

Salinas Valley Memorial Healthcare System Migrates Toward 6.0 and Drives Toward Electronic Health Records

Introduction

Since the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) was signed into law in February 2009, hospitals across the country are mapping out strategies to achieve an Electronic Health Record (EHR) and ensure ARRA compliance. The journey toward achieving EHR brings unique challenges to each hospital, necessitating that hospitals evaluate their current situation, identify the steps that need to be taken, and map out the best approach for them to reach their goals. At Dell, we've been offering guidance to many of these hospitals on activities such as building an EHR implementation plan, assessing their infrastructure and disaster recovery needs, optimizing the advanced clinical applications, aligning their clinical and business processes, and ensuring physician and clinician adoption.

One such hospital, California-based Salinas Valley Memorial Healthcare System, has assessed its particular situation and mapped out its own path toward implementing an EHR. A well-established, long time MEDITECH MAGIC user, Salinas Valley Memorial first decided to migrate to MEDITECH's latest 6.0 platform which they felt would provide the strongest foundation to meet their future needs, while also supporting their strategic goal of achieving an EHR.

"EHR is important to Salinas Valley Memorial Healthcare System because it is part of our long term strategic plan and vision. It will improve efficiency, reduce costs, and provide an efficient way to communicate effectively between all of our practitioners," said David Perrott, MD, MBA, Salinas Valley Memorial's Senior Vice President/Medical Director, Quality Management and Safety Services.

The Challenge

Salinas Valley Memorial faced two somewhat overlapping challenges: ensuring a smooth migration to 6.0 and building a solid foundation for an EHR. As part of their 6.0 migration, the hospital planned to implement MEDITECH's Advanced Clinical System including Computerized Physician Order Entry and Clinical Decision Support.

Salinas Valley Memorial recognized that implementing an EHR was not just a technology-driven project but rather a clinical initiative. A key component of the planning centered on promoting clinician and physician adoption to the provider community in order to achieve a successful implementation of MEDITECH's advanced clinical applications.

"EHR represents a major shift in our staff's consciousness that is going to require a great deal of focus on their part, and they are anxious about how they fit into this equation," said John Fletcher, Senior Vice President, Finance and Information Technology, Salinas Valley.

The MEDITECH Solutions Group within Dell Perot Systems was delighted when Salinas Valley Memorial asked for our assistance. The hospital engaged us to perform a readiness assessment and project planning to ensure a smooth transition from MAGIC to 6.0. Our physician and clinician consultants are also providing advisory services in the areas of physician governance, leadership, change management, and clinical decision support to further advance the hospital-wide transformation required to achieve their EHR goals.

Solution

Working with Salinas Valley Memorial, we provided a complete readiness assessment that encompassed technologies, applications, staffing, and processes that would be impacted by the 6.0 migration. It included a comprehensive review of their IT strategy and current clinical and business processes, applications, and infrastructure. It also addressed physician and clinician awareness of new 6.0 functionality as well as budget and staffing recommendations for migration success. As a result of the readiness assessment, Salinas Valley Memorial has a detailed roadmap and timeline for pre-conversion tasks and an implementation plan to guide them to 6.0.

“The MEDITECH Solutions Group within Dell brings a lot of knowledge, not only about MEDITECH 6.0, but healthcare operations, including the implementation of a new EHR,” said Audrey Parks, Senior Administrative Director, Information Technology, Salinas Valley Memorial. “We are working very closely with Dell to be sure our infrastructure is prepared, and at this point, we are doing a lot of preparations for 6.0. They are helping us create organized groups and teams to review our current state processes, assess where we are in terms of our skill sets and knowledge, and identify any gaps.”

Recognizing that EHR initiatives must be ‘clinically led, and IT supported’, our physician and clinician advisory consultants are working with Salinas Valley Memorial to establish the foundation needed to ensure clinician engagement and adoption. A shared vision and a multidisciplinary governance structure were developed to promote effective and timely decision making.

“With the advice and help of the MEDITECH Solutions Group, we now have a committee with physician champions and they are going out to the various medical staff committees and including them in the process so that the entire medical staff will be on the same page towards a successful outcome,” said Fletcher.

Our advisory consultants also identified organizational risks and mitigation strategies related to workflow and cultural change management efforts. With the comprehensive readiness assessment and detailed project plan in place, along with ongoing support from our physician and clinician consultants, Salinas Valley Memorial is confident about their MEDITECH 6.0 migration and their successful implementation of a fully capable EHR.

“We work hard with MEDITECH to understand their system inside and out, and with our customers to ensure they get the most effective and efficient use of the system. At the end of the day, that’s what it’s all about: our customers and their patients, whether inside the walls of the hospital or outside, all benefiting from improved patient safety, quality of care, and the efficiencies of EHR,” summarized Berk Smith, President, Healthcare Services, Dell Perot Systems.

To view a brief video about Salinas Valley’s journey to EHR, click here:

<http://www.perotsystems.com/MediaRoom/Videos/SalinasValleyEH>