

## Laying the Foundation for Safer Care

Long committed to quality, patient-centered care, one West Coast medical center consistently has made patient safety priority one. A busy, non-profit hospital with a Level I trauma center, it turned to Standard Register for its expertise and technology to meet National Patient Safety Goals and deliver unparalleled care in the region.

By leveraging the power of SMARTworks® Clinical Enterprise, the medical center has established positive patient identification which is providing a foundation for more closely controlled specimen collection and medication administration. In the process, they also streamlined patient registration, improved compliance and reduced opportunities for identity fraud.

### A Transformation for Patient Registration

The transformation began in the hospital's eight registration areas. SMARTworks® Clinical Enterprise gave the hospital to automatically produce customized patient registration kits -- wristbands, labels, face sheets, consents and other pertinent documentation -- integrating the patient's photo, personal demographics and barcodes on each.

As part of the process, signatures are captured electronically. Patients use a signature pad to sign the consents. The signed documents are then stored in SMARTworks as PDFs, so copies can be printed for the patients and the charts. The files are retained for 60 days after discharge. Longer term, the medical center will be automatically feeding the signed consents and scanned insurance cards into the EMR.

"Standard Register took us from an antiquated age of manual processes to the 21st century with their technology," said the hospital's Patient Access Services Director. "Our prior system could take up to 10 minutes to produce a single patient's packet of forms. Now by the time the registrars get up from their desks and walk over to the printer, the packet is there. It's increased productivity greatly."

### Continuity, Consistency, Compliance

The director says SMARTworks also has brought continuity and consistency to the registration process. Whether the patient is a Medicare, Medicaid, commercial or self-pay, the application



automatically produces the appropriate forms for the patient. The registrar just specifies the type of registration and selects the appropriate kit which is categorized by type of service.

"It's a welcome change," the director admits. "There's no searching in files or cubby holes. When we use the system, we know we'll get a complete set of the appropriate, compliant forms," and she adds, "We got rid of boxes and boxes of forms. It gave us our space back!"

## Data Accuracy Enhanced

Unlike the wristbands and documents produced by the hospital's old embosser and impact printers, today's documents are crisp and easy to read. What's more, the data is accurate and complete.

"Before when labels were printed, the system might drop a number from the medical account number and an alpha character from the name. It was a huge patient safety issue," the Patient Access Director explained. "So our staff was forced to carefully examine every label sheet before sending them to the nursing floor. I love the new system. Now documents are clean and accurate."

## Positive Patient Identification

Patient photos on wristbands and documentation add another layer of safety, according to the hospital's spokesperson.

"Our number one reason for implementing SMARTworks Clinical Enterprise was to improve accuracy of patient identification. The photo provides a third identifier. We initially thought we might encounter some resistance, but our patients have accepted it without reservation. When they see the bar codes and the pictures, they know we are serious about patient safety," he said.

"From the revenue cycle side of it, we're assured of charging the right things to the right patient. So it's a benefit to the hospital from a financial perspective," he added.

## Right Patient, Right Specimen, Right Medication

Clinicians have embraced the photo identification, too, according to the hospitals' director of Cardiovascular Services. "Our nurses love it. Before we only had patient account number, patient name and physician's name to reference. Now we see the face and name by the picture and we know we have the right patient."

Currently, the medical center is using the bar codes and photos to assure accurate identification of patient specimens. The collection process is conducted right at the bedside:

- Nurse or phlebotomist scans their own badge and the patient's wristband
- Review the orders, selecting the specimens to be collected
- Press "Print" to generate the specimen label

- Collect the desired specimen
- Scan the collected specimen to enter the collection date/time
- Scan the patient's wristband to close the collection encounter

A special check-digit in the wristband's bar code ensure clinicians are scanning the patient's wristband at the bedside and not simply taking a label from a patient's chart. The CareFusion application will not allow the nurse to proceed if anything but the wristband scanned.

It's been effective. The director of Cardiovascular Services reports that the incidence of mislabeling specimens has been reduced significantly.

In Phase II of the implementation, the medical center will be using the bar codes and photos for bedside administration of medications to assure the medication about to be administered matches the patient's pharmacy profile.

## Reduced Identity Fraud, Safer Patients

As a nonprofit, this hospital sees a lot of uninsured patients. For many, it's their first and only access to medical care. The Patient Access director reports it is not uncommon for people use different identification at different times.

"We always suspected it was happening. Now with the new system, we have confirmation. With the picture retained in an archive, we know when people misrepresent themselves," she states.

This is not just a financial issue. A false identity can pose real risks to the patient when specific care is indicated or medications need to be reconciled. The hospital spokesperson reiterated, "It's all about patient safety. Anything you can do to reduce medical errors is a step in right direction. Standard Register's technology provides an important foundation for improving safety."

