Case Study:
Improving Patient Safety for MultiCare Health System

Challenge

Each year, an estimated 1.5 million Americans are affected by medication errors—a healthcare problem that can have serious, even fatal consequences. It’s a challenge that many healthcare organizations are working to overcome. MultiCare Health System, a group of four hospitals in southwest Washington, embarked on large and complex initiative to improve patient safety using the barcode on each patient’s wristband. MultiCare engaged Point B to lead this initiative, which included four interrelated projects with many diverse stakeholders, workflows, and technology vendors.

Choosing the best solution

To ensure that all stakeholders had a voice in defining requirements for the bedside barcoding solution, Point B brought together and led a cross-functional team including pharmacy, nursing, IT, facilities and process improvement. Point B led the team in evaluating RFPs, making site visits to see the systems in action and weighing diverse factors such as functionality, cost, performance, integration and impact on workflows.

Rolling out system-wide success

Once the technology was selected, Point B led vendor contract negotiations for the bedside barcode solution and orchestrated the rollout across MultiCare’s four hospitals.

Point B began by developing a pilot implementation at Allenmore Hospital. The pilot included testing and working closely with the hospital’s leaders to plan workflow training for the pharmacy and nursing staff. Once the Allenmore pilot was complete, Point B led the system implementation across MultiCare’s other three hospitals. At the same time, Point B managed the three related projects, which culminated in the launch of MultiCare’s new, end-to-end medication delivery system and the integration with the organization’s electronic medical record system.

Putting patient safety first

Now at MultiCare, computerized physician order entry eliminates the errors inherent in handwritten prescriptions, getting accurate records directly into the patient’s medical record. Pharmacy automation ensures that every dose of medication has a readable barcode. Medication storage closer to the point of care on nursing units ensures quicker access to medication. And bedside barcodes validate the five “rights” of medication administration: the right patient, time, drug, dose and route. MultiCare’s integrated system has gained national recognition as one of the most automated healthcare organizations in the country.

“Point B’s understanding of customer needs, communication skills and ‘can-do’ attitude gave all team members a sense of confidence and trust in their ability to deliver on a key organizational project.”

-- MADY MURREY
VICE PRESIDENT AND ADMINISTRATOR, MARY BRIDGE CHILDREN’S HOSPITAL AND HEALTH CENTER

About Point B

Point B is a management consulting firm. We help our clients develop strategic insights and translate them into impact. Point B serves organizations from visionary start-ups to Fortune 100 companies across a wide range of industries, including healthcare, technology, retail and public sector. Our clients look to us for industry and functional expertise combined with our ability to execute. Point B is regularly honored by many publications as an exceptional place to work, including the Wall Street Journal and Consulting Magazine.

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