

## IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF CARE

“It’s just very important that our hospitals have all the latest, greatest technology available, for not just me and my family, but for everyone that is our service area.”

Felicia Pierce, CNO, Mississippi County Hospital System

As healthcare organizations are always striving to improve the quality of care they provide to patients, there are two aspects that have become a focus - improving medical care and adapting to healthcare consumerism.

To improve medical care, providers are replacing staple items, such as beds, room sanitizers, sterilizers, and surgical lights. Routinely replacing items like this can make care more comfortable, reduce the risk of infectious disease, and give staff members tools to efficiently and safely do their jobs. Additionally, purchasing or upgrading medical equipment that integrates with technology, such as nurse call

systems, da Vinci robots, EMR systems, telehealth equipment, imaging equipment, and patient monitors can improve the patient experience by helping patients and staff communicate more efficiently, minimizing discomfort and recovery time, and recording accurate data for both patients and staff members.

With the new need to provide tools for patients about pricing, resources, and care options, healthcare consumerism is on the rise. Consumers expect to have everything at their fingertips with virtually no wait time, therefore healthcare organizations must adjust accordingly. Information and services must be readily available and easily accessed. New technologies that address these needs are:

- patient portals,
- wearable technology and remote monitoring tools,
- self service kiosks, and
- various apps on their smartphones and tablets.

Even within healthcare organizations, patients are expecting to have unlimited free Wi-Fi, bedside computer terminals, and all of their information synced with all of their providers and all of their devices.

These advances are very exciting for the patient-provider relationship. The more invested patients are in their health, the more likely there will be positive outcomes. While many patients have incorporated smartphones and tablets into every day life, healthcare organizations need to make many adjustments to conform to new patient expectations. With so much more data being transferred



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from patients to providers and vice versa, organizations must invest heavily in servers, wireless infrastructure, routers, and security software to keep communication efficient and safe. Additionally, end users devices are needed for physician and staff to input the data during patient visits. Finally, as telehealth becomes more available to patients, organizations must ensure they are equipped with video equipment and monitors to make proper evaluations.

## **COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF CARE:**

- + **Replace staple items** such as beds, room sanitizers, elevators, sterilizers, surgical lights.
- + **Purchase or upgrade new medical equipment** that integrates with technology such as nurse call system, da Vinci robots, EMR systems, telehealth equipment, ultrasounds, EKG equipment, patient monitors.
- + **Upgrade infrastructure.** To offer these additional services, healthcare organizations must boost their infrastructure to serve many more users, additional security risks, and sustain operating speed. This involves more routers & access points, a wi-fi management systems, servers, hotspot hardware, upgraded firmware and security software, and more wireless networking devices.
- + **Acquire new technology.** If organizations do not currently offer wi-fi, they may have to purchase many of the items about. Additionally, consumers are looking for self service kiosks to check in and view their patient profile, online scheduling capabilities, and on demand services, such as basic wellness care, minor diagnosis treatments, and prescription refills. Many organizations need to make a list of new capabilities they would like to offer, and what equipment and technology is needed to fulfill those capabilities.

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