

TriMedx helps nation's largest nonprofit health system save more than \$100 million

Ascension Health grew fast, with 78 hospitals in 20 states and the District of Columbia. Yet each clinical engineering department differed in management methodologies, policies, and procedures. TriMedx faced the critical challenge of establishing a consistent, comprehensive program to meet the individualized needs of each hospital no matter how many beds, FTEs, or sites were involved.

SITUATION

The nation's largest nonprofit health system, Ascension Health, was plagued with fragmented clinical engineering programs. Departments independently managed their own equipment, which deterred from patient care and caused dependencies on external resources by relying on exorbitant service contracts. Ascension Health needed a comprehensive medical equipment management program to connect every department in every hospital throughout the System.

CHALLENGES

A thorough assessment of each facility revealed there was no centralized purchasing or contract management and no standard policies or procedures in place. In addition, the organization lacked a shared database to monitor equipment, recognize trends, and prepare for regulatory review. Plus, most hospitals utilized different staffing models and various vendors, creating a chaotic scenario for managing costs allocated for clinical engineering.

APPROACH

TriMedx implemented a holistic support structure for clinical engineering and equipment management featuring:

- centralized customer care and parts sourcing center
- clinical engineering expertise over multiple modalities
- regulatory expertise for the Joint Commission and state board of health compliance (which differed from state to state)
- robust IT and data management system
- flexible staffing model with national recruiting, training, and development



OUTCOMES

- 1) Shared knowledgebase allows equipment managers to document and recognize trends; develop benchmarks and best practices
- 2) Centralized resources achieve economies of scale and major cost efficiencies, creating more than \$100 million in total savings since inception
- 3) Increased patient safety and improved clinical staff satisfaction results in higher-quality care
- 4) Consolidated procurement process eliminates more than 50,000 purchase orders and invoices annually

KEY SUCCESS FACTORS

Program success was contingent upon each hospital's independent buy-in, with most requiring a rigorous RFP process.

Parts purchasing power

Once the program was implemented at each site, hospitals could take advantage of group buying power. Centralized sourcing specialists determined best value through comparative pricing and negotiation, allowing technical associates to focus on equipment maintenance.

Stronger supplier relationships

Thanks to larger volume purchases, each hospital and health facility not only saved money through leveraged purchasing power, but also benefited from stronger supplier relationships. Due to better accountability for payment through a single point of contact, billing errors were significantly reduced as were man hours to process invoices.

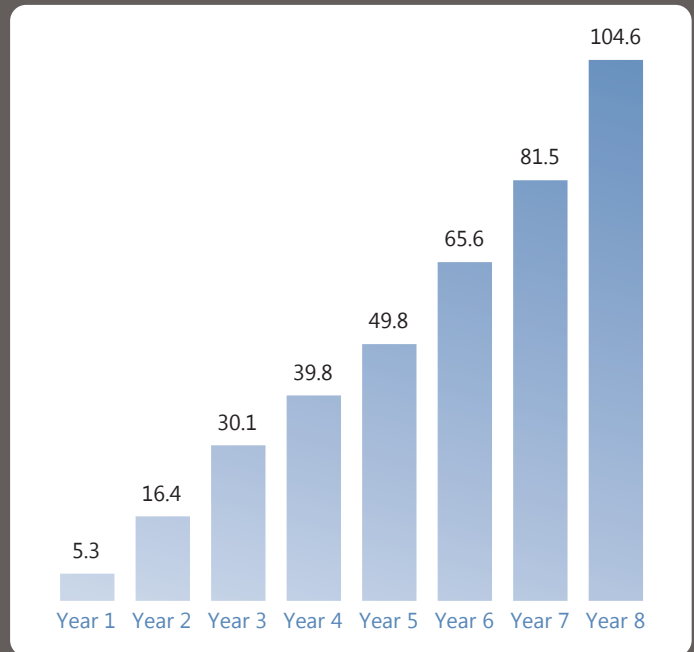
Training and development

In addition, focused training and career development enabled technicians to see the big picture. It also encouraged adherence to strict, standardized guidelines for documentation and regulatory compliance readiness as well as careful monitoring and managing of service contracts.

Improving quality across the value chain

Clinical staff satisfaction and hospital revenue generation relies on medical equipment availability. Technician response time, timeliness of the repair, and knowledge sharing all helped improve equipment availability—increasing uptime to 99.3 percent across all modalities. Consequently, hospitals were able to generate more revenue and clinical staff satisfaction increased by virtually eliminating equipment downtime.

Cumulative Cost Savings (millions)



Reducing Total Service Cost



“Implementing this solution has impacted Ascension Health on many levels—we continue to see the financial benefits, and the quality of the program underscores our dedication to the patients we serve.”

- **Anthony R. Tersigni, EdD, FACHE**
President and Chief Executive Officer
Ascension Health