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Memorial Health System

Memorial Health System Gains Control of a Once Unmanageable Process Involving Thousands of New and Ongoing Agreements

Like many leading healthcare organizations, Springfield-based Memorial Health System is constantly in the process of acquiring and maintaining thousands of contracts, ranging from employment agreements with physicians and nurses to purchasing orders with major suppliers.

“At any time, we may be handling as many as 3,000 contracts,” said Cindy Oehmke, contract specialist for the health system. “The whole system encompasses three hospitals, a home health services provider, a mental and behavioral health affiliate and network of primary care physician clinics and practices. We deal not only with contracts in different departments, but contracts originating from different locations. To think of that in terms of physical paperwork, it seems almost impossible to keep track of it all.”

“Too many things were slipping through the cracks,” Oehmke said. “We knew we needed a centralized process.”

Memorial Health System became one of a growing number of hospitals and health systems to turn to MediTract, the nation’s leading healthcare contract and document management provider, serving over 20 percent of the nation’s hospitals. The company is a dominant provider in the healthcare contract and document management business, serving more than 1,200 hospitals and 5,000 related facilities. MediTract is a division of TractManager Inc., a national Internet-based technology firm specializing

in secure, real-time access to customized and centralized contract and document management systems.

The health system has been using the document management and contract system with great success. Aside from ensuring timely payments on completed jobs and handling all of the health system’s contracts, MediTract also helps ensure patient confidentiality and keeps tabs on various insurance policies for permanent facilities and new construction projects.

“Before, just about anybody could sign a contract. Now we have a system in place that runs through a compliance checklist. Our employees know that they need the proper authorization to sign contracts. And our legal department is kept abreast of everything we enter into, before we enter into it,” Oehmke said. “It’s been a real lifesaver. We have every single contract that comes through Memorial Medical Center (the health system’s flagship hospital) and health system running through one office, one system, and we’re able to track everything from there. All the forms and paperwork are online and at our fingertips.”

Memorial Health System has started using MediTract for all service contracts and agreements including legal services, corporate compliance and internal audits. MediTract enables the health system to track compliance with Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), state and federal regulations. The service also provides staff with routine management and oversight of all contracts.

"We now have a policy that requires every agreement to be reviewed by the legal department and the proper management before it is implemented," Oehmke said. "We put together step-by-step procedures to make sure we've got our bases covered. MediTract gives prompts and e-mail reminders and really helps to expedite the process of getting the agreements reviewed and signed. And we have eliminated any possibility of approving payment for unauthorized projects or expired contracts."

Oehmke said that MediTract has helped by identifying opt-out clauses in contracts, ensuring that the health system has plenty of time to terminate agreements and flagging contracts that don't require payment until a project is complete. The purchasing department can easily conduct price comparisons among vendors and receives e-mail notices when price lists expire.

"I measure it this way – before MediTract, I had 20 filing cabinets in my office. Now I have two," Oehmke said. "Before, if the president of the hospital was looking for a contract, it might take me two or three days to find it. Now I can have it in his hands in less than five minutes. I can tell you the vendor list by heart. If there's a problem with a job or a vendor, I can go right to the contract and tell you who's responsible for oversight of a project and who to call. I've worked here for 26 years, and always with contracts. MediTract has definitely made my job easier."

MediTract provided a team of professionals to build the initial contract and document database for Memorial Health System, scanning and uploading all of the existing contracts and documents on HP Digital Senders. Additional scanners were left onsite for the processing of new contracts and documents that need daily uploading.

The MediTract scanning process extracts key data elements and loads them into the appropriate location in the database. The software monitors key data elements and sends e-mail alerts to appropriate staff. The technology offers a series of views and functions performed against the database, tailoring the system to meet the requirements of each department.

Users from many sites can access the database at the same time. And since each department can tailor the database to their needs, there are no unnecessary prompts, and, therefore, less wasted time.

"It's been a tremendous timesaver," Oehmke said. "Our managed care department, for instance, created custom fields for patient billing that greatly reduce the time it takes to bill insurance providers. We can track physician hours and avoid shuffling papers between various departments. The little timesavers that MediTract provides really add up. I'm not sure how we did business without it."

Enhances Contract Management and Corporate Compliance Efforts

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