

CUSTOMER Success Story

Sacred Heart HealthCare System, Allentown, PA

Sacred Heart Hospital improves ED operations and financial performance with MEDHOST



Background: Sacred Heart Hospital, a member of the Sacred Heart HealthCare System, is the third-largest acute-care hospital in Pennsylvania's Lehigh Valley, which boasts a population of approximately 500,000. Sacred Heart is committed to providing personalized care, so leaders continuously evaluate solutions that impact change. Hospital executives sought to refine ED operations and elevate quality of care by eliminating redundant processes, streamlining charting methods, decreasing length of stay, and reducing wasted time spent locating information, equipment, staff and patients.

The Challenge: ED leaders wanted an automated charting process but realized other factors such as workflow, coding and compliance needed to be addressed. Like many other EDs, Sacred Heart's emergency clinicians were spending nearly half of their time searching for charts, staff, patients or other information. The hospital also found it difficult to recoup costs, and administrators were determined to find a solution that promised an iron-clad return on investment (ROI). Sacred Heart chose to implement an Emergency Department Information System (EDIS) because it needed an all-in-one solution that would enhance ED operations, boost the hospital's bottom line, and most important, increase the quality of patient care.

Objective

Streamline ED operations, improve communication, increase charge capture and track compliance and core measures more accurately.

Highlights

58 of the 60 staff members selected MEDHOST because of its impressive visual format and intuitive software.

Over a 12 month timeframe, Sacred Heart maintained a **13% boost** in charge capture.

On average, an additional **\$33,000** was collected per month.

More accurate charge capture and efficient processes led to a significant financial improvement—the ED began contributing **\$33 per patient** to the hospital's operating income rather than losing \$6 per patient.

Throughput dropped to **2.5 hours** from 4 hours.





The Solution: Sacred Heart selected MEDHOST, a decision buoyed by overwhelming staff support. In fact, during vendor selection screening, 58 of 60 staff members said that MEDHOST fully met their criteria, including clinicians' drive to find an easy-to-use system that wouldn't impede care; IT's aim for seamless integration with the main HIS; and administration's mandate to improve communications and core measure compliance, increase charge capture and ensure that JCAHO and Department of Health regulations were met. Sacred Heart Hospital chose the full suite of MEDHOST solutions, which includes the Nurse Charting, Physician Documentation, Patient Tracking and Order Entry modules.

"The impact of MEDHOST on our operations continues to amaze us daily," said Dr. Robert Hill, medical director. "We no longer chase down charts or send assistants to find doctors, patients and test results. The real-time information available in MEDHOST keeps workflow progressing, and our clinicians are more productive and can concentrate on spending more time with patients."

MEDHOST's documentation module ensures accurate and thorough charts, and its automatic behind-the-scenes Charge Capture computes charges in real-time and assigns the appropriate E&M Level associated with the care given. At Sacred Heart, this eliminated the cumbersome manual coding process, and the more accurate charge capture and efficient processes led to a significant financial improvement—once costs associated with treating each patient were subtracted from what was billed, the ED began contributing \$33 per patient to the hospital's operating income. Prior to MEDHOST, the hospital lost \$6 per patient. Other results include:

- Over a 12 month timeframe, Sacred Heart maintained a 13 percent boost in charge capture
- On average, an additional \$33,000 was collected per month
- Down-coding dropped to an all-time low of 2 percent

More accurate charting also elevated Sacred Heart's core measure compliance from the 60th percentile into the 90th percentile, and mandatory screenings have reached 100 percent compliance. When the Department of Health and JCAHO visited the hospital to conduct annual audits, they commended MEDHOST's HIPAA compliance capabilities, patient safety features, ease-of-use and highly visual user interface.

The Patient Tracking module, which features an intuitive, graphical floor plan, allows clinicians to immediately see the status of each patient in real-time, along with the number of inbound patients and those waiting to be seen. The module is equipped with automated notifications, risk alerts and visual cues, giving clinicians an at-a-glance awareness of patient acuity. Since deploying Patient Tracking, Sacred Heart cut throughput time from 4 hours to 2.5 hours. Patients now see a doctor 25 minutes sooner, and fast-track time dropped to barely an hour.

The module's real-time alerts and notifications work in tandem with an automatic paging system. Now clinicians are alerted as critical test results return, once a new patient is admitted or when a patient requires immediate attention, keeping the ED on track so care is prompt.

"I can see MEDHOST in place 20 years from now," said Chris Gazdick, ED director. "It's completely capable of adapting to the ED's continually changing environments and has had an impressive impact on our operations."

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