Indiana University Health System (IU Health) is the largest health system in Indiana, with 3,000 providers and over 200 different physician office locations, eight acute care hospitals, one pediatric hospital, five critical access hospitals and nine ambulatory surgery centers.

Overview

The need
A multifaceted team at IU Health needed actionable financial performance data to quickly identify opportunities for cost-control.

The solution
The team used IBM® ActionOI® as an objective database for insights—comparing the health system’s operational and financial data to that of peer comparison groups.

The benefit
The IBM® ActionOI® program is helping the system identify performance improvement opportunities in areas such as staffing levels, skill mix, productivity, utilization, patient volume, facility capacity and more.

Indiana University Health System

Using IBM ActionOI to support hospital and health system profitability and data-driven decision making

Indiana University Health System (IU Health) is the largest health system in Indiana, with 3,000 providers and over 200 different physician office locations, eight acute care hospitals, one pediatric hospital, five critical access hospitals and nine ambulatory surgery centers.
A new team tackles new challenges

In response to the growing problem of segmented data across the organization and an increased need for budgetary guidance at the regional level, IU Health had recently formed the strategic Profitability & Utilization Support Hub (PUSH) team. The results-driven group—made up of experts from diverse areas such as revenue cycle, supply chain, clinical operations, labor analytics and more—was tasked with providing recommendations that would help drive operational and financial improvement.

As the PUSH team began its work, it turned to ActionOI from IBM® Watson Health™ for reliable and unbiased data that would aid in getting from problem to solution, faster. The solution's database became the starting point for the team's work. Following are three examples.

Reducing telemetry utilization

Using operational and financial performance benchmarks from ActionOI, the PUSH team proactively found that one of the system’s hospitals was ranking 70 percent over the comparison group median in telemetry use.

The PUSH team recommended a review of both the electronic medical record order set and staffing ratios. Those steps led to improvement of the telemetry standard order set to reduce prolonged monitoring and a reduction in full-time equivalents (FTEs) through flex time.

Within just three months, the hospital had reduced telemetry utilization to the comparison group median.

Pinpointing staffing concerns in a hybrid facility

A recently integrated hospital had been converted into an outpatient facility with emergency care and oncology treatment services. The transition to this hybrid model made internal benchmarking difficult, but the PUSH team used the comprehensive data in ActionOI to develop a roadmap.

Team members found new concerns in the data: A large increase in oncology patient volume was needed to maintain current levels.

The team recommended increasing marketing to get the word out to the community and providers that the facility was actively accepting new patients.

Thanks to the team’s work, hospital leadership was able to act quickly to maximize resources and optimize strategies that could increase oncology patient and provider participation volumes.

“The PUSH team uses ActionOI as a starting point for all of our operational projects, whether we’re proactively seeking opportunities for improvement or it’s a request from one of our CFOs to look into a problem. We first consult the data in ActionOI and say, ‘how do we compare?’”

– Chad Williams, Program Director for Business Intelligence Member PUSH team IU Health
Boosting emergency department (ED) capacity

When one of IU Health’s hospitals began to report declining ED visits even though staff was reporting full capacity, the hospital’s CFO asked for guidance.

The hypothesis was that more patients were leaving without being seen due to longer wait times, so the PUSH team used ActionOI benchmarks to examine possible ED capacity constraints.

The data showed the hospital was efficiently using its available space—treating 20 more ED patients per day than the comparison peer average—but it had six fewer treatment spaces.

Based on that insight, the hospital received approval to expand the ED to accommodate up to 25 more visits per day.

Focusing on efficiency and improvement

For each challenge presented, the IU Health PUSH team continues to work collaboratively to solve complex problems with the unique lens provided by its diverse members, along with the help of ActionOI data and benchmarking tools. Perhaps most importantly, the group is meeting its goal of providing streamlined recommendations for financial performance improvement across the system.

What is ActionOI?

This solution allows hospitals and health systems to analyze financial and operational performance in a real-world context, head-to-head with best-in-class performers and facilities of similar size, payer mix, complexity and patient population. The ActionOI comparative database provides data from more than 700 healthcare organizations in the US.
About IBM Watson Health

Each day, professionals throughout the health ecosystem make powerful progress toward a healthier future. At IBM Watson Health, we help them remove obstacles, optimize efforts and reveal new insights to support the people they serve. Working across the landscape, from payers and providers to governments and life sciences, we bring together deep health expertise; proven innovation; and the power of artificial intelligence to enable our customers to uncover, connect and act — as they work to solve health challenges for people everywhere.

For more information on IBM Watson Health, visit ibm.com/watsonhealth.

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