

been significant from all perspectives including:

1. Staff Efficiency

Families' access to medical information and ability to electronically communicate with the nursing team has reduced the number of phone calls per day and staff time spent on communicating with families per day by 40%, saving an average of one hour per day. The saved time has been repurposed toward hands-on patient care, and comes with a financial benefit of at least \$16,000 per year.

Engage+ robust messaging service has been beneficial in:

- a. Decreasing phone calls from families, especially for general, basic updates. The phone calls are now mainly for emergency or meaningful in-depth conversations about patients' health.
- b. Allowing any nurse on duty to reply to the messages at their convenience.
- c. Reducing families' concerns on general resident updates, e.g.: How did the resident sleep? How did the resident eat? How was the resident's night?
- d. Allowing family members to easily contact the clinical team.

The following quotes are but a few of the examples of significant improvements resulting from implementation of Engage+:

"The phone calls have decreased on therapy's end and there seems to be less confusion on who to speak to about medical things when we are talking with the families."

— Vicki Williamson, Director of Therapy

"We could never keep up with questions from families without the messaging. I have also found a significant decrease in phone calls, especially when there is simple question to ask, we can shoot back a quick reply."

— Shannon Durante, Assistant Director of Nursing

“I have definitely noticed a decreased number of phone calls. Families being able to see health information has been a big help.”

— Kelly Moore, Director of Nursing

2. Person- and family-centered care:

Families can log in anytime, from anywhere, to view health information and communicate with the nursing team directly without having to call (sometimes repeatedly). Families are also able to receive automatic email notifications when there is a status update which keeps them informed in real time. They have found access to the clinical notes and care plan extremely helpful to understand what is going on with the care of their loved ones. Based on the positive response from the families on the platform, Rehab at Shannondell further extended the access to clinical notes to include therapy, social service, and nutritional notes as well.

“Wow, I like everything about this service! This is so helpful, informative, and really keeps me as a loved one up to date, and my mind is at ease regarding my husband's care. It's really an awesome service; technology can be so wonderful, and this was created perfectly.”

— Family member

Rehab at Shannondell has always been a top choice for people looking for post-acute rehab care and with Engage+, now they are also viewed as transparent, trustworthy, and willing to go above and beyond to share information with patients and families.

Since November 2021, Engage+ has also been rolled out at The Meadows, a 172-bed personal care home which is also a part of Shannondell communities.

Lessons Learned/ Advice to Share with Others

As the complexity and demands of resident care continues to increase, it has become imperative for long-term and post-acute care (LTPAC) communities to improve on operational efficiency enabling their staff to spend more time on quality resident care. The findings from the implementation of Engage+ at Rehab at Shannondell provide early evidence that an EHR-integrated family engagement and information sharing portal, when effectively implemented, can significantly save time for staff and enhance LTPAC productivity, while simultaneously empowering families to be equal partners in patients' care.