



PRESS RELEASE

GE Healthcare Performance Solutions Helping Georgia Hospital Streamline Patient Flow, Boost Revenue and Enhance Patient Satisfaction

Pilot program to bring major efficiency enhancements to Medical Center of Central Georgia through RFID tracking and unique patient care visibility system called Awarix

WAUKESHA, WI, OCTOBER 27, 2006 – GE Healthcare will help The Medical Center of Central Georgia (MCCG) improve timely patient care and patient throughput by combining Six Sigma-based process improvements with the latest RFID patient location and patient care visibility system.

The new process will go live in January 2007 at MCCG, a 603-bed acute care hospital in Macon, Ga. The goal is to ensure timely and efficient care by making sure that rooms are ready for patients being admitted or for patients being transferred, such as from the emergency department to the ICU, or from the PACU to a medical floor.

GE is collaborating on the MCCG project with Awarix, Inc., of Birmingham, Ala., a provider of patient care visibility systems that let clinicians see what is happening with patients and check the status of patient rooms simply by looking at large-screen displays. GE is also deploying its IntelliMotion RFID system to track patients throughout the enterprise.

Together, GE and MCCG will monitor progress to measure expected benefits such as creation of additional capacity, reduced length of stay, increased revenue and increased patient and staff satisfaction.

“Cost-effective care depends on moving patients smoothly through the treatment process,” says Bill Burke, a manager of clinical practice with the Performance Solutions group of GE Healthcare. “If rooms are not ready when it is time for patients to be transferred or admitted, that causes backups elsewhere in the hospital.

“For example, if patients can’t be transferred after emergency care, then other patients arriving at the emergency room face long wait times and may leave without being seen by a doctor. Similarly, if a bed is not ready for a patient on the way by ambulance, then that patient has to be diverted to another hospital. All this is terribly inconvenient for patients, and it also means a major loss



of revenue for the hospital. Our goal is to improve patient care, increase staff satisfaction and enhancement the hospital's overall ability to serve the community."

As the first step in the MCCG project, the GE Performance Solutions group used Six Sigma and other proven methods to analyze patient flow and to devise a system to help ensure rooms are available when needed. The improvements include scheduling patient discharges regularly throughout the day and setting time expectations for cleaning and preparing rooms after the patients leave.

The net effect is to "pull" patients through the system by making rooms available in a timely manner and letting the department and admitting staffs know of the availability.

The Awarix patient care visibility technology, when implemented, will help make staff accountable for following the processes. A large screen near the nurse station on each floor shows a floor plan on which patient rooms appear in different colors according to their status – occupied, empty but in need of cleaning, ready for the next patient. Any staff member then can see if, for example, a room has been sitting empty for an excessive time without being cleaned, or if a patient discharge is behind schedule.

The system also is used to provide location information throughout a patient's treatment. A radio-frequency identification (RFID) tag travels with each patient's chart, enabling staff to see on the screen where patients are in the system and how long they have been there. To ensure privacy, no names or other patient-specific information appears on the main screen. However, caregivers can use personal computers to access the visibility system and review patient data.

The visibility system is networked across the hospital so that admitting and departments that need to transfer patients can see when rooms become available. The system also will generate reports that MCCG can use to measure progress against specific improvement goals.

"As you get busier, you have to become more efficient," says Barbara Stickel, Senior Vice President and Chief Nursing Officer with MCCG. "The GE Healthcare team has been extremely valuable in helping us create leaner, more streamlined processes.

"The patient care visibility system will provide instantaneous information that will enable our staff to be much more responsive. It will also help us measure the results of process changes we've put in place. We're very excited about this program and what it will mean to our patients, physicians and staff."



About The Medical Center of Central Georgia

The Medical Center of Central Georgia, located in Macon, is a 603-bed, full-service, acute care hospital serving some 750,000 residents. It has a primary service area of 30 counties and treats patients regularly from nearly 80 percent of the state's 159 counties. MCCG is one of the top teaching hospitals in the United States and serves as the primary teaching hospital for the Mercer University School of Medicine. Three of its programs – cardiac care, neurology and orthopedics – have earned five-star national ratings.

About GE Healthcare

GE Healthcare provides transformational medical technologies and services that are shaping a new age of patient care. Our expertise in medical imaging and information technologies, medical diagnostics, patient monitoring systems, performance improvement, drug discovery, and biopharmaceutical manufacturing technologies is helping clinicians around the world re-imagine new ways to predict, diagnose, inform and treat disease, so their patients can live their lives to the fullest.

GE Healthcare's broad range of products and services enable healthcare providers to better diagnose and treat cancer, heart disease, neurological diseases, and other conditions earlier. Our vision for the future is to enable a new "early health" model of care focused on earlier diagnosis, pre-symptomatic disease detection and disease prevention. Headquartered in the United Kingdom, GE Healthcare is a \$15 billion unit of General Electric Company (NYSE: GE). Worldwide, GE Healthcare employs more than 43,000 people committed to serving healthcare professionals and their patients in more than 100 countries. www.gehealthcare.com.

About Awarix

Awarix, Birmingham, Ala., is the leading developer of enterprise patient care visibility systems, a new category of health care technology that enables hospitals and integrated delivery networks to streamline throughput, improve caregiver effectiveness and increase patient satisfaction. The Awarix system provides a 360 degree view of the patient's status in real time via electronic patient care communication "whiteboards" that present real-time information about patients' locations, the status of patients' various tests results, updates on patient safety issues and the expected time of the patients' discharges. By presenting a graphic representation of the hospital's floor plan, clinicians and



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other users can determine exactly what is happening with patients simply by glancing at the whiteboards. Radio frequency identification (RFID) technology and geospatial visual technologies are integrated with existing clinical systems to create this synthesized single view of patient status. With the Awarix system, health care providers have been able to quickly increase revenues via increased capacity, eliminate emergency department diversion, improve patient care quality and enhance employee and patient satisfaction.

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