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The importance of collaboration and alignment for a clinically integrated supply chain

By Leo Vartorella

Alignment of clinical and supply chain objectives can positively influence costs and patient outcomes. However, in order to reap the benefits of alignment, organizations must work to break down communication silos, optimize workflows, and generate buy-in among both staff and leadership.

Expenses are continuing to outpace revenue for healthcare providers, and while 80 percent of surgeons and procurement officers say they work in collaboration to purchase medical equipment, only 43 percent of surgeons believe their procurement department improves costs and quality of care, according to a 2017 [report](#) from Bain & Company. Without active collaboration between these teams, organizations risk supply chain inefficiencies that waste time and resources.

In a March 7 webinar sponsored by Cardinal Health, Jeff Porubcansky, Vice President of Customer Operations at Cardinal Health™ WaveMark™ Supply Management & Workflow Solutions, and Morgan Shradar, Manager of Procedural Services at Omaha-based Nebraska Medical Center, discussed best practices for achieving clinical integration in the supply chain and how this integration can benefit an organization.

When clinicians and supply chain increase their integration, organizations see hard dollar savings such as minimized non-contract spend, minimized labor management expenses for unnecessary products, and higher availability of the right products needed for patient care. However, there are also soft dollar savings such as increased sourcing leverage and more time for clinicians

to spend at the bedside.

In order to achieve clinical integration, leaders must break down silos, increase communication and evaluate workflow. Silos can only come down when stakeholders are brought along for the entire change journey and decision-making conversations are driven by data. Organizations should also make changes slowly and identify concrete benefits of integration efforts before they make additional changes. If all stakeholders clearly define their roles in the improvement effort and work together, organizations can achieve a clinically integrated supply chain.

Data capture and workflow solutions such as WaveMark can support these integration efforts. At Omaha-based Nebraska Medicine, supply chain and clinicians used the data to generate buy-in among stakeholders by demonstrating the efficacy of a clinical integrated supply chain through documentation of early, small-scale wins.

"Being a smaller, community-based hospital, we gained momentum by showcasing our opportunities for integration with low hanging fruit then saying, 'Hey, let's really try this,'" Ms. Shradar said. "It was essential to showcase the first couple of steps,

the common mission between the supply chain team and clinical leaders. Once you put the ball in motion and celebrate small successes you can go to leadership."

However, a clinically integrated supply chain does not only positively impact an organization's finances but promotes the ultimate goal of providing the patient with the best possible experience.

"WaveMark is all about clinicians designing and operating at optimal performance to improve quality and outcomes. They get to focus on the patient, and not on how many supplies they have on the shelf, or if they have what they need for tomorrow," said Mr. Porubcansky. "Delivering insights on data allows you to break down silos and build trust, and have impactful conversations with providers, clinicians, supply chain team members, and hospital leadership by showing that savings. It is a financial impact, which is so important to the hospital, but it's also a patient care impact."

To learn more about WaveMark [click here](#). To listen to a recording of the webinar [click here](#).