Beaufort County Health Department

Beaufort County achieves Meaningful Use comlpliance through seamless transtition to Patagonia Health EHR

BACKGROUND

The Beaufort County Health Department (BCHD), located in eastern North Carolina, is responsible for serving its community by promoting and protecting the public's health. In any given year, nearly 7,500 patients will come through the doors of the clinic, but the department itself is responsible for the wellbeing of the roughly 48,600 citizens who call Beaufort County home. BCHD was eager to transition to and use a new Electronic Health Record (EHR) system because it found that its existing software was somewhat redundant and at times difficult to use. Patagonia Health's name surfaced at a number of meetings that the BCHD employees regularly attend, including meetings of the North Carolina Association of Local Health Directors (NCALHD). "Part of the reason Patagonia Health was chosen was it was focused on aspects that are unique to public health and they are willing to work with health departments on specific public health needs," said James Madson, the Beaufort County Health Department health director.

SOLUTION

Once Patagonia Health was chosen, the implementation and training process began. The Patagonia Health team built many of BCHD's existing proprietary forms into its EHR so as to make the transition from paper to electronic documentation easier.

"The continuity of the transition from our in-house paper forms to electronic forms was seamless and efficient because the electronic forms mirrored the paper forms," said Vanessa Greene, RN, Clinical Supervisor, of the Beaufort County Health Department.

To ensure accurate communication and a smooth go-live process, Patagonia Health's team of trainers spent time on site during go-live with all of the employees at BCHD who work with clinical patients and who would therefore be affected by this transition. This included professionals in a number of roles-specifically, a mid-level provider, clinical staff, administrative staff, support staff, medical records, social workers and clerical staff. Patagonia Health's attention

BENEFITS OF PATAGONIA HEALTH EHR

► Ensuring that certain procedures receive necessary follow-ups

► Rectifying pharmacy counts, if needed

► Allowing both clinical and clerical staff to better prepare for and perform audits

to detail and thorough approach was one factor which led to a faster and easier transition process, and enabled the BCHD staff to efficiently continue delivering care without delays to its patients.

"Our health department prides itself on innovation and leadership," said Madson. "We were able to address many issues, such as in-house forms, and make them work within the EHR model."

PROCESS

When it came to making the actual transition, the BCHD team had some concerns. There was a general hesitation about making a change to a new platform, particularly because not everyone on the staff is tech-savvy. But the Patagonia Health team's initial product demonstration to the BCHD staff generated a great deal of excitement about the software, and helped to alleviate some of the worries they were having about making the transition.

"Patagonia Health has an ease of use that helped even the most resistant to change," said Greene. "Their demo really helped our staff look forward to the process of transitioning to the EHR."

The BCHD team met the transition process head-on and with enthusiasm. The clinical and clerical supervisors directed staff as they "practiced" within the system with live patients one week before their official go-live date. This helped ensure that BCHD's process was working and that any required lastminute tweaks could be made prior to the switch. The clinical and clerical supervisors also designed customized training manuals with screenshots and how-to guides to help walk the users through a complete client visit. These guides helped the staff feel more comfortable with the system. They also identified and designated "super-users" within the system. These "superusers" provided guidance and support to other BCHD staff who were not as comfortable using a computer, and allowed those less tech-savvy users to transition as easily as any other user.

"Although we anticipated a lengthy transition for the clinics to be back at full capacity, we were able to go back to full clinics after the first week,"said Shelia Sauls, Administrative Assistant at Beaufort County Health Department. "The Patagonia Health system works for our Health department's workflow, which allowed us to provide consistent patient care."

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James Madison
Health Director

BENEFITS

By using Patagonia Health, BCHD is able to achieve federally-mandated Meaningful Use compliance requirements. Patagonia Health's EHR version is certified as Meaningful Use 2011 and 2014 Edition compliant under the Drummond Group's Electronic Health Records Office of the National Coordinator Authorized Certification Body program.

In addition, the department experiences smooth, efficient documentation processes during clinic visits. Also, the department's ability to electronically send prescriptions via the medications widget benefits patients immensely.

Beaufort County no longer struggles with challenging paper charts. Now when patients call with questions or concerns, any nurse can easily pull up the patient's electronic chart and address the inquiry without having to track down paper documentation. BCHD staff members are more efficient and able to better allocate their time, and patients receive fast and accurate care.

Patagonia Health's reporting mechanisms have also provided the BCHD team with better tracking for a variety of purposes, including:

• Ensuring that certain procedures receive necessary follow-ups
• Rectifying pharmacy counts, if needed
• Allowing both clinical and clerical staff to better prepare for and perform audits

"We are very pleased with the overall ease of use of the Patagonia Health EHR system," said Madson.

In fact, the Beaufort County team has even conducted Patagonia Health demos with neighboring Health departments and has been successful in bringing several counties on board with Patagonia. The team has been willing to recommend Patagonia Health EHR based on its successful implementation experience and its continued use of Patagonia Health throughout day-to-day operations.

PatagoniaHealth

At Patagonia Health, we empower healthcare communities to achieve desired health outcomes with easy-to-learn, innovative technology solutions backed with highly-referenceable customer service. Patagonia Health collaborates with healthcare organizations to improve the well-being of their communities. We serve those who serve others.

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