Enhancing the Patient Experience

Industry Overview
As the debate over health care policies continue to shape the landscape of the industry, a central theme of leveraging the use of electronic health records (EHR) in order to improve the quality of care and positively impact patient outcomes has become a clear focus of policymakers. Newly established measures move away from the standard payment models which focus solely on quantity of care provided, mandating a larger emphasis on quality.

One of the most apparent examples of this new legislation is the introduction of tying patient satisfaction scores, captured by Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (HCAHPS) discharge surveys, to payment. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) have begun reducing hospital inpatient reimbursements by one percent, a rate which will increase to two percent in 2017.

Health care organizations are now earning this withheld reimbursement back through clinical quality measures and reported HCAHPS scores. Additionally, CMS has begun to penalize hospitals and integrated delivery systems experiencing "higher than expected" 30-day readmission rates for cases of heart failure, acute myocardial infarction and pneumonia. Preventable readmissions are considered by policymakers to be an indicator of lower care quality and have recently resulted in a staggering $12 billion of one-year Medicare spending. In an effort to curb spending in this area, CMS has started penalizing organizations with excessive readmission rates by withholding up to one percent of all inpatient payments – a figure which will be followed by a withholding of up to two percent in 2014 and up to three percent in 2015 and beyond.

Linking Satisfaction to Care Quality
With this increased focus on patient satisfaction, health care organizations are under growing pressure to enhance the way quality care is given as well as find new ways to improve the patient experience. This pressure is amplified when clinician time is limited, leaving physicians and nurses with less time to spend at the patient's bedside. According to research conducted by The Beryl Institute, patient experience and satisfaction is ranked as the number two priority facing hospital executives today, following only the number one priority of quality and patient safety. However, only 27 percent of those executives actually have a formal definition of "the patient experience".

A research study released by Duke University's Fuqua School of Business attempted to measure what correlation existed between patient satisfaction and 30-day readmission rates at roughly 2,500 hospitals. In addition to overall patient satisfaction with the hospital stay, the surveys also helped to determine whether patients were provided discharge instructions and the necessary condition management information upon leaving the hospital. Interestingly, the research study found that patient satisfaction scores were more closely linked with lower readmission rates and high-quality hospital care than any other clinical performance measures.

In order to help raise patient satisfaction levels and enhance the patient hospital experience, health care organizations are in need of systems which improve communication and care coordination, and also allow patients to become active participants in the care process. To address this need Cerner developed CareAware myStation™, a fully integrated, interactive patient system aimed at engaging patients and improving satisfaction levels throughout the entire care process.

CareAware myStation
CareAware myStation enables engagement for patients and families throughout the entire care process by providing comprehensive communication, education and entertainment offerings — all through the patient's bedside TV. At a glance, patients are able see who is caring for them, their calendar for the day, as well as assigned educational materials. Patients can
CareAware myStation is a fully-integrated interactive patient system aimed at engaging patients and families throughout the entire care process by providing comprehensive communication, education and entertainment offerings.

also access their plan of care to view personalized information like allergies, medications, education content, discharge plan and more.

CareAware myStation also provides an easy way to share feedback on things like pain level and satisfaction with the overall care experience. Additionally, the Cerner Patient Portal®, a service for online access to items like lab results and appointment scheduling, is accessible within myStation and allows for easy enrollment. All this in combination enhances safety and communication in real-time with on-demand access.

The educational component of CareAware myStation provides an efficient way to consistently deliver high-quality, patient-specific education. Eliminating the complex logistical coordination of the patient, family, educator and materials simplifies the workflow and saves time. Assignments are made in the EHR as a by-product of existing clinician activities, and the patient is notified as content is seamlessly made available. Materials can then be viewed on-demand, and the loop is closed with a notification to the care team back in the EHR.

Client Successes

University of Missouri Health Care System
As part of the University of Missouri Health Care System, the Missouri Orthopaedic Institute (MOI) is central Missouri’s largest freestanding orthopaedic center, as well as the region’s most comprehensive orthopaedic surgery center. Beginning in July 2012, MOI has used CareAware myStation for inpatient engagement within its Columbia, Mo. facility. Patient HCAHPS scores have increased in a number of areas at MOI since go-live of myStation, specifically in the overall hospital ratings and in areas of care communication.

Comparing fourth-quarter data from 2012 and fourth-quarter data from 2011, there has been a 14.2 percent top box improvement in the “Would Recommend Hospital to Family” question. Additionally, there has been a 4.7 percent top box increase in “Overall Hospital Rating” question for the same time period.

Care communication at MOI has also improved for this same timeframe by using CareAware myStation. There has been an 8.9 percent top
Box improvement in the “Doctor Explained Things Understandably” question, a 13.4 percent top box increase in the “Nurses Explained Things Understandably” question, and a 3.0 percent top box improvement in the “Told What Medicine was For” question.

**NCH Healthcare System**

As one of the two Naples, Fla. hospitals within NCH Healthcare System, NCH North Naples Hospital is a 261-bed facility providing a range of services to residents of Collier County and southwest Florida. Two patient floors within the NCH North Naples Hospital, North Naples 5 and North Naples 6, have been using CareAware myStation since August 2012.

NCH Healthcare System has experienced an increase in its reported HCAHPS scores in a number of care areas due to the CareAware myStation deployment, including a 2.8 percent top box increase in the “Overall Hospital Rating” question and a 2.6 percent top box increase in the “Hospital Environment” question.

Additionally, medication teaching has greatly improved at NCH Healthcare System, as the integration of CareAware myStation to the EHR has helped improve patient comprehension. Specifically, NCH has experienced:

- 9.3% increase in “Communication About Medications”
- 5.6% increase in “Told What Medication was For”
- 15.4% increase in “Described Medication Side Effect”
Conclusion
As CMS shifts its reimbursement policy towards one partially driven by clinical performance and patient satisfaction ratings, health care organizations must be prepared to find new ways in which to enhance the patient experience and improve care quality.

Cerner’s CareAware myStation interactive patient system is positioned to engage patients and their families throughout the entire care process during a hospital stay. The solution’s modules help to improve care communication and, most importantly, empower patients to become active participants in their own healing and wellness, leading to increased levels of patient satisfaction and improved patient outcomes.

While the debate over U.S. health care reform will inevitably continue, the new reimbursement policies employed by CMS provide a blueprint for rewarding organizations with higher levels of quality care, and penalizing those which fall short. Health care organizations must focus on engaging both patients and families throughout the entire hospital experience, transforming care processes to positively impact patient outcomes in order to create a new, patient-centric model for care delivery.