



A GE Healthcare Clinical Equipment Technology Management program brings asset optimization, cost savings and cost transparency to Spartanburg Regional Healthcare System.

For 16 years, Spartanburg Regional Healthcare System (SRHS) leveraged a strong external clinical device service provider. However, when the current service contract was approaching renewal, Chief Information Officer Harold Moore initiated an RFP as required by SRHS procurement policies with the goal of taking the system's current performance to the next level.

The health system evaluated five leading service providers, and ultimately entered into a five-year multi-vendor service agreement with GE Healthcare. The choice was based on a guaranteed cost reduction, expectations of higher service quality, a holistic approach to asset optimization, and complete transparency to inventory, services delivered, coverage levels and costs.

Those expectations have been fulfilled. "We get concierge-type attentiveness," says Moore. "GE staff and management take pride in top-level service and do all they can to keep our quality up and costs down. They know the pulse of the healthcare market and the pressures hospitals face. They seem to always be looking to do the right thing for us and our patients."

THE ORGANIZATION

Based in northwestern South Carolina, Spartanburg Regional Healthcare System is an integrated healthcare delivery network with a reputation for technological excellence. Its flagship Spartanburg Medical Center, a 540-bed research and teaching hospital, is the only South Carolina hospital to earn full accreditation from the Society of Cardiovascular Patient Care (SCPC) as a Chest Pain Center with Primary PCI with Resuscitation. The system's Gibbs Cancer Center & Research Institute is a three-time recipient of the Commission on Cancer's Outstanding Achievement Award.

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Driving out cost

Signed in April 2015 the contract now covers approximately 15,000 biomedical devices and 350 diagnostic imaging systems from major OEM vendors. Moore prefers dealing with a single company for most service instead of individual vendor contracts: “It streamlines everything. It’s one-stop shopping.”

Identification of the operating and capital cost reduction options, per the GE guarantee, was completed in the first year of the agreement, ahead of schedule. Savings came from avoidance of some major capital purchases, establishment of optimum device service levels, reduction of overtime labor, and a general increase in service efficiency.

“GE gets creative in helping us find ways to save money,” Moore says. “For example, they point out if our coverage level is too high on a piece of equipment we’re not using often. They don’t nickel and dime us.”

Up with quality

Substantial savings also came from enhanced service quality, a point of emphasis from the start. “GE has online tools to track and document how equipment is being fixed,” says Moore. “As a result, we’re turning around fixes in a timely manner. GE staff on site are very professional and well trained.”

One key quality initiative is reduction in avoidable damage to equipment, a problem spotlighted through GE analytics. “We identified areas where we were seeing an above-average rate of damaged equipment coming into the shop,” says Moore. “We shared that information with the affected departments, and they changed the ways they physically handle the medical equipment.”

“One nursing unit did an in-service to inform staff how to store equipment properly to avoid damage. In another case, a mechanical arm attached to a surgical table was damaged after the table was moved. The clinical department manager applied labels to advise team members how to position the equipment safely.”

Getting more from assets

GE Healthcare also enabled SRHS to deploy equipment more efficiently than before and allocate capital more advantageously. A mobile asset optimization study helped right-size the device inventory. For example, while system leaders believed there was an IV pump shortage, the study found the real issue was suboptimal utilization. The team developed an efficient process to locate, clean and redistribute pumps after use, allowing SRHS to cancel pump rentals and avoid a significant investment in purchasing additional pumps.

On the capital side, GE determined through technology planning that the health system could avoid spending an additional \$800,000 by not purchasing two new nuclear imaging devices, choosing instead to more fully utilize those in place.

OUTCOMES

- Produced significant capital and operations savings in first year
- Avoided \$800,000 nuclear camera purchases through Asset Optimization Analysis
- Used asset optimization to avoid additional IV pump purchases
- Saved roughly \$50,000 per year in overtime/call-backs through shift realignment
- Significantly reduced avoidable damage to clinical equipment



Analytics and transparency

The GE service approach is reinforced by analytics and data shared frequently with Spartanburg leadership. Moore receives detailed monthly reports on contract status, equipment performance and costs. “We have access to a complete database of contract equipment, with the coverage levels and the amount we’re being charged for every device, to the penny,” he says. “We never had that level of detail or transparency before.”

On a weekly basis, Moore meets with the dedicated on-site GE-employed Director of Clinical Services and the assigned GE financial analyst to review data and discuss ways to boost quality and drive out cost. In one meeting, data from the electronic/digital maintenance management system showed a large volume of weekend service calls, outside normal coverage hours and subject to overtime. GE then reconfigured shifts to cut weekday night hours and provide regular weekend staff, saving roughly \$50,000 per year on overtime/call-backs.

Sustainable value

Improvements of these kinds continue nearly two years into the contract. Moore notes that the GE service team is deeply integrated, enabling service to evolve strategically as SRHS needs change, proactively addressing cost pressures while meeting safety and regulatory requirements. Capital planning, analytics and asset optimization have lasting impacts that can enable continuous improvement far into the future.

“If you don’t keep on top of cost, you can wake up one day and find it’s gotten out of hand,” says Moore. “GE gets it. Every week we’re looking at ways to streamline. They help us find ways on the clinical engineering side to bring costs down.”

“GE delivered on what they promised and in many cases exceeded our expectations. They have become a true partner, not a vendor.”

Harold Moore – Chief Information Officer



About GE Healthcare

GE Healthcare provides transformational medical technologies and services that are shaping a new age of patient care. Our broad expertise in medical imaging and information technologies, medical diagnostics, patient monitoring systems, drug discovery, biopharmaceutical manufacturing technologies, performance improvement and performance solutions services help our customers to deliver better care to more people around the world at a lower cost. In addition, we partner with healthcare leaders, striving to leverage the global policy change necessary to implement a successful shift to sustainable healthcare systems.

For more information contact your local GE Healthcare representative or call 1-877-438-4788

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