

Using technology to maximize efficient care

SUCCESS STORY HOSPICE



At a glance

Community

- Hospice

Organization

- Visiting Nurse & Hospice Care (VNHC)

Location

- Santa Barbara, CA

Challenges

- Paper-based chart system
- Getting information to nurses in the field

Solution

- Netsmart Homecare™
- AllDocs for Homecare

Results

- Giving clinicians better access to patient information
- Improving billing efficiency
- Improving patient care through the use of technology
- Reduced costs of photocopies by \$21,000 over two years

Visiting Nurse & Hospice Care improves home health efficiencies with electronic clinical and billing information

The Visiting Nurse & Hospice Care (VNHC) in Santa Barbara, CA, uses Netsmart Homecare and AllDocs to achieve better, more efficient care for its patients. With an integrated clinical and financial solution, the agency has improved clinician access to patient records, streamlined billing processes and reduced costs associated with a paper-based system.

Experience

Founded in 1908, VNHC has a long history of providing stability, wellness and independence through compassionate care for patients. Services include home health skilled nursing, home health rehabilitation therapies, palliative care, hospice care and other support programs for patients and their families.

“We want to be the home care provider of choice and to be a partner to other community providers,” VNHC President & Chief Executive Officer Lynda Tanner, RN, MSN said. “Home care is going to be the center of post-acute care, so we need to always be looking at how we use technology and make sure we are maximizing efficiencies.”

For many years the agency used a paper-based chart system, which was cumbersome for several reasons. First, it was time-consuming and costly to duplicate the 12 to 25 referral packets received every day for the clinical team.

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President & Chief Executive Officer, VNHC

“A referral packet is anywhere from two to 50 pages,” said Home Health Manager Mary Beth Noggle. “Intake needs a copy, the manager of nursing needs a copy, possibly rehab and case managers...we were making five to seven copies of every packet we received.”

Another challenge of the paper-based system was getting the information in the hands of nurses who were generally out in the field. They would need to travel back to the office, some needing to travel 30 miles, to pick up the paperwork to be fully prepared for patient visits in the home.

“We need technologies that will help clinicians be more efficient...anything to make their jobs easier,” IT Manager John Dougherty said. “Security is also key. The less paper left in cars and homes, the less risk to security.”

Solutions

In 2009, VNHC replaced its electronic system with Netsmart Homecare. Main factors in choosing this solution included its capabilities to integrate business and clinical software, scale with the agency’s growth and the solution’s support options.

The Home Health department was the first area to launch AllDocs, and it has improved efficiency with more accurate and complete records while shifting to a truly paperless process. Director of Home Health Agnes Padernal recalled, “Our goal was to make sure we had all paperwork and were not losing any pages.”

VNHC worked with local hospitals to bring in information, such as physician notes, medications, orders, demographics, surgical reports and labs. In a paper-based system, the agency had to make multiple copies and require nurses to come into the office to pick up the information. With electronic file numbers and categories, the solution helps staff transfer the information to the correct place in the chart.

Giving clinicians better access to patient information

With Netsmart Homecare and AllDocs, VNHC clinicians can instantly access electronic health care plans, patient demographics, medications and other relevant clinical information at the point of care.

“Patients are getting better care because the staff has all the information...The difference with Netsmart Homecare and AllDocs is that staff has all the patient history at admission, right in their laptops.”

Mary Beth Noggle
Home Health Manager, VNHC

“For quality care, a lot of team members need access to the information,” Noggle said.

“Now we know that documents are not getting lost or misplaced. We can all share and have access to the documents when we need them.”

“I love that I can access referral information electronically,” Case Manager Leila Antonio, RN, said. “Coming into the office to pick up a packet took so much time...but now it frees up time for me to add another patient visit.”

Improving billing efficiency

With Netsmart Homecare and AllDocs, VNHC can combine business, clinical and scheduling with one integrated solution. In addition to improvements for clinicians, it also makes financial processes smoother.

“AllDocs gives us another tool so we don’t have to wait for paper documentation to go through each area,” Patient Accounting Manager Lynn Gamble said. “If our clinicians have the right tools and they are easy to use, I’m going to get correct work with fewer mistakes on the back end.”

Netsmart Homecare handles both electronic and paper claims for Medicare, Medicaid, commercial payers, other third-party payers and self-pay patients. It helps automate the billing cycle and streamline processes.

Outcomes

VNHC clinicians agree that the biggest benefits of using technology are the improvements in patient care. “Patients are getting better care because the staff has all the information,” Noggle said. “The difference with Netsmart Homecare and AllDocs is that staff has all the patient history at admission, right in their laptops.”

VNHC has also improved several operational outcomes. For example, Noggle explained, “We went from making 10,209 home health copies every year down to zero... our Home Health department is now truly paperless.” This enabled the organization to reduce costs of photocopies by about \$21,000 over two years.

“The efficiencies in billing alone are amazing,” Gamble said. “We can now access information right away instead of waiting for Medical Records or Intake to pull the information and send it to us. This process could take a day or two before we had AllDocs, but now most of the information we need is indexed within one to two hours of the referral, and we can retrieve it very quickly.”

Each achievement helps VNHC better focus on its goal to deliver high-quality, compassionate care for patients and be the home care provider of choice.

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About Netsmart

Netsmart designs, builds and delivers electronic health records (EHRs), solutions and services that are powerful, intuitive and easy-to-use. Our platform provides accurate, up-to-date information that is easily accessible to care team members in behavioral health, care at home, senior living and social services. We make the complex simple and personalized so our clients can concentrate on what they do best: provide services and treatment that support whole-person care.

By leveraging the powerful Netsmart network, care providers can seamlessly and securely integrate information across communities, collaborate on the most effective treatments and improve outcomes for those in their care. Our streamlined systems and personalized workflows put relevant information at the fingertips of users when and where they need it.

For 50 years, Netsmart has been committed to providing a common platform to integrate care. SIMPLE. PERSONAL. POWERFUL.