ProClarity helps PeaceHealth fulfill a century-long commitment to service

PeaceHealth's name refers to its founders—the Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace—who in 1890 opened their first non-profit hospital in Bellingham, Washington. "They were known for being ambitious and compassionate," says Director of Data Administration & Decision Support, Susan Easton.

As legend has it, Sister Margaret Anna Cusack's unwillingness to compromise so infuriated her superiors that they sent her to America. What Ireland lost, Alaska, Washington and Oregon have been benefiting from ever since. Six hospitals and a century later, PeaceHealth still accepts all patients regardless of their ability to pay.

Nothing about PeaceHealth's commitment has changed, but the pace has certainly quickened. Over a recent six-month period, PeaceHealth may have set a record of sorts by implementing an astounding number of ProClarity applications—everything from materials management to electronic prescription-writing. As a result, PeaceHealth is optimizing its data resources as never before while serving as a national model for healthcare quality and efficiency.

Here are just a few ways PeaceHealth uses ProClarity:

• **key performance indicators** for asthma and diabetes are being monitored in an online analytical environment for the first time. "We also have clinical, operational, financial and mission-related Key Performance Indicators that help us monitor our completion of annual goals," says Easton.

• **adverse drug events** are recorded into a database so physicians and quality managers know how, when, and why medications cause adverse reactions in patients. "That's a crucially important analysis in modern healthcare," says Easton.

• **clinical documentation** includes everything from medication lists and pain assessments to smoking cessation by clinic, provider, and patient. We can evaluate the frequency and completeness of clinical documentation for our patients.

• **clinic appointment** cubes are being used by the clinic managers to view appointment trends by day, week, and month to accurately anticipate staffing and physician loads.

• **materials management** tracks total cost by department, order count, quantity, as well as total laundry orders. "You can even tell how many Q-tips they've bought!" says Easton. Utilization rates and projections of future needs are becoming much more precise.

• **electronic prescription writing** has perhaps the biggest "wow factor," according to Easton. When physicians write prescriptions online, a fax is automatically sent to the pharmacy and these prescriptions are filled right away. "We use ProClarity to track how many physicians are entering prescriptions and what prescriptions they are writing," says Easton.

• **business development** has an application that integrates all inpatient hospital data for Oregon, Washington and Alaska, which makes it very easy to analyze total charges, patient count, mean length of stay and market share over time by service line, state, county, city, or zip code. "It dramatically simplifies tracking, analysis and market share forecasting," says Easton.

• **staffing** can be monitored as never before thanks to a ProClarity application that provides a hospital midnight census. "Do we really have more patients during the flu season, on Mondays, on Fridays, or during Christmas vacation?" says Easton. "Now we know."

• **A report library** ended the frustration of searching for up-to-date information. The ProClarity Analytics Server (PAS) provides a centralized location for many reports PeaceHealth CEOs and other executives normally require.

• **Financial decision support** will allow PeaceHealth to tie cost to the healthcare provided. As PeaceHealth brings up a costing system this year, it plans to use ProClarity to learn how to improve patient outcome and lower costs for the patient.

the tradition continues

These impressive applications, all launched within a relatively short time, reflect PeaceHealth's commitment to providing quality care to the most people possible. "I've been here 15 years," says Easton, "and our uniqueness hasn't changed. PeaceHealth still accepts all patients regardless of their ability to pay, and we stay totally focused on providing the best healthcare we can."

That commitment is felt throughout the Data Administration department. "All the people on my team are passionate about clinical quality improvement," says Easton. "If we can take better care of patients, provide better quality of life for them and cost them less, that's really important."

perfect fit

PeaceHealth chose ProClarity following an intensive 18-month GAP analysis that focused on PeaceHealth's data accessing and reporting needs. Under Easton's leadership, the data administration and decision support team conducted multiple customer forums and conferences to identify the needs of different users--from what Easton calls "the super-data-analyst and super-user types" to the user who's just learning to use a computer mouse.

The team studied tools just as exhaustively. "We looked at the whole market, everything out there," says Easton. PeaceHealth eventually decided upon ProClarity for "a trending and analysis drill-down tool with the ability to move data from the analysis to another tool like Excel. Being able to create your briefing books (collection of favorite views) and then publish them to the ProClarity Analytics Server for consumption by users is a big win as well."

understanding the user

Failure to understand user needs often causes business intelligence (BI) projects to fail. More than once, ProClarity has heard new customers say, "'We did it before. This time we're going to do it right."

But Easton got it right the first time. Susan says there are two questions she always asks, What is the question you're trying to answer? And how do you want that information delivered to you? "That's my mantra. That's what everybody knows me for. Our approach is to fully understand what our users want and need, and proceed from there."

Functionality, feature set and price all put ProClarity well ahead of the competition. "Other products had some of the functions and features of ProClarity, but the price was beyond what we felt reasonable to spend," says Easton. "And what we've learned is that ProClarity has more useful features and functions than we would have found with those other products anyway."

flexibility counts

PeaceHealth certainly did its homework. Nevertheless, ProClarity's flexibility has been somewhat of a surprise. "When we first acquired ProClarity, we didn't know it was as flexible as it is," says Easton. "But the fact that you can do things about 300 different ways in ProClarity is something we really appreciate, particularly because the GAP analysis revealed how many different ways people have of learning and doing things. We needed a tool that was flexible enough to meet all those needs. ProClarity's ability to quickly change measures and tables is a huge plus because things change so quickly in healthcare. The appropriate, nationally-known way of doing things this week might be different next week."

Other big advantages were ProClarity's drill-down, formatting and de-composition features. "To just click and drill down into specific information is huge," says Easton. "Formatting is important, too. Lots of tools look great until you want to change the format. With ProClarity you can change colors and color-code exceptions." And the decomposition tree, says Easton, "is always a big win. Whenever we give a demonstration everybody loves the decomposition tree."

ProClarity's 'wizard' is a valuable feature, too, says Easton, "especially for new users. And being able to put the grid on the bottom of the graph is a great convenience and really assists in understanding the data which is essential to good decision making."

ongoing ROI

PeaceHealth's ROI increases daily as it uses ProClarity to unveil more and more applications. "Users are thrilled," says Easton. "Take our clinic managers, for example. They've never had so much information to help them assign staffing and process patients as they're getting with the new appointment application we released last month. They're really excited. So are the physicians who have taken it upon themselves to utilize the cubes around diabetes and heart failure."

In the past six months, ProClarity has become a corporate-wide phenomenon. "We're just booming right now," says Easton. "I don't even know how many applications we have anymore; they're growing that fast! ProClarity as a tool has been outstanding and we owe much credit to Josh Dorsey and Robin Smith, our OLAP Development experts, for their extremely effective needs analysis, development and training. ProClarity is a great tool. If you have great developers who strive to understand the business you can create highly effective solutions."

Easton has demonstrated ProClarity in every hospital, clinic, and executive committee. "Everyone is always very wowed by ProClarity. Every time we did a demo we got another five requests," says Easton. "And it's still that way; I get another request almost every day."

minimal training

Easton's group provides new users with four hours of training per application area plus a more in-depth ProClarity tool training when the time is right. "The four hours are with ProClarity in a computer lab," says Easton, "where we do an overview of the data itself and discuss data anomalies and data quality issues, explain all the measures and the fact tables, and go through the basic functions of the ProClarity solution. There are plans for on-going education regarding ProClarity's various functions and features. The important thing is that training be appropriate to the user. After all, if you don't understand the data, you can't use it effectively."

PeaceHealth already has about 200 people using ProClarity, ranging from data analysts to CEOs. "Managers, directors, clinical nurse managers, physicians," says Easton. "They're all getting on board and eagerly suggesting new applications."

Easton's staff can build most new applications very quickly - most in less than 20 hours. "That's a great thing," Easton says, "because if someone asks for information to analyze, we usually can give it to them within a week or two."

taking the lead

PeaceHealth has long believed that proper management of a chronic condition begins with patients who are knowledgeable about their condition and supported by a well-connected team of healthcare professionals. That philosophy embodies the goals of a prestigious $1.9 million "Pursuing Perfection" grant recently awarded to PeaceHealth's St. Joseph Hospital by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the largest U.S. foundation devoted exclusively to improving health and healthcare in America. Only six other hospitals received the grant.

"We'll be working with adults with diabetes and/or congestive heart failure," says Easton, "to enhance access to care, improve communication across health care organizations and support patients in being full members of the care team."

One of the most unique things about the grant project will be a secured website that will enable care team members, including patients, to access all the critical aspects of their medical record on a 24 by 7 basis.

"The objective," says Easton, "is to provide perfect healthcare across the community. That means that it's accessible, that people are getting treated with the right drug at the right time, that they know what their care plan is and that they know how to follow it. The goal is to prevent confusion between doctors and all the other people that the patient deals with."

bright future

ProClarity's role promises to grow more and more. "We're probably tapping only 20 or 30 percent of ProClarity's potential," says Easton.

"The biggest advantage of ProClarity," says Easton, "is having data at your fingertips the moment you need it. Efficiency-wise and in terms of effectively using data to analyze and spot trends, it's made a tremendous difference. I have one doctor who would probably say it saves days of time. And I have clinic managers who say they can't tell me exactly how much time and money it saves, but it's the first time they've been able to accurately analyze patient loads and plan accordingly. I think that adds a ton of value.

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"What we hope to be able to document," says Easton, "is that five years from now more of our diabetics will be healthier than they were before because we have both empowered them to manage their disease and because we have the tools in place to help the whole care team manage their disease more effectively. ProClarity is one tool in a suite of tools that is enabling people to have the information they need to make decisions without having to wait two weeks for a report—that's a big deal. That alone is plenty of ROI as far as we are concerned."

in their own words

More convincing than statistics are the stories PeaceHealth users tell. "That's why I'm having our physicians demo ProClarity at an upcoming executive meeting," says Easton. "No amount of numbers I might give out would ever tell the story like the people who use it and benefit from it."

Anyone interested in the potential of ProClarity should keep an eye on PeaceHealth. "The way it's going," says Easton, "in another week I might have four or five new application requests! That's how fast ProClarity's value is growing here."

ProClarity, says Easton, "is 100 percent great. We have no real complaints. It's a great tool for forecasting and trending and is definitely getting us where we want to go. I've been recommending it within our organization and I would certainly recommend it outside as well. There's no point in spending money you don't need to spend. ProClarity gets the job done effectively, efficiently and affordably."

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