



Novant Health Brunswick Medical Center

Location

Bolivia, North Carolina

Size

74 bed acute care hospital with a staff of 200 physicians, 450 employees, and 150 volunteers.

Affiliation

Part of Novant Health, a four-state integrated network of physician clinics, outpatient centers and hospitals serving more than four million patients annually.

Of note

Named a 2013 “Top Performer on Key Quality Measures” by The Joint Commission.

The Challenge

Since the hospital opened in 1977, Novant Health Brunswick Medical Center had relied on print pamphlets and brochures for the bulk of their patient education needs. “Patients were getting this material at discharge right before they left,” explains Karen Keeler, RN, Clinical Practice Specialist. “They were unable to ask questions and have a dialogue about their care with hospital staff.” Keeler recognized the need for a fundamental change to improve patient outcomes and decrease readmissions.

The Requirements

Brunswick Medical Center needed an education solution that would engage the patient, teach them self-care skills they would need to recover, and provide clinical staff with an opportunity to dialog with the patient. The solution would need to reach the full spectrum of the hospital’s patient base (i.e., emergency care, medical, surgical, imaging, rehabilitative, and maternity). Perhaps most important, the education solution needed to function as a resource throughout the hospital stay and not just as an afterthought as the patient was discharged.

The Solution

Half of the hospitals in the Novant Health system were already successfully using the Patient Channel for inpatient education, so Brunswick Medical Center had the experiences and resources of their colleagues to draw on in the selection of the channel for their facility. However, utilization levels varied throughout the system. Some sites were heavy users, and others hadn’t yet taken advantage of key Patient Channel features such as the online portal. Keeler and her team saw a real opportunity to do more with the channel.

The Implementation

“You really have to have a core group invested in the implementation to make it successful,” said Keeler. “We needed support from not just the clinical staff, but from engineering, IT, guest services, our volunteer staff, and our television vendor.”

Keeler’s team went to leader meetings across the hospital and communicated with employees about the Channel. “We did a lot of prep work before we even went live, including many meetings to figure out the best way to distribute the schedule and the website information and have materials where and when patients need them” she explains.

Once the planning was complete, it was time to roll it out to all hospital staff. The team utilized a communication template that Novant Health employees call a 4P – purpose, picture, plan, and part. During a series of employee presentations, the team explained the purpose of the Channel in improving patient care and

gave video demos to provide a picture of what it looked like. They also explained the utilization plan of action for ensuring patients watched the Channel, and explained what part each employee could play in ensuring a successful roll-out. The presentations were held during shift changes to ensure everyone had a chance to participate.

Here are the key features of Brunswick Medical Center's utilization plan:

- Default to the Patient Channel. When hospital patients turn on their TV, the Patient Channel is the first thing they see. Waiting room, ambulatory care, and emergency department televisions also default to the Channel.
- Make program schedules easy to find. The hospital has program schedules customized with their facility information, and includes them in patient admissions packet. They are also displayed prominently in waiting rooms.
- Enlist volunteers as advocates. Guest Services and Volunteers Manager Deborah Rochelle and Volunteer Coordinator Natalie Clark ensured that all volunteers were included in training and communications on the Channel. Volunteers are also supplied with schedules to share with patients during the hospital "cheer cart" rounds.
- Involve physician practices. Local physician practices in the Novant Health system were given information on using the online Patient Channel portal to educate their patients.
- Educate future patient customers. Brunswick Medical Center participates in community health fairs, where they share information about online and in-hospital access to the Patient Channel.

Lessons Learned

Keeler reports that feedback from both staff and patients has been overwhelmingly positive, even if the usage isn't yet 100% across all departments of the hospital. "Some departments use it more than others. If I had to do it over again, I would recommend more rounding with clinical staff to get them all on board," Keeler acknowledges.

And patients are more satisfied with the preparation they are getting to transition back home. Since the channel was implemented, there has been a 7% increase in patients who answered that they strongly agree or agree with item 24 on the Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems, or HCAHPS, survey ("When I left the hospital, I had a good understanding of the things I was responsible for in managing my health").

Another lesson learned has been the unexpected popularity of the online Patient Channel portal. Patient usage has been high, indicating that patients are proactively educating themselves before and after discharge as well as during the hospital stay. In fact, video views at Brunswick are 41% higher than all five other Novant system facilities combined. No longer an "afterthought," patient education has become an integral part of the continuity of care.

About The Wellness Network

The Wellness Network (TWN) is dedicated to delivering life-enhancing wellness information to motivate patients to take action, aid hospitals in meeting accreditation and improve overall quality of health care. TWN owns and operates the largest and most comprehensive in-hospital health TV networks in the US, available in more than 2,000 hospitals and on 300,000 screens. Channels include the Patient Channel, Newborn Channel, Your NICU Baby, HeartCare Channel and MedSerenity Channel.



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