



Comprehensive Approach to Communication Gives Community Health Network an Edge

When Indianapolis-based Community Health Network (CHN) undertook a multi-year, network-wide innovation initiative, Sharp helped transform the healthcare provider's communication processes, moving it away from paper-based communication methods and saving CHN more than \$600,000 annually.

Business Environment Challenges

Hospitals and health systems continue to face new challenges in a rapidly changing healthcare market. Whether it is due to rising competition, cost constraints or increased regulation, providers need to improve performance across operational, clinical and governance functions if they want to stay competitive.

For Central Indiana's Community Health Network (CHN), one area targeted for performance improvement was its communication infrastructure. With four hospitals, more than 200 sites of care, hundreds of physicians and more than two million annual patient visits, CHN's communication needs were significant. And with a multitude of touchpoints—from medical forms, to patient and visitor communications, to mail, marketing and internal communications—CHN put a high demand on the frequency and quality of communications.

In addition, CHN had to make these changes to its infrastructure while keeping critical communications flowing and without disrupting patient care.

Business Technology Solutions

Working together, CHN and Sharp undertook a multi-year process improvement program that pushed communications up a "communication continuum," from paper-based to digital and collaborative visual communication methods.

"We started by asking: Why do you communicate the way you do in all aspects of the organization, and how can we work together to continually improve the ways your staff and patients interact to be more effective and efficient?" says Stephen Orander, President of Sharp Business Systems of the Midwest.

Industry

Healthcare

Organization

Community Health Network

Challenges

- Hoped to drive efficiencies across its operations to lower costs and improve performance
- Needed to upgrade a complex and outdated communications infrastructure
- Changes were required without disrupting patient care

Solutions

- Enhanced communication by blending technology and systems integration
- Decentralized CHN's copy center, dispersing services throughout CHN
- Consolidated more than 1,600 desktop printers to 300 desktop printers and redirected print volumes to Sharp MX-M365N and MX-M465N series MFPs in clinical and administrative work areas
- Created a Web-based portal to handle all medical form requests using a print-on-demand interface
- Installed electronic signage in more than 100 locations to communicate more efficiently with patients, visitors and staff
- Digital signage was managed and updated from a single location, allowing for efficient updates
- Outfitted boardrooms with AQUOS BOARD® interactive display systems to facilitate collaboration and overall staff engagement

Results

- Sharp's managed solutions, software and technology have saved CHN \$1 million over the past five years
- Annual paper use was cut from 64 million pieces of paper to 16 million over the past 12 years
- Eliminated unnecessary inventory and saved \$600,000 annually
- Signage creates a better patient experience and eliminates paper-based processes

That focus led to a reengineering of CHN's copy center approach, which at the time was a centralized production print and copy center. CHN and Sharp worked together to decentralize the process, creating several smaller centers that were dispersed across CHN and bringing services closer to users. In addition, mail operations, including a physician's mail center, were integrated into the copy centers. The technology workhorses in these smaller print centers include Sharp MX-M950 multifunctional printers (MFPs) with booklet makers.

From there, the Sharp team analyzed desktop printer use across CHN facilities and concluded that CHN was spending too much time and money maintaining those devices. Sharp assumed responsibility for the printer fleet, migrating more than 1,600 desktop printers down to 300 desktop printers and moving the remaining volume to Sharp MX Series MFPs, further streamlining document-driven communications.

Next, the team tackled CHN's medical forms, which were outsourced and required long turnaround times and PO based purchasing and receivers to get form orders completed. Sharp moved the medical forms up the communication continuum, creating a Web-based portal via Microsoft® Sharepoint® that allows users to preview, 360 view and order forms with the click of a mouse. The upgrades eliminated the need for the PO process and costly form inventory, and cut turnaround time significantly.

Two other improvements incorporated visual and collaboration communication methods to improve the patient and visitor experience at CHN facilities and to allow for face-to-face meetings from remote locations.

At more than 100 sites of care, Sharp installed professional monitors with Prysm® interactive signage (300 Media Station computers) that provide more effective communications for visitors. For example, at some CHN facilities, visitors looking for directions to the cafeteria can receive a coupon offering food discounts through the interactive signage via their smartphone. Sharp also designed the system so that CHN can monitor and update content on the monitors from a single central location.

Finally, with effective communications across facilities critical to CHN's operations, Sharp installed three AQUOS BOARD interactive display systems to help facilitate videoconferencing, group diagnosis, meeting presentations and collaborative working sessions. The Network is beginning to integrate this technology into more day-to-day operations to improve patient care and promote overall staff engagement.

Proven Results

The partnership with CHN and Sharp Business Systems of Indiana has spanned a dozen years and has grown organically in that time. "Sharp has been a valued partner, providing not only technology solutions but also innovative workflow solutions," says Rick Copple, Vice President and Chief Technology Officer, CHN. "They have worked alongside CHN to not only reduce costs but improve the overall needs of our clinicians."

The results have contributed to the culture of innovation at CHN. For example, by streamlining document-driven communications, Sharp helped CHN cut annual paper use from 64 million documents to 16 million throughout the past 12 years—converting medical form fulfillment to print-on-demand reduced turnaround time from up to two weeks to 24 - 48 hours. It also eliminated unnecessary inventory and has saved the Network \$600,000 annually over the past three years. Overall, Sharp's managed solutions, software and technology have saved CHN \$4 million annually since 2010.

"Our creative communication solutions and teamwork with the Community Health Network leadership has proven to be a powerful and effective relationship," says Orander. "The results speak for themselves both experientially and financially, and we're proud to be an accountable partner that requires continuous improvement in all aspects of our relationship."



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