



## HOSPITALS & INTEGRATED DELIVERY NETWORKS

### Smarter patients, better results

BY JACK BEAUDOIN, Editorial Director

COLUMBUS, OH – When officials at Grant Medical Center, part of the OhioHealth system, looked to improve the hospital's quality indicators, they knew information technology could help. But unlike many healthcare organizations, they aimed the IT initiative at patients, not clinicians.

According to Mrunal Shah, MD, OhioHealth's vice president for physician IT services, the hospital's initial goal was to reduce the 30-day readmission for congestive heart failure. Readmissions, after all, are costly to the hospital, and OhioHealth's CHF (congestive heart failure) clinics were underused. But Shah had statistical evidence to show that higher use rates at the clinics led to lower readmission rates at hospitals.



Mrunal Shah, MD

"Most congestive heart failure patients will tell you that they don't remember all the things that they can do to stay out of the hospital," Shah said. "So we looked at the ways we would educate our patients in terms of weight, diet, signs and symptoms."

The system partnered with Emmi Solutions to offer patient-level CHF education using a variety of channels, including in-hospital computers, clinic kiosks and Web sites. The interactive, multimedia materials are sequenced so that patients can learn about their conditions and treatments on their own schedule.

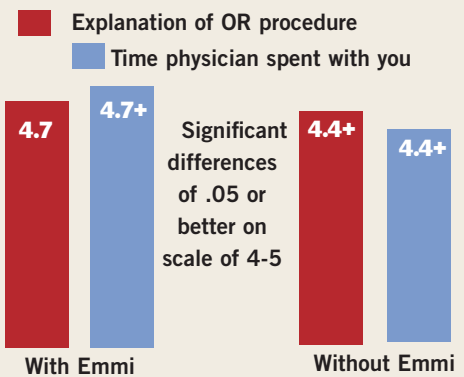
Meanwhile, the system tracks the progress patients have made. Any time patients have questions, they can refer to the Emmi materials – and they're encouraged to contact one of the CHF clinics.

Grant rolled out the project in June and will review the results this summer. If they show a statistically significant reduction in hospital readmission, Shah says the CHF pilot could be rolled out to other hospitals within the system, as well as to patients with other chronic conditions or who require education about upcoming procedures.

"We want to see some positive outcomes from this pilot at Grant," Shah said. "If we prove what we think we will, there is no reason we wouldn't expand to certain procedural areas like GI and Cardiology."

The Methodist Hospital System in Houston has deployed Emmi's education programs to increase patient satisfaction in a metropolitan area that includes

#### Methodist hospital inpatient survey



SOURCE: METHODIST HOSPITAL SATISFACTION: APRIL 2009

several large, competitive healthcare organizations, including MD Anderson Cancer Center, Memorial Hermann and St. Luke's Episcopal Hospital.

"We use any and every metric to measure patient satisfaction," said Bryan Croft, vice president of operations. He said the hospital system views Emmi as "a differentiator" and part of the "Methodist experience," a quality and satisfaction program that focuses on the patient.

Results from the health system's own internal studies suggest that providing patients with high quality multimedia education improves their experience.

Ambulatory clinic patient satisfaction surveys from July 2008 to February 2009 show an increase in satisfaction in overall care, explanation prior to surgery, information about what was done, likelihood to recommend the hospital to others, the quality of information received prior to surgery and how well the procedures were explained.

An in-patient study also found improvements in the same measures, as well as with time spent with physicians.

"The data really speak to how well Emmi contributed to the patient's understanding of the procedure and what the experience will be," Croft said. ■

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Hospitals across the country are turning to programs that educate patients about their condition, care and procedures.