Many American hospital systems use IBM’s insights to support profitability and data-driven decision making as well as performance improvement to reduce readmission rates and length of stay for COPD patients and so much more.

From coast to coast, medical professionals are turning to IBM® Watson Health™ to help them better manage the overall quality of their patients’ care as well as their systems’ financial records. From the century-old 93-bed Schneck Medical Center in Seymour, Indiana to Alhambra, California’s AHMC Healthcare—America’s 11th largest for-profit health system—leaders are teaming up with IBM Watson Health to get results that positively affect patients.
Cost savings result from action-driven insights

Indiana University Health System (IU Health) developed the Profitability & Utilization Support Hub—a.k.a. PUSH—in an effort to respond to two significant problems. First, segmented data all across the organization. Second, the increased need for budgetary guidance at the regional level.

A results-driven group, PUSH was made up of experts in supply chain, revenue cycle, clinical operations, labor analytics and other specialties. The result? Using financial performance benchmarks from Watson Health, the PUSH team found that one of IU Health’s hospitals was ranking 70 percent over the comparison group median in telemetry use.

Staffing and labor represent more than 50 percent of a facility’s total costs. Ron Rasey knew that. But he also knew that “... across-the-board cuts in every department” wasn’t going to deliver the necessary savings. Only a proper analysis with IBM insights would reveal the greatest opportunities for savings in both labor and medical supplies.

Combatting COPD and sepsis

Susan Zabor, VP of Clinical Services for Schneck Medical Center is proud of her institution’s 100-year legacy. An independent, 93-bed community hospital with 1,000 employees in Seymour, Indiana, Schneck won the 2011 Baldridge Award, and a Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services five-star rating. But Ms. Zabor knew Schneck could do better.

That’s why the hospital employed an IBM Watson Health solution to conduct its first data review in 2014. Ms. Zabor and her staff immediately noticed a red flag: the system’s raw readmission rate was nearly 14 percent and marching upward. The data review also revealed that ten percent of the facility’s readmissions were due to chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). Ultimately, the readmissions were draining more than $300,000 every year.

“We decided to look at our readmission rates, our lengths of stay, our mortality rates and also the cost of our COPD patients,” Ms. Zabor stated. “After we analyzed that data, we saw that we had gaps in performance, and we were able to pull together teams that were able to focus on what resources we needed to close those gaps.”

Jonathan F. Aquino is the Corporate Chief Quality and Vice Compliance Officer at AHMC Healthcare in Alhambra, California and Interim Chief Executive Officer at AHMC San Gabriel Valley Medical Center. As one might imagine, Mr. Aquino has a lot on his plate as he leads a team in various efforts to elevate the performance of the system’s hospitals.

“Prior to Watson Health, we lived in this very obscure environment of action-driven work. However, it was not data-driven.” A number of activities through Mr. Aquino’s facilities were focused on quality improvement, but weren’t able to measure, pinpoint and truly evaluate performance as an overall system.

When patients leave an AHMC facility feeling better than they did when they arrived, there are many reasons why. Advanced medicine. Superior care. Modern advancements. “But we know it’s because of the data and the clinical benchmarks and the care delivery process,” insists Mr. Aquino.

“Watson Health has really helped us to bridge our clinical performance and our operational success. That really leads to positive patient experiences.”

–Jonathan F. Aquino
Better input can lead to better outcomes

Ellen Hargett, Executive Director at DeKalb Medical, a 627-bed nonprofit outside Atlanta, wanted to develop the DeKalb Quality Institute (DQI) to better process physician efficiency and patient outcomes. For each performance indicator on each metric’s dashboard, she established tactical teams of physicians, operations leaders, a performance improvement coordinator and a Lean Six Sigma Black Belt.

Each team’s Black Belt focused on the expert use of IBM Watson Health data to provide statistical analysis, identify key drivers of the observed/expected indices and facilitate process improvement. Ms. Hargett acknowledged, “Prior to our time working with Watson Health we had reported our quality performance to the Board of Directors in the context of performance measures, core measures and CMS-required public reporting.”

Once Ellen Hargett and her staff brought IBM Watson Health onboard, they fundamentally changed the way they measured system-wide performance using:

- Key quality monitoring for length of stay, mortality, readmissions and more
- Monthly comparisons on each metric against national peer group standards
- Lean Six Sigma performance improvement model to execute clinical initiatives
Solution components

IBM® ActionOI®

IBM® ActionOI® operational and financial performance improvement solution

IBM® Care Discovery®

Connect with us

About IBM Watson Health

Watson Health is a business unit of IBM that is dedicated to the development and implementation of cognitive and data-driven technologies to advance health. Watson Health technologies are tackling a wide range of the world’s biggest healthcare challenges, including cancer, diabetes, drug development and more.

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

For more information

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Watson Health is a business unit of IBM that is dedicated to the development and implementation of cognitive and data-driven technologies to advance health. Watson Health technologies are tackling a wide range of the world’s biggest healthcare challenges, including cancer, diabetes, drug development and more.

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