

PLAZA MEDICAL CENTER OF FORT WORTH



PLAZA MEDICAL CENTER PROVES THE VERSATILITY OF LIVEPROCESS BY INCREASING EVERYDAY PRODUCTIVITY

Located in the heart of Fort Worth's nationally acclaimed medical district, Plaza Medical Center serves as a tertiary care facility for not only Tarrant County, but many other North Texas municipalities within a 90-mile radius. The 320-bed hospital, operated by the Hospital Corporation of America's North Texas division, offers a full range of specialty and sub-specialty services, serving more than 65,000 inpatients, outpatients and ER visitors each year. Ensuring adequate staff coverage for such a varied and active facility has been a strenuous and time-consuming responsibility — until LiveProcess was brought on to help automate the process.

"It's a win-win, by saving precious time and resource, and affording us total coverage throughout the work week."

*Monica Demar
Staffing Coordinator*

APPROACH

Shift management is an important function for any enterprise, but it is the very lifeblood of a successful healthcare organization. The busier the hospital, the more essential it is to be able to coordinate personnel effectively and ensure that no shifts are understaffed.

Plaza Medical Center is one of the leading specialty hospitals in the state, providing comprehensive diagnostic and treatment capabilities in Cardiac Care, Neurosciences, Oncology, Orthopedics and numerous other specialties. The hospital is committed to growing to keep pace with the medical needs of the region, recently opening

a free-standing emergency room facility in Burleson, Texas, and becoming the first hospital in north Texas, and only the fifth in the state, to receive comprehensive stroke center certification.

With primary and secondary care facilities as far as 90 miles away regularly referring patients to Plaza Medical, maintaining appropriate levels of staff coverage is among the hospital's highest priorities. Monica Demar is Plaza's staffing coordinator, charged with ensuring the hospital is effectively staffed to handle the growing need for world-class medical care.

"Until fairly recently, we had two staffing coordinators at Plaza, working in shifts from 7:00 a.m. until 11:00 p.m.," noted Demar. "The function of staff coordination is so important at a hospital like Plaza, but it required an immense amount of resource, time and diligence."

Reflecting on the previous workforce management process, Demar described a manual procedure that was labor-intensive and often produced a duplication of effort between the two staffing coordinators. "To ensure proper coverage, we used to call our staff individually, placing upwards of 50 calls a day," Demar said. "As difficult as that was, the real problem was that we typically didn't get an answer on the first call. There was a lot of waiting for callbacks, followed by return calls from us, by which time a shift may have been filled or, in some instances, under or over booked because of the delay and overlap of duties."

EFFICIENCY THROUGH AUTOMATION

To keep pace with the growing medical needs of the region, Plaza has stayed ahead of the curve by continuously expanding its clinical facilities and capabilities. But the hospital has also demonstrated a strong commitment to creating operational efficiencies wherever possible in an effort to not only improve cost-performance ratios, but also maintain clinical excellence.

Plaza Medical administrators implemented LiveProcess as a means for automating the process by which staffing coordination is done. The objectives were to reduce the effort, time and cost associated with shift management, and by all measures, those goals have been far exceeded.

By deploying LiveProcess, a previously manual procedure has been automated, enabling the coordinator to alert all or selected staff about shift openings with the push of a button. Communication takes place via a range of modalities, including text message, email, or automated calls to either a mobile and landline phone, whichever are preferred by the recipients. They are then able to reply and the responses can be tracked in real-time within LiveProcess.

The results have been striking. For starters, the hospital has been able to reduce the staff coordination workforce, reassigning one of its coordinators to other responsibilities. Under the manual assignment process, only about 70% of vacant shifts

would end up being covered. Now, Demar reports 100% vacancy coverage.



The staff use LiveProcess in concert with their scheduling application to make the most of their shift coverage requests.

"We are now able to fill all open shifts with a fraction of the time and effort that was previously required," said Demar. "The system is extremely easy to use, and affords me lots of flexibility in how I communicate. I will typically use text or email to inquire about bringing evening shift nurses in early, and telephone to ask if day shifters can stay late."

"Just as important, every outgoing call or message is logged, so I can determine how I am most likely to reach each staff member, and analyze which are most likely to provide coverage at what times of the day," she added. "In this way, I have complete control of the process, and maximum insight into which staffers are most able and willing to pick up shifts as needed. It's a win-win, by saving precious time and resource, and affording us total coverage throughout the work week."

FOR EVERYDAY SITUATION MANAGEMENT

Although it is often thought of as a platform hospitals deploy to manage severe weather and other time-critical emergencies, LiveProcess plays as great a role in helping organizations improve their day-to-day productivity. "The use of LiveProcess at Plaza Medical demonstrates its enormous value in maintaining proper workforce coverage," noted Demar. "We have found LiveProcess to be a tool that delivers and manages two-way communication in real-time, and incorporates reporting capabilities that make every stream of the communications trackable for future reference and evaluation."

"I know there are countless other administrative and operational applications for a tool like this," she concluded, "and I'm confident there are other areas of the hospital that would similarly benefit from such a robust solution."