



Executive Brief: Hugh Chatham Memorial Hospital

Hospital Adds \$1.5 Million of New Operating Income and Slashes Length of Stay by Applying New Patient Flow Processes



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Outcome of PatientFlow HD:

- Disparate processes across environmental services, bed management and case management were eliminated
- Barriers to communication and limited visibility into patient status were removed
- Care is more streamlined
- Case management staff and hospitalists can access important patient data earlier in the care cycle
- Inpatient admission bottlenecks are virtually extinct

Hugh Chatham Memorial Hospital's leaders wanted to revamp patient flow, and they had to make a choice – take the easy route and make a few changes in key areas, or make sweeping changes enterprise-wide. The latter meant getting hospital staff to step outside their comfort zones to learn and apply new patient flow processes.

Fortunately for Hugh Chatham and the community it serves, leadership chose the difficult path, implementing a systematic change that would ensure the hospital's efficiency was sustainable for the long-term. Their decision paid off, leading to cost containment and financial stability instead of falling behind. The risk of taking the quick and easy road, succumbing to anemic reimbursements and suffocating penalties, wasn't worth the gamble according to Don Trippel, Hugh Chatham's CFO.

"This wasn't our first rodeo, not by a long shot – we know what it takes to face down financial challenges," said Trippel. "We also knew we couldn't do this alone. So, we relied on MEDHOST, our long-time healthcare IT partner, to help us fix patient flow, and honestly, to replicate the success we achieved with them by transforming ED care coordination."

Collapsing Barriers

The 81-bed facility in Elkin, North Carolina, implemented MEDHOST PatientFlow HD, with the sole mission of improving patient throughput. Leadership cleared the way for a process-improvement campaign to complement the new patient flow technology and create lasting results.

The outcome? Disparate processes across environmental services, bed management and case management were eliminated, as were barriers to communication and limited visibility into patient status. Today, care is more streamlined, and case management staff and hospitalists can access important patient data earlier in the care cycle.

Extended observation stays and the total excess of observation status hours decreased considerably, and inpatient admission bottlenecks are virtually extinct. ED length of stay (LOS) for admitted patients reduced from 267 minutes to 235 minutes, a noteworthy outcome considering ED-based admissions soared.

What's In It for the Patient?

Within six months of initiating the patient flow improvement project and implementing PatientFlow HD:

- The number of observation status patients exceeding 23 hours declined by 53 percent
- Total excess observation status hours dropped by 250 percent
- When annualized, a 1,000-hour monthly reduction in unnecessary observation time will lead to a reduction of avoidable nursing labor costs of approximately \$460,000
- Additional admissions created by a .3-day decrease in overall LOS equates to \$1.5 million in new operating income annually

“Streamlining patient flow across departments yields a better patient experience, and by addressing observation status overages, we’re meeting regulations and ensuring patients receive the appropriate level of care,” said Lee Powe, CIO of Hugh Chatham Memorial Hospital. “Enterprise visibility with MEDHOST PatientFlow HD helps everyone involved in patient care better communicate, a key criteria to providing first-class care, improving clinical outcomes, and boosting patient and provider satisfaction.”

About Hugh Chatham Memorial Hospital

Hugh Chatham Memorial Hospital is located in Elkin, North Carolina, and provides care and various services to the residents of northwestern North Carolina and southwestern Virginia. The 81-bed facility has received numerous patient safety and satisfaction awards and merits.

About MEDHOST

MEDHOST, Inc. is a provider of market-leading enterprise, departmental and healthcare engagement solutions to approximately 1,000 healthcare facilities. Our healthcare management system includes intuitive, easy-to-use and SaaS-enabled solutions complemented by a robust suite of managed hosting, outsourcing and consulting services that are changing how clinicians and hospital leaders work and communicate, while generating notable operational, patient flow, care and revenue improvements. MEDHOST delivers value by enabling hospitals of all types and all sizes to better manage care and the business of healthcare while meeting evolving regulatory requirements.

The American Hospital Association Exclusively Endorses the Patient Flow Management Solution from MEDHOST

For more than 100 years, the American Hospital Association (AHA) has been a powerful symbol of quality. By consistently applying a formal due diligence process, AHA Solutions, Inc., an AHA member service, identifies products and services that foster operational excellence in our nation's hospitals.

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