

SHARING

THA-Endorsed Products and Services

Volume 1, No. 2

Winter 2009



Doctors on Demand

*Texas Hospitals Turn to Locum Tenens
Physicians to Meet Staffing Needs*

Revving Up the Revenue

*Improving Reimbursement Accuracy
and Reducing Revenue Cycle Time
through Financial Consulting*

Self-Directed Floating

Empowering Nurses to Become Part of the Staffing Solution

Converting Self-pay to Pay

Partnering for Third-party Eligibility Assistance

Applying "Lean" to Patient Care

Best Practices from the Automotive Industry Help Hospitals Improve Performance

A M E S S A G E F R O M T H E C E O

What a year! As I look back on 2009, it's hard to believe how much has happened and how far we've come. In the last 12 months, HealthSHARE underwent a major rebranding initiative, along with an intensified marketing focus, on the heels of 2008 organizational changes. This involved everything from a new logo to a new Web site to new e-newsletters and a revamped *Sharing*. To top things off, we just launched a Speakers Bureau, which you can read more about on p. 14.



I'm pleased to say that all of these changes have had a positive effect. HealthSHARE business is on track to expand by 15 percent next year in Texas, a testament to the quality of products, services and customer service delivered by the six dozen endorsed companies. We couldn't do any of this without your support, and I thank you for trusting us to help you and your hospital.

As always, I'd like to hear your thoughts. Please send your suggestions, feedback and comments to me at jdixon@tha.org.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James M. Dixon". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "D".

James M. Dixon
President/Chief Executive Officer



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SPOTLIGHT: *Information Management and Physical Plant Services*

As a wholly owned subsidiary of the Texas Hospital Association, HealthSHARE's mission is to market best-of-breed, competitively priced products and services offered through THA-endorsed companies that benefit hospitals' quality, service and bottom line. Each issue of *Sharing* spotlights a different category of services. This issue, the spotlight is on information management and physical plant services.

Information Management

MediTract LLC

MediTract is a proven solution that provides cost-effective control of all contract information and other business documents. It provides a more sophisticated and efficient way for hospitals to manage their contractual obligations. MediTract provides all the labor necessary to scan, build, maintain and update contract files. A patented process is used to build the customized and centralized contract and document database. The solution is accessible via a secure online connection, enabling hospitals to share one source of information with thousands of employees across various departments and sites. The extensive levels of user security make database information accessible only to those employees who have permission to view specific contract files.

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Medmined Services of CareFusion

Each year nearly one in 20 patients acquires a health care-associated infection, impacting 1.7 million lives and costing hospitals and patients more than \$35 billion. MedMined services objectively monitor the entire hospital for emerging infection issues, enabling clinicians

to quickly identify HAIs and drive process improvement. Patient safety is further enhanced through Patient Event Advisor from CareFusion. The Advisor identifies patients of highest interest for adverse clinical events, continually screening for clinical status changes that may affect therapy. MedMined services have earned peer reviewed status from the Healthcare Financial Management Association and are ranked #1 in the infection prevention market by KLAS. In partnership with the Texas Hospital Quality Initiative and BlueCross BlueShield of Texas, MedMined services provide Texas hospitals with the technology to help reduce HAIs, save lives and reduce costs.

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Thomson Reuters

Thomson Reuters' clinical performance improvement solutions and expertise provide a powerful view of hospital and health system clinical performance. They help hospitals detect unseen inefficiencies, prioritize opportunities and set improvement goals based on relevant, dependable, quantitative information. The CareDiscovery clinical performance improvement solution provides reliable clinical resource and quality benchmarks, assembling multiple clinical performance improvement initiatives in a single unified system. CareDiscovery helps align an organization's key quality improvement stakeholders. In addition, CareDiscovery Quality Measures is the best-in-class regulatory reporting solution from Thomson Reuters, the nation's leading core measures vendor. Drawing on the combined expertise of Medstat and Solucient, Quality Measures helps hospitals deliver efficient and reliable reporting, thereby ensuring performance-based reimbursement and protecting market share. With 99

percent on-time submission to The Joint Commission and 98 percent acceptance by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, Quality Measures can save time and resources.

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Physical Plant Services

EQ2 Inc.

EQ2 HEMS Enterprise is a comprehensive, flexible hospital engineering management system. Designed to be fast and efficient, the system saves health care facilities time and money and scales to meet the needs of any size facility. Handling one service department, several service departments or multiple facilities with multiple service departments, EQ2 provides powerful features, including the following:

- **HEMS Enterprise: Incorporates smoke/fire, environmental zone and automatic scheduling modules into the system;**
- **EQ2 Web Request: Allows for work requests that automatically route to the proper service area;**
- **EQ2 Mobile: Provides wireless access to HEMS Enterprise for managing work orders and equipment maintenance histories;**
- **EQ2 medTester Interface: Directly supports the Fluke medTester to combine the leading biomedical equipment safety analyzer with the HEMS Enterprise, which creates a powerful, integrated biomedical equipment servicing tool.**

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Doctors on Demand: Texas Hospitals Turn to Locum Tenens Physicians to Meet Staffing Needs

BY LAURA TUMA

The situation at San Angelo Community Medical Center in early 2008 probably sounds familiar to many hospital administrators. Two of the hospital's four cardiologists left the medical staff, and the remaining physicians quickly were overwhelmed.

"They couldn't be on call 24/7 and maintain an office practice," said Buddy Hartje, practice administrator for Community Medical Associates, a multispecialty physician practice affiliated with the hospital. "Our clinic took it on itself to find a locums physician and give them some relief, especially on weekends. However, we were very particular because we have a high-quality staff and required someone who meets our standards."

Hartje took a colleague's advice and called Staff Care, the nation's leading locum tenens physician staffing firm. Randy Sparks, regional vice president, walked Hartje through the process, and 30 days later, San Angelo Community Medical Center welcomed a new part-time cardiologist to its medical staff.

"Staff Care bent over backwards to speed up the process and meet our needs," said Hartje. "We liked the first recommended candidate, and he liked us. He was with us for about a year while we recruited a new full-time cardiologist."

A "Perfect Storm" for Texas

Some facilities, like San Angelo Community Medical Center, experience an unexpected need for temporary or part-time physician assistance, while others turn to locum tenens physicians to cover vacation or other absences or to expand service during peak usage periods. Locum tenens physicians may be needed for a few days, a few weeks or many months in virtually any specialty, practice setting or corner of the state.

Staff Care actively recruits physicians in various specialties and maintains a rigorous credentialing procedure that is reflected in the company's exceptionally low malpractice exposure.

Tim Boes, Staff Care president, predicts a growing need for locum tenens physicians due to Texas' high uninsured rate, dependence on emergency rooms for primary care, and fast-growing and fast-aging population.

"It's a perfect storm for Texas," he said. "Locum tenens physicians fill a critical gap between the need for medical care and what providers can do to meet that need. That gap is going to get bigger over time in Texas, especially as facilities are seeking permanent physicians to fill an identified need. There is always a lag time between when they seek a physician and when that physician can start."

Locum tenens work has become an accepted career path for young physicians because it offers them the opportunity to sample different geographic and practice settings before making a permanent commitment. It also attracts experienced physicians who want more flexibility and fewer administrative responsibilities.



For 17 years, Staff Care has sponsored the national Country Doctor of the Year Award to honor rural medical practitioners and to draw attention to the needs of medically underserved rural areas. In 2008, Staff Care's Kurt Mosley, vice president of business development, left, and Phil Miller, vice president of communications, far right, presented the award to Dr. David Watson of Yoakum, Texas, who is standing with his wife, Bernice.

Emergency Response

Staff Care works closely with clients to get to know their needs and culture before placing a locum tenens physician, said Sparks. "Ideally, we already know the client when a need comes up, but sometimes emergencies happen," he said.

That was the case when Matagorda Regional Medical Center in Bay City suddenly found itself without a pediatrician to take hospital calls. Staff Care stepped in and has provided locum tenens pediatricians since 2007 to attend deliveries, care for newborns and be on call for the ER.

"There was one special physician whom we loved. He was always our first choice, and we tried many times to get him to come on full time," said Tiffany Foltyn, Matagorda Regional's manager of administration and community relations. "We were sorry when he stopped doing locums work last year, but all the doctors they have sent us have been first class."

Matagorda Regional also uses Staff Care to provide surgeons and obstetricians/gynecologists on a temporary basis. Foltyn expects the small-town hospital to continue needing locum tenens physicians on a regular basis.

"The more we talk to Staff Care staff ahead of time and discuss how things work here and what we expect, the better things turn out," she said. "But I have called in crisis moments, and they get right on it and find the best person for us. I really appreciate the fact that they buy into us as much as we buy into them."

For more information about Staff Care, contact Chris Schleiss at chris.schleiss@staffcare.com or 800/685-2272 or go to www.staffcare.com. *

Butler Honored with THA Pioneer Award

HealthSHARE congratulates Keith Butler, chief executive officer of Lillian M. Hudspeth Memorial Hospital in Sonora, who received the 2009 Texas Hospital Association Pioneer Award in November. The Pioneer Award, which is underwritten by HealthSHARE and THA-endorsed company the Texas Hospital Insurance Exchange, is THA's annual award recognizing excellence in rural hospital management. Butler received the award at a luncheon held at the Texas Rural Health Forum on Nov. 10 in Austin.

Lillian M. Hudspeth Memorial Hospital is a 12-bed public hospital operated by the Sutton County Hospital District. During Butler's eight-year tenure there, the hospital has grown from a struggling rural facility to a thriving and progressive health and wellness center for the community.

CareFusion Spins off from Cardinal Health

Cardinal Health announced it has completed the spinoff of CareFusion Corp. through a pro rata distribution of approximately 81 percent of the shares of CareFusion common stock, launching it as an independent, publicly traded company.

"Our experienced management team and more than 15,000 employees begin today ready to serve our global customers as a new public company," said David L. Schlotterbeck, chairman and chief executive officer of CareFusion. "We have a track record of innovation and growth that we intend to make a hallmark of CareFusion for the future."

CareFusion's products and services include MedMined services, which are endorsed by the Texas Hospital Association.

nTelagent Releases Real-Time Point-of-Service Reporting Director

As their bad debt and days in accounts receivable continue to rise, health care service providers need actionable information on a real-time basis to see where processes and procedures can be improved. Particularly at pre-registration and point of service, many hospitals and other providers don't have the tools and technology they need to effectively adapt to health care's new "retail-like" revenue cycle.

nTelagent, Inc.'s point-of-service collection system, called the Retail Application for Healthcare, gives providers a comprehensive solution to address all their front-end challenges, along with the Point-of-Service Reporting Director, which allows them to monitor every patient-due amount on-demand and in real time. With the new Reporting Director, health care financial managers can track how individual staff members are using nTelagent's system and which ones need further training.

"Our comprehensive Point-of-Service Reporting Director takes the guesswork out of everything a health care financial manager wants and needs to monitor on a daily basis, from cash collected to red flags alerts to charity pending and charity approved," said Earl T. Winter, chairman and chief executive officer of nTelagent. "Easy, immediate access to this type of data is critical as hospitals and other providers look to improve their financial health."

For more information, go to www.ntelagent.com.

Medversant Earns URAC Accreditation

Medversant Technologies, the nation's exclusive provider of AutoVerifi technology (U.S. Patent 7,529,682) that continuously monitors Web-based credentials verification solutions for hospitals, health plans, state Medicaid programs, and other health care settings, has been accredited by the Utilization Review Accreditation Commission in the 2009 Credentials Verification Organization Standards category.

URAC, an independent, nonprofit health care accrediting organization dedicated to promoting health care quality through accreditation, certification and commendation, developed the CVO standards exclusively for organizations that gather data and verify health practitioner credentials.

Matthew Haddad, president and chief executive officer of Medversant, said, "Medversant demonstrated an overwhelming ability to gather data and verify the credentials of health professionals in keeping with URAC's CVO standards to ensure a rigorous and fair credentialing process that protects patients and providers from poor credentialing practices."

Medversant is endorsed by the Texas Hospital Association. For more information, go to www.medversant.com.

Amerinet Economic Solutions Series Focuses on RAC Solutions

Amerinet Inc., a leading health care group purchasing organization and Texas Hospital Association-endorsed company, is highlighting solutions and best practices to deal with Recovery Audit Contractor appeals as part of its continuing Economic Solutions series, an initiative focused on keeping members proactively engaged with current economic challenges and health care reform issues.

"The RAC issue is one that every health care provider that bills Medicare Part A and Part B will face, if they have not already," said Todd Ebert, Amerinet president and chief executive officer. "It is important to link members with existing tools and industry experts that can provide support and guidance."

The free Webinars featured in the Economic Solutions series are available through the Learning on Demand feature of Inquisit, Amerinet's strategic education partner, at www.inquisit.org under the Economic Solutions Education Series tab. For more information on Amerinet, go to www.amerinet-gpo.com. *

Revvng Up the Revenue:

Improving Reimbursement Accuracy and Reducing Revenue Cycle Time through Financial Consulting

BY KAREN BRANZ

For Scott & White Healthcare, capturing accurate physician and resident time data is a crucial element to the bottom line. It's also a challenging task, one that is closely scrutinized by TrailBlazer, the fiscal intermediary for Medicare and Medicaid in Scott & White's region. In 1997, after TrailBlazer challenged the health care system's resident time data for the period of 1991-97, Scott & White decided to look outside for help.

"We were at risk of losing all medical education reimbursement from the federal government, which was about \$12 million to \$15 million annually," said William Galinsky, assistant executive director of finance at Scott & White.

Scott & White turned to CampbellWilson, which provides health care financial regulatory consulting services. The company helped Scott & White develop the Medical Education Resident Information Tracking System and convinced TrailBlazer to let Scott & White retroactively apply it to their data.

"CampbellWilson worked directly with TrailBlazer on our behalf and was able to build the data sets that TrailBlazer ultimately accepted," said Galinsky.

In 2002, Scott & White again turned to CampbellWilson for help with TrailBlazer when the fiscal intermediary disallowed a significant portion of its reimbursement related to the wage index calculation. Using a tool modeled after work with other clients, CampbellWilson was able to show TrailBlazer the error in its calculations of wages and hours. A byproduct of this is the physician time study that has been required ever since in order to include those salary dollars and hours in the calculation.

"TrailBlazer and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services made a retroactive adjustment in 2002 to correct their errors, which they almost never do," said Galinsky. The adjustment saved the system millions of dollars in revenue.

CampbellWilson has helped Scott & White with a wide variety of reimbursement and compliance projects, including helping the health care system set up the documentation system for its End Stage Renal Disease Center and conducting regular audits of its reimbursement and compliance systems.

"We want to make sure we aren't missing anything. We don't want to leave anything on the table. We want to collect everything we are legitimately entitled to," Galinsky said. "CampbellWilson staff have a special area of expertise; this is what they do day in and day out. We are very happy with their services."

Improving the Revenue Cycle

Keith Barber, chief operating officer and chief financial officer of Tomball Regional Medical Center, said his hospital also engaged CampbellWilson because of its reimbursement and revenue cycle expertise.

"We wanted to improve our revenue cycle. We already have good performance indicators and processes, but we want to go from good to great," Barber said. "CampbellWilson is helping us see where we are strong and where we are weak."

The redesign initiative team, composed of both CampbellWilson consultants and Tomball staff, completed a detailed assessment of the revenue cycle, including all functions, processes and key performance indicators to determine opportunities for improvement. Cedrial Moore, vice president of the revenue cycle at CampbellWilson, led the effort. "We partnered with Tomball's revenue cycle leadership to redesign processes, improve communications and improve key performance indicators," Moore said.

At the conclusion of the assessment, the engagement team conducted work sessions with Tomball revenue cycle staff to develop the future state model, best practices and training needs in patient access, health information management, and the business office. In addition, the team specifically redesigned the self-pay processes and policies and also developed denial management tracking and monitoring procedures. The goal was to improve revenue cycle processes, end-to-end, and achieve a best practice model.

"We went in as a partner in the process to teach and coordinate, not to just fix things and leave," Moore said. "Our job was to work with the team to improve processes based on leading industry standards and utilize improvement strategies and proven methodologies to improve the revenue cycle. They now have the infrastructure, knowledge and processes in place to succeed."

"We are definitely seeing quicker turnaround on reimbursement," said Barber. "This is a time when being good isn't good enough. You have to have great operations. CampbellWilson staff bring a lot of experience to the table to help us in the process, and I would hire them again and would highly recommend them to other hospitals."

For more information about CampbellWilson, contact Manie Campbell at mcampbell@campbellwilson.com or 214/750-5220 or go to www.campbellwilson.com. *

2009 NEW THA-ENDORSED COMPANIES

As of press time, the Texas Hospital Association had endorsed 12 new companies in 2009. These companies were selected with guidance from HealthSHARE staff, who conducted an extensive and lengthy due diligence process that encompasses at least three levels of review. After a company receives THA endorsement, it undergoes ongoing evaluation to ensure the company continues to meet or exceed HealthSHARE's rigorous standards of quality and service.

Air Liquide Healthcare Cost Containment

Air Liquide Healthcare is a world leader enjoying a national presence throughout the health care sector, from long-term acute care hospitals and rural hospitals to world-class research facilities and the largest hospital group. Air Liquide Healthcare seeks a strategic partnership approach to ensure hospitals can provide top-notch patient care with the highest-quality bulk and cylinder medical gases, supplies and equipment.

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www.airliquide.com

Amazon Coding HIM Services

Amazon Coding provides remote medical coding for Texas hospitals. The company bills itself as the freakishly strong solution to hospitals' coding needs, providing certified, specialized and accurate remote coding to increase their full realized revenue, shorten the revenue cycle, and eliminate overage of uncoded and unbilled accounts. Amazon offers 24-hour, 7-day-a-week coverage for guaranteed immediate turnaround and 100 percent utilization of the hospital's technology. A coding and technology manager are assigned to each client to ensure streamlined communication, and the team of coders can eliminate backlog and work concurrently with existing staff to address daily chart volume.

Julie White
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www.amazoncoding.com

HEALTHeCAREERS Network Staffing Support

HEALTHeCAREERS Network specializes in online recruitment, advertising and career solutions for the health care industry. Through its network of Web sites (including MedHunters), more than 120 association career centers and other distribution partners, HEALTHeCAREERS makes it easy for employers to recruit and retain qualified candidates and for job seekers to find the right positions. HEALTHeCAREERS Network offers multiple opportunities for connections between top hospitals or health care systems and qualified job seekers. HEALTHeCAREERS Network has been in business for more than a decade serving the health care industry. Jobs strategically cross-post on HEALTHeCAREERS.com, MedHunters.com and all relevant professional health care association sites as well as the health care section of all relevant bizjournal.com markets.

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InsMed Insurance Agency Inc. Insurance Program/Retirement

InsMed Insurance Agency Inc. earned THA endorsement as the marketing and service firm for an executive disability insurance program. This program allows hospital executives to apply for portable individual insurance policies that can more completely protect an executive's income not covered by an institution's long-term disability program. Strengths of this offering include the ability to provide up to \$20,000/month of coverage; coordinate with group benefits up to \$25,000/month; use as a cost containment vehicle to fund contractual salary continuation obligations; offer discounted and gender-neutral fixed rates without any participation requirements; waive medical underwriting requirements if purchased by an institution for at least six executives; tailor the contract provisions to meet personal needs; and maintain coverage

if the employee terminates employment, without regard to health status or the future employer's benefit package.

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MTS of Texas HIM Services

MTS of Texas has more than 25 years of experience and some of the most skilled transcriptionists in the industry. MTS offers medical transcription services perfect for the demanding, high-volume environment of acute care hospitals, with transcription available any time of the day or night, turnaround in as little as four hours to support the need for fast patient-care decisions, clear and auditable charges by the dictated minute, and the ability to transcribe records directly into a hospital's health care application system.

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Next Generation Enrollment Inc. Insurance Program/Retirement

Next Generation Enrollment offers health care dependent audits. The process verifies that spouses and children enrolled in a group medical plan meet contractual requirements for participation. Typically, 5-10 percent of currently covered dependents on a plan are ineligible for coverage. A hospital can remove these individuals from the plan post-audit and save about \$2,500 per dependent per year.

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Power Station LLC

Cost Containment

Power Station LLC provides highly reliable and user-friendly business services and media entertainment in airports and hospitals. Its popular PowerPort product is an interactive kiosk that features stationary public computers with Internet access, portable laptop computer rental, printing capabilities and secure battery charging for laptops, cell phones and other portable electronic devices. Business services are available at a nominal fee, and access to the hospital's Web site and electronic medical library is available at no charge. Power Station monitors the kiosks electronically and maintains the equipment. THA members receive 20 percent of kiosk revenues.

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www.powerports.net

RWD Technologies

Operational Advantages

RWD is a leading provider of human and operational performance improvement solutions. RWD's health care practice is focused on helping hospital personnel save wasted time and money so they can devote more time to patient care. RWD's "lean" methodology originally invented and perfected by Toyota. Despite its heritage in manufacturing, it is profoundly human. It's not about making rules but changing people's behavior. It's not about a team of experts who come in with better methods or technology but enabling people in the unit, or on the floor, to come up with their own solutions. What does this mean to hospitals? First, it means practice in the art of sustainable change management or getting a hospital's staff more engaged in what they do. Second, it means reducing medical mistakes. Standardizing everyday tasks goes a long way to ensuring that "never-events" never happen. Third, RWD's approach leads to measurable cost savings.

Sue Varner

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www.rwd.com

RWR Financial Services Inc.

Insurance Program/Retirement

RWR Financial Services Inc. offers long-term care insurance. The coverage is available from two well-known providers, John Hancock and Prudential Financial. Both are rated A+ by A.M. Best. LTCI is one way to meet the financial needs that often result from a long illness, a disability or a cognitive impairment (such as Alzheimer's disease). The THA program discounts make the policies more affordable, and policies can include the partnership option that was recently adopted by the state of Texas.

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Ryerson Management Associates LLC

Operational Advantages

Ryerson Management Associates LLC is a full-service health care consulting firm that builds leadership excellence to enable client organizations to provide extraordinary patient-focused care in a fiscally responsible way. RMA's process is to analyze the current state, develop recommendations, fully implement these recommendations and monitor performance to ensure that improvements become part of organizational culture and are sustained over the long term. RMA's integrated team of health care professionals is skilled in improving organizational performance, maximizing revenue capture, developing leadership skills and enhancing patient satisfaction. RMA establishes goals for patient throughput and implements all of the approved recommendations. The company serves a wide range of health care organizations, from critical access hospitals to community hospitals to large urban teaching institutions.

Peter Ryerson

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www.rmasolutions.com

Simulation Education Services Inc.

Operational Advantages

Simulation Education Services Inc. has earned THA-endorsed status for its emergency preparedness education, training, exercise and assessment solutions. SES has pioneered the use of many nationally recognized emergency preparedness tools and solutions, including the Web-based DeskTop Exercises using distance-conferencing technologies. SES has partnered with leading experts from the National Center for Emergency Medical Preparedness and Response at Texas A&M University to develop many of these solutions. One of the major preparedness challenges is the governmental, regulatory and Joint Commission accreditation requirements mandating that hospitals' emergency operations plans and disaster management infrastructure are tested and evaluated every year. SES has developed solutions in education, training and exercises, all of which are consistent with and fully meet The Joint Commission standards and governmental guidelines.

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Wiederhold & Associates

Staffing Support

Wiederhold & Associates specializes in executive coaching and transition services. There are many possibilities when choosing either an executive coach or an executive career development firm, and deciding on the right firm is crucial to a hospital's success. Wiederhold & Associates finds key opportunities for growth and development to ensure success and satisfaction. Services offered at Wiederhold & Associates include a customized three-phase program in both executive coaching and transition. Its strong national network supports its clients and its beliefs.

James Wiederhold

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www.wiederholdassoc.com

Self-Directed Floating: Empowering Nurses to Become Part of the Staffing Solution

BY SHARON REYNOLDS

As the new director of human resources at St. Luke's The Woodlands Hospital, one of Mona Tucker's first challenges was to hire supplemental nurses to cover staff shortages. Working with both the hospital's existing staff and the float pool, managers spent countless hours contacting nurses and coordinating schedules. Throughout the process, Tucker already was formulating a plan to put in place a smarter staffing solution that would save the hospital hundreds of thousands of dollars and provide other positive changes as well.

In her previous position with another health care system, Tucker became familiar with Concerro's Web-based software and services that help hospitals optimize in-house staffing and reduce the cost of filling open shifts with outside agency nurses. At that time, the hospital had decreased its utilization of agency nurses by almost one half, and Tucker was confident that SLWH could reap similar benefits.

"Our initial objective was to utilize our float pool to its full potential and monitor their commitments," said Tucker. "It has been a great success. Not only have we eliminated the need for agency staffing, but also our cost avoidance has been calculated at approximately \$357,000 annually since starting with Concerro almost two years ago."

The Concerro software is unique and cutting edge. It's easy to learn, easy to use and accessible – anywhere, anytime – through the Internet. It allows managers to complete their regular core scheduling process and give the float pool access to the list of remaining open shifts. Employees then request shifts in units where they are qualified and are notified by e-mail if chosen.

"Most hospitals don't use resource pools effectively," said Brad Nation, regional manager of Concerro. "Each hospital unit relies on its own staff to fill in holes, and then they call in contract labor that will cost twice what one of their own nurses would cost."

The Concerro software also allows SLWH to offer incentives through the ShiftRewards feature, which operates similarly to frequent flyer programs. As full-time and float pool staff take on extra shifts, they earn points that can be redeemed directly through Concerro's Web site for items ranging from digital cameras to iPhones to a variety of gift cards.

"Points are much more cost-effective than monetary rewards," said Nation. "ShiftRewards provides trophy value, so people choose to buy things they normally wouldn't buy with their own money. One nurse used ShiftRewards to purchase flowers for her wedding, and another uses points to pay for her housekeeper."

Benefits of Automated Scheduling Go Beyond Monetary

Concerro's automated scheduling process allows nurses to balance their work/life obligations independently by managing their own schedules. The program is totally integrated – including core scheduling, open shift management and incentive management – and is available for one flat monthly fee.

Employee satisfaction has increased, according to Tucker. By choosing where and when to work and feeling in control of their schedules, employees are working extra shifts on different units, something they never did before. They feel good about being able to build their professional credibility throughout the hospital while meeting the needs of the organization.

Tucker said the hospital's return on investment is substantial. "We can leverage our own workforce to meet patient care obligations and respond quickly to census fluctuations in winter and throughout the holiday season," she said. "We utilize our own full-time nursing staff and float pool to the maximum."

Jeff Turner is chief executive officer of the Moore County District Hospital in Dumas and also has experienced great success with Concerro. Since investing in the program in mid-2008, the hospital has saved \$587,000 on reduced contract labor costs alone. The benefits go beyond the monetary, however; LVN turnover has dropped substantially, and managers spend less time calling staff and agencies to fill vacant shifts.

"Concerro's program is an effective tool to help increase staff satisfaction because it provides flexibility when scheduling shifts," said Turner. "It allows managers to effectively control staffing to meet the organization's needs. More consistent staffing from employees who are loyal to your organization increases quality. This increases patient satisfaction. When all these factors combine, financial improvement takes care of itself."

For more information about Concerro, contact Wes Staggs at wstaggs@concerro.com or 858/875-4751 or go to www.concerro.com. *



Converting Self-pay to Pay: Partnering for Third-party Eligibility Assistance

BY BARBARA WRAY

When a patient who was in the country illegally came to Medical Center Hospital in Odessa for care, the hospital helped him. When the hospital then needed to get reimbursed for his treatment, Resource Corporation of America helped.

Hospital staff got the patient Section 1011 eligibility and needed to get reimbursement for the \$1 million bill, but once he left the hospital, it was difficult to locate him. “RCA hired a private investigator to find him and got the paperwork signed so the hospital could get paid,” said J.R. Edmiston, director of patient financial services for Medical Center Hospital. “Last year, RCA helped us convert \$35 million of self-pay into a funded source.”

Resource Corporation of America, a provider of third-party self-pay eligibility services, helps hospitals convert self-pay to a paying status. The firm offers extensive knowledge of the application, certification and appellate processes for third-party assistance programs in all 50 states. RCA customer Stacy Miller, chief operating officer for HCA Shared Services’ San Antonio/Austin division, said, “Our mission is to provide affordable access to health care. The services that RCA provides at our facilities allow us to do that.”

It’s About Numbers – and People

Billing to the correct insurance plan is critical. “For example, Medicaid has a 95-day filing deadline. There’s no margin for error,” said Miller. “RCA makes sure we have matched up the right plan to the right product so we can convert to cash.”

When Miller began working with RCA, inpatient conversion averaged 30 percent. In one year’s time, it is averaging 82 percent. “RCA has hit record numbers in conversions over the last two months with conversion rates that have exceeded any previous vendor. We’ve set record revenue levels the last three months,” she said.

“Above and beyond the cash flow, RCA provides a service to our community,” Miller continued. “RCA is helping people without insurance coverage have a way of feeling safe about health care.”

Becoming Part of the Team

“Our primary goal is to become an integral part of the business office at the hospital,” said Mark Taiclet, director of business development for RCA. “We deal on a daily basis with case workers and business managers, and we know what’s going on with patients and how we can help them.”

RCA is committed to providing staff trained in making proper determinations when screening a patient. “It’s about timing.

Solid training helps us turn things around faster. Higher certification rates and lower turnaround times mean more money coming into the hospital, sooner,” Taiclet said.

RCA staff often educate patients about the process and help them fill out paperwork properly and secure necessary documentation. “Our goal is to help hospitals recuperate as much as possible on their self-pay. We honestly care about the patients, too, and work hand-in-hand with them all the time. Taiclet said.

“We also advocate on behalf of patients in the reconsideration process. If they get denied, but we know they should be eligible, we’ll go back and help them get covered. You have to care about what you’re doing in this business,” he continued. “People come to work for RCA because they truly want to help people.”

Leadership Starts at the Top

When Edmiston first came on board in Odessa, he was looking for ways to improve processes, so RCA’s corporate leaders came on-site. They met with staff, retrained them as needed and brought in people who had been successful in some larger hospitals.

“I hadn’t worked with RCA staff until I came to Odessa. I pushed them hard, and they really stepped up to the plate. Two and a half years later, they’re still doing a good job,” said Edmiston. “For six months, they were heavily involved in getting staff up to par. They built relationships with case management, social workers and me to where everybody got on same page. In the beginning, we had some things to smooth out, but the RCA executive staff were here, working with us in the cubicles. We’ve come through that process. Times are good now, and they’re still coming through for us.”

For more information about RCA, contact Mark Taiclet at marktaiclet@resource-corp.com or 281/334-1855 or go to www.resource-corp.com. *



Hospital Financials Have Recovered to Pre-Recession Levels, According to Study

The median profit margin of U.S. hospitals increased from near zero in the third quarter of 2008 to more than 8 percent in the second quarter of 2009, according to an analysis of hospital financial performance published by Thomson Reuters. The recovery has been broad-based, with all classes of hospitals showing positive median margins.

The study tracks two dozen key financial indicators, using proprietary and public data to dissect the balance sheets of more than 400 hospitals nationwide. It evaluates trends in revenue and profit, employment levels, closures, inpatient volume, days cash on hand and case mix to gauge the fiscal health of the nation's hospitals.

About 20 percent of hospitals had negative total margins in the second quarter of 2009, similar to the rate seen before the recession began in late 2007. This is an improvement from the first quarter of 2009, when 30 percent of hospitals were operating with negative margins, and the third quarter of 2008, when half of U.S. hospitals were operating in the red.

For more information, go to www.thomsonreuters.com.

Report: Primary Care Doctors in Greatest Demand

Primary care physicians are in greater demand than any other type of doctor according to a report by national physician search firm Merritt Hawkins & Associates.

The study examines physician recruiting assignments from April 1, 2008, to March 31, 2009. The company fielded more requests for family physicians than for any other type of doctor, followed by general internists, who also provide primary care. Requests for primary care doctors, defined as family physicians, internists and pediatricians, increased 23 percent over the previous 12-month period examined in the survey.

Merritt Hawkins attributes the shortage to the growing demand for primary care services combined with a shrinking supply of generalist physicians. Fewer medical students are choosing primary care specialties at a time when the population is both growing and aging.

Complete results of Merritt Hawkins & Associates' *2009 Review of Physician Recruiting Incentives* can be accessed at www.merritthawkins.com.

Nurses Working More in Down Economy

Despite the nation's high unemployment and underemployment, registered nurses have increased the number of hours they work. According to a recent survey by the nation's largest health care staffing company, AMN Healthcare, nurses are putting in more hours than they were at this time last year but expect to return to pre-recession work levels once the economy rebounds.

During May, more than 320 registered nurses responded to a survey that covered a range of work force-related questions on NurseZone.com and RN.com. A total of 58 percent indicated they are working more hours than they did one year ago. Twenty percent said that the increased work hours are temporary, as they plan to return to their previous work schedules once the economy rebounds.

The survey explained the increase in work hours due to a variety of reasons, including making up for reduced family income due to a spouse job loss and replenishing retirement funds impacted by last year's dramatic stock market decline.

2010 AHA Hospital Statistics Available

In 2008, the nation's 5,010 nonfederal community hospitals posted a \$17 billion overall profit, down 61 percent from 2007, and reported a \$4.5 billion loss on their investments, the first time in at least 15 years that the investments lost money. These and other statistics can be found in the 2010 edition of *AHA Hospital Statistics*.

Published by the American Hospital Association, *AHA Hospital Statistics* is a comprehensive reference for analysis and comparison of hospital trends. The book comes with a CD that allows users to create their own charts and graphs, illustrate data points and trends or incorporate other sets to focus on specific areas of interest.

For more information or to order a copy, go to www.aha.org. *

Applying “Lean” to Patient Care:

Best Practices from the Automotive Industry Help Hospitals Improve Performance

BY JILL M. JOHNSON

Comparing the building of a car to the healing of a patient may seem like quite a stretch, but not when you consider that changing people’s behavior and empowering them to come up with their own solutions, whether at a factory or a hospital, inevitably leads to self-perpetuating improvement at all levels of an organization.

After experiencing years of inefficient operations and declining profit margins, the staff at Hill Country Memorial Health System, which serves Fredericksburg and the surrounding counties, made operational and employee-focused improvements their top priority. They decided to look for a Lean consultant group that could introduce the program and help achieve new efficiencies.

“It was important that we find a Lean group with Toyota training, not just knowledge about the Lean program,” said Mike Williams, D.O., M.D., chief executive officer of Hill Country Memorial Hospital. “RWD was the only company we found whose consultants had experience with direct health care application of Lean.”

RWD Technologies Inc. takes the best practices of the proven “Lean” approach, also known as the Toyota Production System, and helps hospital personnel eliminate wasted time, effort and money so they can devote more time to patient care. “Despite its heritage in manufacturing, RWD’s methodology of implementing Lean is profoundly human,” said Michael Brown, department director at RWD. “Our health care practice is based on our belief that inefficiencies grow out of flawed processes, not flawed people. The core of what we do is build teams that problem-solve, take pride and ownership, and make changes that both grow and last.”

These methods take on a number of different forms, from simple to complex. Changes might include altering the supply layout area so workers take fewer steps to reach needed items; working with supply deliverers to unload items in a specific order, allowing hospital staff to restock more quickly; or giving cleaning personnel precise, repeatable tasks so room turnaround time can be reduced and easily measured.

Lean Results in Terms of Numbers

St. Luke’s Episcopal Hospital, which serves the Houston metropolitan area and is the largest facility in the St. Luke’s system, worked with RWD to achieve a systematic approach to improving the entire care delivery cycle. “Our goal was to develop a path leading to organizational involvement, cultural transformation and sustainable change,” said Brown.

In just a few years, St. Luke’s achieved significant improvements by implementing recommendations developed together by hospital staff and RWD consultants. Examples include:

- **Inventory in the central sterilization department was reduced by 26 percent, saving \$1.18 million. Removing unnecessary materials allowed this department to prepare instruments and equipment properly.**
- **Operating room turnover time decreased by 67 percent, while antibiotic timing compliance increased by 25 percent. With more cases starting on time and with safety measures in place, doctors can treat more patients, leaving ample time for each operation.**
- **St. Luke’s went beyond achieving 100 percent compliance with the 90-minute target for balloon insertion in heart failure cases, performing at 57 minutes on average. Using Lean methods to look at process and patient flow, the time from emergency arrival to treatment in the catheterization lab decreased significantly, increasing survival rates for those experiencing heart failure.**
- **Emergency department diversions decreased by 96 percent, left without being seen incidents decreased by 69 percent, and length-of-stay decreased by 36 percent.**
- **Patient transfer time from emergency department to other hospital floors decreased by 66 percent.**

Lean Results in Terms of Quality

For hospital administrators, statistics and savings mean little if they don’t translate into better patient care. “The financial return on our investment with RWD was considerable. More importantly, however, the engagement led to improved efficiency, performance and employee satisfaction in all areas where the Lean methodology was implemented,” said Mark LaRocco, Ph.D., vice president and patient safety officer for St. Luke’s Episcopal Hospital.

Williams noted that while Hill Country Memorial has been working with RWD only a short time, the hospital has already achieved a great deal. “One very significant achievement we have seen is the involvement of the operating room staff at all levels,” he said. “They have become engaged in problem-solving and initiating Lean changes with the guidance of RWD experts.”

For more information about RWD Technologies Inc., contact Sue Varner at svarner@rwd.com or 248/267-3536 or go to www.rwd.com. *

HealthSHARE Launches Speakers Bureau

To help hospitals and health care-related organizations find qualified speakers for events, HealthSHARE recently launched its Speakers Bureau. Subject-matter experts from Texas Hospital Association-endorsed companies are available on a broad spectrum of topics, from capital financing and executive recruitment to retirement plans and nursing leadership. Customized presentations also may be arranged.

There is no fee for using the HealthSHARE Speakers Bureau, and most speakers offer their services as a free service to hospitals and health care-related organizations. For a complete listing of topics and speaker credentials, visit the Speakers Bureau section of the HealthSHARE Web site at www.healthshare-tha.com.

New HealthSHARE Web site Easier to Use

When your hospital needs a bid on a new product or wants to find the very best provider of a particular type of service, look no further than the new HealthSHARE Web site, launched in November. The site, www.healthshare-tha.com, was completely reorganized and redesigned to make it easy for hospitals to connect with Texas Hospital Association-endorsed companies.

"This major overhaul had one primary purpose: to help Texas hospitals easily leverage the best-of-breed products and services that are available to them through the six dozen THA-endorsed partners," said Jim Dixon, HealthSHARE president/chief executive officer.

The new site features multiple ways to search for products, services and companies. Key new features include:

- **An easy-to-use online directory of endorsed companies;**
- **An extensive Resources section for hospitals that includes white papers,**

brochures, presentations, news and more from THA-endorsed companies;

- **An enhanced About Us section with photos and bios of HealthSHARE staff; and**
- **A section just for THA-endorsed companies that includes helpful resources, events and a discussion forum.**

Be sure to check the site regularly for HealthSHARE news and other related information.

HealthSHARE Hosts Summit for Endorsed Companies

Texas Hospital Association-endorsed companies contributed some \$800,000 in royalties to the THA family of companies' bottom line in 2009, income that significantly impacts THA's ability to advocate on behalf of its members. Those strong results were among the updates shared with THA-endorsed companies at the HealthSHARE Summit held Oct. 13-14 in Austin.

"What we are seeing is that there is no single market segment – by size, type or region – that drives endorsed companies' business," said HealthSHARE President/Chief Executive Officer Jim Dixon. "While 32 percent of usage is attributable to hospitals 500 beds and larger, hospitals between 200 and 500 beds account for another 24 percent of usage this year."

The summit marked the second time HealthSHARE has hosted an event specifically for endorsed companies. Participants say the event is extremely valuable in making the most of their endorsed status.

"The summit is a great conference," said Michael Freeman with nTelagent. "The HealthSHARE team all did a great job with the content and presentation."

THA Leadership Conference Coming Up

Health care reform is the biggest political story of the year. From Beltway offices to dinner tables across the country, how to improve health care quality, cost and access is the hot topic on the minds of Americans. The Texas Hospital Association's 2010 Leadership Conference, which will be held Feb. 17-18 in Austin, is bringing the new health care reality into full focus with an impressive cast of speakers and thought-provoking sessions.



Watch the health care debate in the national media, and it is likely you will encounter the name of Len Nichols. Nichols has established himself as one of the most articulate, informed and passionate voices in the health care reform debate. Director of the health policy program for the Washington, D.C.-based New America Foundation, Nichols is a highly sought-after speaker and one THA members will be talking about long after the conference. Nichols' keynote session opens the 2010 Leadership Conference. Other session highlights include:

- **The Trickle-down Effect: How Health Care Reform will Impact the Texas Budget;**
- **Comparative Effectiveness Research Principles and Implications;**
- **Workforce Best Practices for a New Health Care Reality; and**
- **Value-Based Purchasing: The Clinical Perspective.**

HealthSHARE and many THA-endorsed companies will be available to discuss how they can help hospitals find innovative, creative approaches to help be part of the solution. Visit the THA Web site (www.tha.org/conf2010) for the full agenda, speaker bios, exhibit listing and entertainment schedule. Register online and book your hotel room by Jan. 25 for the best discounts. *



Texas Hospital Association-Endorsed Companies

Air Liquide Healthcare

www.airliquide.com
Troy Fowler, 512/417-9803

Amazon Coding

www.amazoncoding.com
Jan Keil, 888/442-6296 ext. 801

***Amerinet**

www.amerinet-gpo.com
Jack Bennett, 281/239-8660

Ameritas Life Insurance Corp.

www.ameritasgroup.com
Craig Miller, 888/968-9365

***AMN Healthcare**

www.amnhealthcare.com
Bonnie Owens, 877/282-0380

***Bells International Inc.**

www.bellsintl.com
Rhonda Kingston, 866/372-3557

***CampbellWilson**

www.campbellwilson.com
Manie Campbell, 214/373-7077

careLearning

www.carelearning.com
Laura Cornelson, 800/252-9403

***Commerce Bank N.A.**

www.commercebank.com
Lance Wright, 800/892-7100 ext. 27094

***Concerro**

www.concerro.com
Wes Staggs, 858/882-8500 ext. 302

***ConMediSys**

www.conmedisys.com
Bryan Blackford, 512/299-9611

Craneware Inc.

www.craneware.com
Jamie Oakes, 614/804-6147

Curbside Hospitality

www.curbside.com
David Ryan, 978/524-0900, ext. 101

DOTmed.com

www.dotmed.com
Philip F. Jacobus, 212/742-1200 ext. 250

EQ2

www.eq2.com
Jim Smith, 802/865-0920

eTactics

www.etacticsinc.com
Paul Osiecki, 214/213-1685

Ethos Partners

Formerly Ascendium Healthcare Solutions
www.ascendium.com
Trent Ritzenthaler, 317/430-0964

Financial Review Services

www.checkfrs.com
Mike Lewis, 713/850-7456

GroupOne Services Inc.

www.gp1.com
Eric Scott, 972/719-4208

HealthCare Benefits Inc.

www.hcb-inc.com
Mike Payne, 800/252-9404

***Healthcare Funding Solutions**

www.healthcarefunding.com
Michael Toth, 832/656-4221

Healthcare Recovery Alliance

www.hcralliance.com
Mike Stewart, 800/710-2825

HealthCare Strategies Inc.

www.hcare.net
Bob Calvisi, 443/745-8526

HealthCAREERS Network

www.healthcareers.com
Gary Seaberg, 214/256-4811

***Hospital Receivables Service Inc.**

www.hospitalreceivables.org
Doug Smith, 800/955-8722

InsMed Insurance Agency Inc.

www.insmedinsurance.com
David C. Blake, 800/214-7039

Management Dynamics Inc.

www.management-dynamics.com
Richard "Dick" Nolan, 770/953-9553

MediTract LLC

www.meditract.com
Jeffrey Steele, 877/492-8490

***Medmined™ Services of CareFusion**

www.carefusion.com
Derek Cunningham, 203/314-8590

MedTravelers

www.medtravelers.com
Eric Casazza, 469/524-1506

***Medversant Technologies LLC**

www.medversant.com
Matt Haddad, 213/291-6139

MEMdata LLC

www.memdata.com
Andy Hood, 866/695-1950 ext. 105

***Merritt Hawkins & Associates**

www.merrithawkins.com
Daryl Fowler, 469/524-1591

***Milliman**

www.milliman.com
Doug Conkel, 214/863-5000

MTS of Texas

www.mtsoftexas.com
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National Benefits Group

www.nbginc.com
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***Resource Corporation of America**

www.resource-corp.com
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www.rwd.com
Sue Varner, 248/267-3536

RWR Financial Services Inc.

Bob Rhodes, 877/246-9377

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www.rxprohealth.com
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www.simulationed.com
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SpectraCorp

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***Staff Care**

www.staffcare.com
Chris Schleiss, 800/658-2272

Tandberg

www.tandberg.com
Ryan Rogers, 512/505-8900

Texas Hospital Insurance Exchange

www.thie.com
Mike Payne, 800/252-9404

Texas Hospital Association Insurance Programs

www.healthshare-tha.com/products/insurance/
Mike Payne, 800/252-9404

Texas Hospital Association Patient Data System

www.tha.org/pds
Kent Stevens, 800/252-9403

Texas Hospital Association Retirement

www.tharpm.org
Fred Hamilton, 800/252-9404

***The SSI Group**

www.thessigroup.com
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Total Productivity Track LLC

www.therapytrack.com
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Wiederhold & Associates

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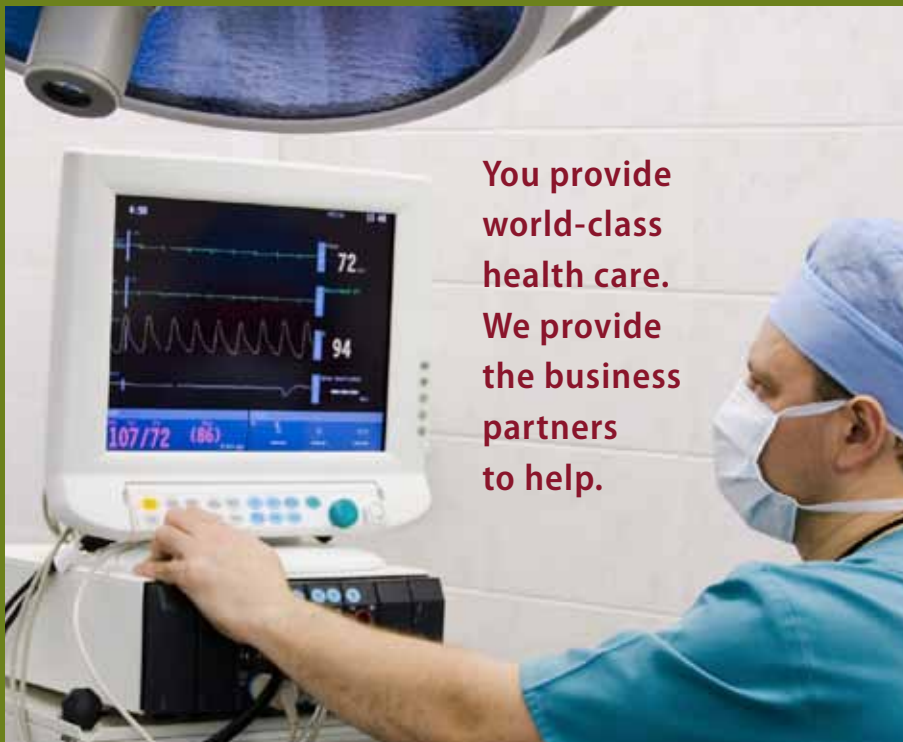


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