



WHITE PAPER

Creating Clinical Value

4 STEPS TO DRIVE CHANGE AND IMPROVE CARE





Creating Clinical Value

Over the last 10-15 years hospitals and health systems have spent millions — sometimes billions — of dollars to implement EHR systems. Yet, despite the investment in technologies promising bottom line improvements and greater efficiencies, many organizations have not seen their cost of care decrease or efficiency improve.

At the root are a number of issues. Usability problems. Poor end user adoption. Inefficient workflows. Manual processes. Issues that often existed before the new system was installed.

TECHNOLOGY IS NEVER A SILVER BULLET

Unfortunately, believing a new system or technology will resolve existing problems an organization is experiencing is a common misconception. While a new system may solve some problems, it cannot fix existing organizational and operational issues. Diving into an EHR implementation without upfront planning regarding organizational priorities and processes usually results in current problems being replicated in the new system.

The result? Clinical teams are slowed down with workarounds. Patients are unhappy. Physicians are dissatisfied. Access to data is cumbersome and time consuming. EHR/EMR system features are not being used. To name a few.

If this is happening in your organization, it is time for a clinical optimization strategy.

TIME TO ADDRESS ISSUES AND CREATE CLINICAL VALUE

Historically, optimization has been thought of as solely a record change or tweaking the EHR. Today, it encompasses a broader approach, seeking to make an organization's people, process, and technology as effective as possible. Ultimately, optimization is about creating clinical value and improving patient care.

If your organization is ready to embark on a clinical optimization initiative, it is critical it not be viewed as an IT project. Technology changes and/or enhancements are just one component. Optimization requires workflow improvement, strong management, and organizational transformation. It requires close collaboration between all divisions of your organization, including clinicians, IT, finance, billing, patient access, operational management, and the business office.



Ready? Here are the four steps of a successful clinical optimization program.

STEP 1: Define the Who, What, Where, and Why

As part of Leidos' Clinical Value Foundation Offering, we call this first step a Current State Assessment. Using group workshops, one-on-one interviews, and direct observations, a complete picture is assembled of the systems, people, policies, and procedures being used for each clinical process. By applying organizational objectives, such as decreasing the length of patient stay or reducing expenses without decreasing the level of patient care, you drill down into the areas that directly relate to the goals and identify issues and areas for improvement.

For example, the wave of mergers and acquisitions that swept through the healthcare industry created a windfall of system redundancy and process duplication for many organizations. For one county hospital, Leidos Health found 22 different workflows and over a dozen systems were being used to do the same process. The Leidos team helped them eliminate workflow redundancy, identify the best system to use, and decommission unneeded systems dramatically shortening their discharge process and reducing their operational spend.

STEP 2: Create an Optimization Governance Structure

A good governance structure is the foundation for a clinical optimization project. All your optimization efforts should fall under a single governing body comprised of key stakeholders from various areas of your organization. Typical members include senior management, key physician stakeholders, representatives from nursing and ancillary departments (pharmacy, radiology, lab, etc.), continuum care leaders (mental health, long-term care, etc.), billing, patient access, IT, and the business office.

A good governance structure will help your optimization initiative by ensuring that changes/improvements to be made are:

- ▶ Aligned with the organization's mission, strategic objectives and other initiatives
- ▶ Not blocked by lack of decision-making power
- ▶ In the best interest of the entire enterprise, not just a few "silos"
- ▶ Communicated and transparent to the entire organization to help foster buy in at all levels

STEP 3: Define the Future State

With your Current State Assessment complete, an ideal future state map can be created. Inputs for your organization's ideal state can come from stakeholder workshops, insights gathered during Step 1, and a review of current technology. Within this map optimized future state workflows and areas for improvement are defined.



When looking for areas of improvement, focus on changes to improve the flow of patients through the process. Also look at the takt time, which can help you decipher the pace of customer demand in your hospital or clinic. In addition, industry best practices, which can be offered by a consulting firm that specializes in the healthcare industry, can be applied to your future state model.

STEP 4: Develop a Roadmap to Get You There

Like going on a road trip, you need a plan and a map (or car guidance system) to get you there. Your future state vision likely includes a number of initiatives and tackling them all at once is impractical. A roadmap communicates in detail how and when to fix and fine-tune system issues, workflows to refine or eliminate, what systems to decommission, and where additional training of personnel may be needed. In the end, the results of your efforts will transform your organization, leading to streamlined access to data, increased clinician collaboration, better processes, and improved outcomes.

CREATING CLINICAL VALUE

While executing a clinical optimization initiative takes significant, time, resources, and skills, healthcare leaders are realizing that it is necessary to transform clinical value. Taking a strategic approach that considers people, process, and technology as described in this paper can help organizations move beyond the initial benefits achieved with EHRs. Rather than struggle through the process alone, it may be worth considering seeking help from an outside firm that can objectively help you navigate the path. Regardless, smart organizations are undertaking clinical optimization efforts to drive improved care and enhanced patient satisfaction that is essential for success under value-based models.



ABOUT LEIDOS HEALTH

Leidos Health is a leading healthcare IT consulting firm with deep clinical and technical expertise to support our customers in selecting, implementing, and optimizing information technology investments. Leidos Health offers a comprehensive range of technology services for healthcare providers — from vendor selection, strategy, design, implementation, and optimization — across all major electronic health record systems. Our professional services help providers define and enhance IT strategy, optimize technology for their clinical workflow, improve the revenue cycle, and meet regulatory requirements.

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