

Better Care through Better Processes

Top-Tier Hospital Meets Safety Standards & Increases Operational Efficiency with Automated eForms

SUMMARY

An award-winning Maryland hospital affiliated with a prominent health system evolved from reliance on a printing business for voluminous patient forms to a more sophisticated, automated registration process that meets NPSG standards for safety.

Today's method of producing packets of forms electronically with patient-specific barcodes reduces both the number of labels required and human error in affixing them. Hospital staff verify information on the forms, which ensures correct patient identification, before scanning documents into an electronic medical record.

Even after its parent company implemented an electronic health record system, FormFast's electronic forms automation solution made the following goals possible for the hospital:

- Accurate identification of patients for improved safety outcomes
- Reduction of costs involving paper, labels, copying, and human resources (no wasted time manually managing forms)
- Elimination of the waste and liability associated with outdated forms
- Better communication with a growing Spanish-speaking population



As part of an effort to improve clinical documentation, a 259 bed acute-care medical center in Maryland implemented an electronic health records system from Epic Systems Corporation in 2013. Previously utilized FormFast products were integrated into the new system to complement it, specifically to handle nearly 1,500 electronic forms and index them to ensure patient safety.

Verifying Patient Identification

Because the forms include demographics specific to an individual patient, the forms comply with the first goal of the Joint Commission's National Patient Safety Guidelines (NPSG) which mandates that hospitals improve the accuracy of patient identification. FormFast's ability to quickly and accurately produce patient identifiers was seen as an important part of the organization patient safety initiatives.

A clinical data analyst at the hospital describes how FormFast's solution ensures positive patient identification. "The registrar reliably identifies the patient for whom the service is intended by confirming patient name and date of birth that prints on forms with the patient so this serves as a second identification check."

In addition to improving patient safety, the organization's use of automated eForms allowed the organization to increase productivity while reducing cost.



Additional improvements included creating bilingual forms for clearer communication. Patients who only read Spanish are provided with a double-sided form with Spanish on one side and English on the other. “Staff can easily see what the patient is consenting to by looking at the English side of the form,” one of the hospital’s clinical data analyst explains.

Complementing Clinical Systems

Dual use of FormFast and Epic means a smooth registration process, savings, and assurance that patient documentation is collected properly. Demographic information and patient-specific barcodes are generated on the eForms based on patient data collected from Epic, allowing the forms to be archived in the correct patient folder quickly and accurately, avoiding indexing errors.

Because of this integration, the process is streamlined for registration staff. Forms applicable to the patient are automatically produced by a nearby laser printer during admissions. Once completed, registrars scan the forms which are sent to the correct electronic medical record in the document management system. The hospital uses Hyland OnBase for document management.

“Because of the barcodes our forms are easily added into OnBase,” says the clinical analyst. “Our process of using FormFast with Epic and OnBase is working well for us.”

Even when the Epic system has scheduled monthly downtime, staff can still generate FormFast’s electronic forms from a Business Continuity Access computer, providing additional assurance that clinical documentation in the document management system is complete and accurate.

Ultimately, by incorporating electronic forms as part of its broader automation strategy, the hospital has achieved greater levels of patient safety and efficiency in a way that is integrated and cost-effective. These positive benefits contribute to the delivery of high-quality care for which the organization is known.

Improving Productivity & Reducing Costs

“FormFast enhances staff efficiency and saves on expenses,” the analyst states. “[Staff members] don’t have to put labels on everything. If a form changes, we’re not throwing it out—we used to have piles and piles of forms that were ordered from the printer and if we made one little change, then we’d be tossing thousands of dollars of forms away. So it’s very cost effective. Plus, you’re using plain paper and a copier or printer. It’s not like it’s expensive to do.”

Although all patients must complete consent forms for the Maryland insurance authority, packets are customized depending on how patients answer questions. For example, when the field for Medicare insurance is checked, this triggers Medicare-specific forms to be generated. Patients entering the emergency department must sign a facility consent form. Other forms are for birth certificates, vital records, and code status (e.g., Do Not Resuscitate). Code status forms print on colored paper to alert medical staff when they view a patient’s chart. Patient education sheets are generated as needed.

Packets are generated for Main Admitting for any inpatient location, Emergency Department, and Health Care and Surgery Center. Medical staff rely on the packets to assist them with various protocols (e.g., heparin protocols that include algorithms regarding patient dosing according to weight and laboratory values). “Providing proper documentation to help staff follow procedure is just another way we’re ensuring patient safety.”

To learn more about FormFast & electronic forms automation visit: www.formfast.com

FormFast, Inc.

13421 Manchester Road, Suite 208
St. Louis, MO 63131
Phone: +1 800 218 3512
Fax: +1 866 538 3329

© Copyright 2014 FormFast, Inc.
All rights reserved. All other trademarks mentioned herein are the property of their respective owners.

