

UT Southwestern Medical Center

Hayes Drives Workflow Optimization at UT Southwestern to Increase Patient Face Time and Reduce Ordering Errors



UT Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas, Texas, one of the premier academic medical centers in the nation, integrates pioneering biomedical research with exceptional clinical care and education. The institution's 2,800-member faculty includes five Nobel Prize winners and its physicians provide medical care in nearly 80 specialties to more than 100,000 hospitalized patients and 2.2 million outpatients a year.

Data entry time for ambulatory physicians was taking too long and causing errors in ordering services and UT Southwestern wanted to streamline their workflow. They engaged Hayes to help with the optimization project.

UT Southwestern partners with Hayes to help streamline workflow processes

Specialty physicians in the ambulatory setting at UT Southwestern were spending an inordinate amount of time on computer data entry, draining time away from valuable face-to-face interaction with patients. Manual data entry of diagnoses codes and charge captures into the navigator of their Epic Ambulatory EHR was causing issues. Extra steps had to be put into the process to ensure that all entries being made were complete and accurate. The organization wanted to optimize clinician workflows to simplify placing orders, documenting patient interactions and effectively dropping charges and closing encounters.

“We already had a relationship with Hayes and knew they did quality work,” said Dr. Duwayne Willett, Chief Medical Informatics Officer at UT Southwestern. “We were confident they would be the best choice to help us implement the changes we needed to make.”

Hayes employs accelerated improvement plan

Hayes consultants constructed a rolling three-week project plan to work with each of seven specialty departments over six months. The project involved interviewing all physicians to gather information, establish the needs of each specialty group and determine what changes needed to be made.

The Hayes consultants implemented the build by making documentation changes to SmartTools and current workflow design. This simplified the clinicians’ ability to quickly pull in discrete patient data thus eliminating the additional time required to navigate patient history.

Hayes added Smart Buttons to allow clinicians to access information such as charge capture, visit diagnosis, and level of service. They customized the buttons based on the needs of the specialty, assisted physicians with creating “favorites” menu, and compiled the information to create custom specialty preference lists. Hayes also worked with radiology and the laboratory to clarify the correct orders, reducing the calls that both radiology and lab had to make to validate physician orders.

The Hayes/UT Southwestern team also optimized SmartSets to simplify the process of clinicians locating more complex orders for orthopedic, radiology, and specialty lab. The build also included changes to Snapshot and Synopsis reports, allowing physicians to quickly review patient data and trending information. Finally, the Hayes team conducted training and provided “at the elbow support” with physicians until each was comfortable with the changes.

UT Southwestern

- One of the nation’s premier academic medical centers
- 2800 faculty members including six Nobel Prize winners
- Medical care in 80 specialties
- 100,000 hospitalized patients annually
- 2.2 million outpatient visits per year

Challenge

- Data entry taking physician time from patient face-to-face interaction
- Manual workflow hampering efficiency and productivity
- Physician difficulty ordering services
- Insufficient encounter closure and charge capture time

Solution

- Enhancements to of Epic system Snapshot, Synopsis, SmartSets, Navigators, and SmartForms
- Add quick buttons for charge capture and diagnosis codes
- Streamline and customize menu options by physician by specialty
- Process workflow modification improvements

Results

- Reduced the time to close encounters and drop charges by 32.5 percent, freeing physicians for more patient face time
 - Decrease of 89.5 percent in the time patients spent in the practices resulting in a 3.2 percent overall improvement in Press Ganey Scores
 - Increased encounter per volume per quarter per physician time by 12.8 percent
 - Comprehensive visit documentation
 - More accurate service orders and diagnosis codes entry
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“We were pleasantly surprised that Hayes was able to get through so many departments in such a short period of time,” said Dr. Willett. “They did an exceptional job at implementing changes that meeting the physicians’ needs.”

Physicians pleased with process improvements

The shortcuts Hayes created for the physicians reduced data entry time by 89.5 percent and increased encounter per volume per quarter per physician time by 12.8 percent. Customizing menu choices resulted in a 32.5 percent improvement in the amount of time it took to drop charges and close encounters. The simplified process allowed physicians to spend more time with patients.

“The optimization was most beneficial by making templates specific to documentation needs of the specialty,” says Michael D Van Pelt D.P.M. Associate Professor of Orthopedic Surgery Foot and Ankle Surgeon.

“Hayes helped us make the process more efficient, allowing for more time with patients and less computer time,” adds Michael Khazzam M.D., Associate Professor of Orthopedic Surgery and Shoulder Injury Specialist states.

UT Southwest pleased with Hayes performance

The strong relationship between Hayes and UT Southwestern was one of the keys to the success of the project. “Even experienced users can benefit from optimization,” says James A. Mitlyng, M.D. Associate Professor of Internal Medicine. “Hayes was a wonderful partner who didn’t slow productivity during the process. They made the optimization a wonderful experience.”

“We knew we could trust Hayes,” said Dr. Willett. “We were able to let them have the freedom to make system changes because we knew they would stay within the agreed upon parameters. That’s huge for a hospital system to trust consultants with build. And the project success proved how well the engagement worked.”

About Hayes Management Consulting

Hayes Management Consulting is a leading, national healthcare consulting firm and software developer that partners with healthcare organizations to streamline operations, improve revenue and enhance technology to drive success in an evolving healthcare landscape. To learn how Hayes Management Consulting can help support your initiatives, call 617-559-0404 or requestconsultant@hayesmanagement.com.