InnerTrack™ for Intrasite Delivery, Scheduling and Tracking – Riverside Regional Medical Center

Overview

Riverside Health System is an all-inclusive, non-profit health system providing virtually all types of healthcare services to support patients in the community throughout their lifetime. Based in Newport News, Virginia, the Riverside Health System manages five acute care hospitals across the region as well as physician practices; lifelong healthcare such as PACE (Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly) and nursing homes; behavioral health; and rehabilitation centers. Riverside Regional Medical Center began serving the Virginia Peninsula community in 1916. Today, this 450-bed, acute care facility is the Virginia Peninsula's most comprehensive medical facility, combining the most current medical technology with a healing environment.

Riverside has been recognized for excellence in both patient care and the use of technology to successfully improve business processes. The health system has earned the Joint Commission "Gold Seal of Approval," is among the GHX "Best 50" provider organizations, was named to the list of America's "Most Wired" healthcare systems for the eleventh consecutive year, and was recently awarded the 2015 "Supply Chain Department of the Year" by Healthcare Purchasing News (HPN). HPN, which provides clinical intelligence for supply chain leadership, selected the multi-hospital system's supply chain team for its comprehensive implementation of value analysis, its orchestration of financial intelligence, and its product and process expertise, all of which solidified its relationships with hospital clinicians and C-suite executives.

The Situation

Riverside is made up of many different types of organizations, generally located within a 150-mile radius of the Riverside Regional Medical Center. The health system uses 10 trucks and employs about 15 drivers on two shifts in order to manage the substantial number of packages, supplies and specimens that move daily within the organization. The process that was being used was essentially verbal and paper-based, with limited manual tracking for each location. The chain of custody associated with this process did not provide indicators surrounding record creation and/ or delivery confirmations. Thomas McVey, Director, Operations/Logistics Supply Chain Management and colleague Ann Tyler, CMRP, Manager, Supply Chain Information Systems, saw the opportunity to better manage pick-ups and deliveries among the facilities within the system.

"We use internal couriers for the movement of packages and materials within our system – some are supply chain related, such as getting supplies to different facilities," said Thomas McVey. "There are many more that are administrative (delivering interoffice mail), clinical pick up and delivery of specimens for testing) and pharmaceuticals. Altogether, there are more than 200 unique stops across our system of acute care hospitals, Lifelong Health facilities, labs, physician practices and urgent care centers."

"One of the problems we were experiencing was that the infrastructure supporting our internal pick-up and delivery system was very manual. The couriers were responsible for handling the materials in their

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vehicles – without a good way to track items. It left an opportunity for things to be misdelivered, misidentified or misplaced," said McVey. "We did sometimes experience lost supplies and shipments, but most importantly, it was the loss of control and visibility into shipments. For example, someone at a facility would request supplies, the courier would deliver the items, but the end user would report they were never received. When we investigated, we'd sometimes find that the courier delivered the package to a central location, and the end user wouldn't be able to find it, unaware that it was delivered. So essentially there were times that a package wasn't lost, but there was a perception that it was. The visibility and control were poor."

Ann Tyler added, "When you don't have an active solution in place, and processes are very manual, it's hard to identify what's happened when a process breakdown occurs. If a package went missing, we'd have to ask everyone involved what was picked up and delivered. So our biggest issues were the chain of custody and the transportation time of the packages moving throughout the health system. It is basic information–who picks up the packages, who receives the packages, how long it takes for delivery–and we need it in a way that creates an internal audit trail."

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> *– Thomas McVey, Riverside Health System*

The Solution

In an organization with multiple sites and a large number of packages and items in transit between facilities, having visibility to each package, from scheduling to pick-up to delivery, is imperative. Creating an electronic audit trail will help organizations:

- Reduce loss
- Gain visibility to items in transit, reducing staff time spent trying to locate deliveries
- Document each item picked-up and delivered in an accessible, electronic format
- Build trust in the internal system
- Help ensure patients don't have to repeat procedures

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InnerTrack helps efficiently manage the movement of packages throughout the organization—automating manual processes, creating visibility and documenting an electronic record of every transaction. Using InnerTrack, visibility is created to packages as pick-ups are scheduled, deliveries are routed, materials are transferred—even from delivery truck to delivery truck if needed—and routes are completed.

"In our organization, anything within the healthcare system can become a *stop* in InnerTrack," said McVey. "We have the flexibility to add locations and schedule pick-ups and deliveries if needed. The same driver may do different things on their route—in the morning, they may pick up mail and in the afternoon, pick up labs. With two shifts, 15 employees and 10 trucks, and the knowledge that sometimes more than one courier may visit the same facility on any given day, we had to be able to organize our routes efficiently and with flexibility."

Installation, Implementation & Training

As a cloud-based system, not integrated with other systems within the healthcare system, initial installation of the solution did not require additional IS/IT resources. McVey and Tyler report the implementation and training in their organization is where they've focused their energy.

"We're doing continual training for our couriers and our internal customers," said Tyler. "So far, we've trained over 430 people with weekly classes, held twice daily on Tuesdays and Thursdays. We're finding that when we train the office managers and they see InnerTrack, they want to get other people in their departments trained as well. That way they have more people who can schedule pick-ups and check the status of deliveries. We've also developed a Frequently Asked Questions document for end users—it's on our intranet as an extra resource. We've been getting feedback from the team members we've trained and we consistently hear they're excited to have this tool for scheduling, tracking and delivery. Sometimes they start off feeling like they're being given an extra task, but once they're in the system and see how easy it is, they're on board quickly."

Components & Hardware

Riverside Health System is using iPods® with ruggedized cases to ensure their drivers have the durability they need, with a Linea Pro® scanner from Infinite Peripherals® that connects directly to the iPod for instant scanning on the device. They currently have the iPods connect via Wi-Fi, either through the internal network or by utilizing the personal hotspot on their corresponding iPhone®.

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– Ann Tyler, CMRP, Riverside Health System

Results

Riverside Health System is seeing benefits in a number of key areas:

1) Avoiding misdeliveries and lost packages

"As our drivers are making a delivery, the system notifies the driver if they're trying to deliver something that's not assigned to that location," said McVey. "This helps our drivers avoid misdelivering packages and having to go back to pick up misdelivered items. As the driver arrives at and selects a location on InnerTrack, the mobile app will only let the user scan items assigned to that specific location. Avoiding delivery errors is especially important when we're dealing with lab samples."

2) Productivity savings

"With visibility to every package that's entered into the system, we don't have to spend time tracking down packages or getting our couriers to remember where they left a delivery," said Tyler. "With InnerTrack, it is much easier to trace the packages. We can find things quickly and eliminate the perception that items weren't delivered or that they were lost."

"Each month, our team would spend time trying to track down packages that had been delivered," added McVey. "Now, we can resolve most of these issues. Our internal customers can even look up deliveries for themselves—they've already started tracking their own packages. We expect to see increased efficiencies for both the supply chain team and our internal customers."

3) Chain of custody

"One of our biggest issues was chain of custody related to the movement of packages throughout the health system," noted Tyler. "Using InnerTrack, we can see which courier picked up the packages, where they were delivered, and who signed for them upon delivery. Our couriers can even take a picture of where the package was left. This is helping us create an electronic internal audit that will be beneficial to our entire organization."

4) Safe handling of packages

"With InnerTrack, our users are able to provide special handling instructions to the driver for a specific package. This can include items such as lab products with temperature control requirements," said Tyler. "As part of the scheduling process, users can actually notate special handling instructions right on the delivery record in the system, so drivers can know exactly how things are to be handled while in transit."

5) Fuel costs

"We want to look at a few more months' worth of data to have real numbers, but we believe that once we can *see* where our drivers are going, we'll be able to organize routes for greater efficiency. For example, grouping together more pick-ups and deliveries at a single location," McVey noted. "In this area, we expect to save both on vehicle expenses and labor."

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– Thomas McVey, Riverside Health System

6) Visibility

"In the coming months, we plan to see additional benefits as it relates to an increase in visibility of packages that are in transit. Today, we're immediately seeing internal customer satisfaction increase using InnerTrack," said McVey. "We're hearing from our end users that it's much easier to see what's scheduled, delivered, where things are throughout the system. Now, if supplies are delivered, but a team member says they've not been received, we can track it—or, as many are doing now, they can just track it themselves."

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In Summary

The team at Riverside Health System is finding InnerTrack to be operationally valuable. "Our couriers are getting more comfortable using the system, gaining efficiencies and the end users are seeing real value," summarized McVey. "There are tremendous opportunities here— as we continue to use the system, I believe we'll see more benefits manifest. It's very user friendly and easy, which is helping drivers and end users adopt the new system and processes."

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