



From left to right:
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Joseph Brant Hospital supports performance reporting and funding decisions with SAS®

In an era of greater demand for transparency and accountability, public reporting of quality of care and patient safety indicators has become a high priority for hospitals. Hospitals do not compete for patients, but they do compete for funding; and to secure funding, they must accurately report what they do and prove that it works.

Business Issue

Ensure accurate reporting of patient care in order to secure government funding for added services and continued operations.

Solution

SAS integrates data from multiple sources and delivers performance management metric reports needed to support hospital funding decisions.

Benefits

SAS provides an integrated environment for data management, simple query and reporting, and complex analytics.

“Both patients and government funding agencies have high expectations for hospitals to provide or expand service and maintain a high standard of quality care,” says Mark Morreale, Manager of Decision Support at Joseph Brant Memorial Hospital in Burlington, Ontario. “If you don’t meet your requirements, funding could be reduced.”

Joseph Brant is a community hospital that provides a wide range of inpatient, outpatient and outreach services. It has an employee base of over 300 affiliated physicians, 1,400 full-time and part-time professional caregivers and operations staff, and more than 500 active auxiliary volunteers.

Morreale’s department works with both clinical and administrative staff to provide information on hospital performance, which includes financial and clinical benchmarking of quality of care and patient safety. It also includes the tracking of funding agreements with the Ontario Ministry of Health.

“The challenge for our department is trying to take the data we have and inform our staff how we are performing against key issues, including: ‘How do we compare on our length of stay for specific procedures quarter to quarter?’ and ‘How did we perform on quality of care measures, such as nurse-to-patient ratios?’,” he says. “SAS has been a major enabler from day one. Our department relies on it for a variety of projects, such as extracting data from the various sources and putting it in formats we can use. It is our go-to solution for most requests and projects.”

For example, Joseph Brant uses SAS to report on the Hospital Standardized Mortality Ratio (HSMR), which compares a hospital’s mortality rate with the overall average for hospitals in Ontario. HSMR scores can be used to identify strategies to reduce mortality rates and to monitor performance. It is also used as a change agent for different procedures and processes. In fact, since Joseph Brant began tracking it, improved on most of its metrics, says Morreale. “The HSMR helped us to identify where we could improve care to ensure quality is good and even getting better.”

Morreale plans to expand the use of SAS to bring the hospital up to standard on performance management and business intelligence via the Data Integration for Hospitals project. “Data integration is our single most difficult challenge,” he says. “We need a solution that also pulls together all the information in one place. Our hospital sees SAS as a leader in this area.”



**JOSEPH BRANT
 MEMORIAL HOSPITAL**

Morreale, for example, praises SAS for its ability to integrate financial with clinical data, which at Joseph Brant is pulled from an information system developed by Meditech. Using SAS, Morreale has been able to streamline and centralize the reporting function, eliminating the problem of having

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different versions of the data. “We had been data-rich and information-poor, but now we are able to track better with real-time financial reports,” says Morreale.

Morreale now sees more organizational improvements to come. “This is a young department (18 months old). We have had real challenges learning about the organization and what information can be gathered and what level of service can be provided to our staff and clients.” At the same time, accountability is increasing and the hospital needs to react, so Morreale is always looking for ways to increase his analytical ability. “The main advantage for us is that SAS is an analytical tool, not just a query tool. Therefore, we can use it to do the complex

analysis needed to evaluate our hospital’s performance,” he says.

He describes “wait-times funding” as a classic example. Whether it’s length of stay in the hospital, emergency room wait times or the time it takes to get an X-ray, hospitals are striving to reduce the time it takes for patients to get care. It’s the key to improving quality of care and providing additional funding for services the community needs. This is not easy to do when resources are limited and the demands are increasing.

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