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The LeadingAge Center for Aging Services Technologies (CAST) is focused on accelerating the development, evaluation and adoption of emerging technologies that will transform the aging experience. As an international coalition of more than 400 technology companies, aging-services organizations, businesses, research universities and government representatives, CAST works under the auspices of LeadingAge, an association of 6,000 not-for-profit organizations dedicated to expanding the world of possibilities for aging.

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Reduction of Medication Errors and Improving Workflows and Staff Efficiencies using e-Prescribing

Category

e-Prescribing/ Medication Ordering

Organization Name

Ohana Pacific Management Company, Inc. (OPMC)

Organization Type

Ohana Pacific is a skilled nursing-focused CCRC that includes memory care, home health, and adult day care.

Organization Description

OPMC is a locally-owned provider of skilled nursing, rehab, home health, hospice, memory care and adult day center services, with five facilities that include 510 beds on the islands of Oahu and Kauai in Hawaii. Taking its name from the native word for “family,” Ohana has been delivering quality long-term and home care services since 1998. Seamless care transitions between its hospital, skilled nursing, rehab and home-based programs have been a focal point since OPMC established their Stay at Home Healthcare service line in 2012.

Project Description

When OPMC began its journey to e-Prescribing, the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC) estimated that less than three percent of prescriptions in the LTPAC sector were sent electronically. OPMC implemented NCPDP SCRIPT10.6-compliant e-Prescribing capabilities across their facilities in 2015, with the primary goals of gaining speed, minimizing errors and improving communication with their pharmacy partners as the primary goals.

Implementation Approach

At the time of OPMC’s decision to transition, Hawaii pharmacies were 97 percent enabled to receive and dispense electronic prescription data. However, only 6 out of 10 Hawaii providers were e-Prescribing – 12 percent lower than the U.S. national average.

OPMC had selected the full-continuum HealthMEDX Vision® platform as their EHR system of choice as part of a broader long-term strategy to fully connect all business lines and ancillary services. An interface was configured using HealthMEDX® Exchange, connecting Ohana to their LTPAC pharmacy partner, Pharmerica, and enabling bi-directional linkage between prescribers, dispensers, and medication administrators.

The integrated ordering function was used to drive consolidation of workflows unique to OPMC and their care processes. The Ohana/HealthMEDX implementation team also optimized the medication order sets to ensure seamless information transfer with Pharmerica.

Outcomes

In the months following implementation, OPMC noted improvements in the target areas of accuracy and efficiency. Medication error rates were cut by 70 percent at some facilities, and some nurses reported a one hour per day reduction in time spent on medication ordering and administration. The Pharmacy Exchange has also driven benefits in the admission process, where optimization of the OPMC order sets has cut intake times by 30-45 minutes per admission.

Challenges and Pitfalls to Avoid

OPMC observed no real challenges during the implementation, with the exception of one location whose orders were not properly synchronized prior to the go-live. This was resolved through HealthMEDX Vision's Batch Entry feature that allows for manual matching orders in bulk in the event of incongruent data.

Lessons Learned/Advice to Share with Others

LTPAC organizations have a challenging environment to navigate. Despite statistics to the contrary, a 2015 Accenture survey showed that although 83 percent of physicians utilized the e-Prescribing technology, only half believed that it improved quality of care. OPMC allowed clinical teams to drive the functionality design, customization and unique configuration of the HealthMEDX Vision platform, which allowed this flexibility. OPMC recommends not only allowing but encouraging clinicians to drive the process (rather than having EHR adoption be driven by the IT department) and emphasizes that clinical buy-in is crucial to the success of any e-Prescribing initiative.