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MEMBER PROFILE

NAME

VHA Georgia Radiology Task Force Initiative

TASK FORCE FACTS

- ▶ VHA Georgia's Radiology Task Force is composed of 17 hospitals that worked collaboratively to identify and implement cost savings and revenue process improvements.
- ▶ Members relied heavily on Solucient's ACTION O-I database, the largest financial and operational comparative database in health care. It includes data from more than 850 health care organizations nationwide.

VHA GEORGIA MEMBER PARTICIPANTS

- ▶ Archbold Medical Center, Thomasville
- ▶ Athens Regional Medical Center, Athens
- ▶ Columbus Regional Medical Center, Columbus
- ▶ DeKalb Regional Healthcare System, Decatur
- ▶ Gwinnett Health System, Lawrenceville
- ▶ Hamilton Medical Center, Dalton
- ▶ Houston Healthcare, Warner Robins
- ▶ Medical Center of Central Georgia, Macon
- ▶ Northeast Georgia Health System, Gainesville
- ▶ Phoebe Putney Memorial Hospital, Albany
- ▶ Piedmont Healthcare, Atlanta
- ▶ Satilla Regional Medical Center, Waycross
- ▶ South Georgia Medical Center, Valdosta
- ▶ Southern Regional Medical Center, Riverdale
- ▶ Tift Regional Medical Center, Tifton
- ▶ University Health, Inc., Augusta
- ▶ WellStar Health System, Marietta

Solucient's ACTION O-I® Key to Members' Documenting \$10 Million Radiology Savings

At A Glance

In early 2005, VHA Georgia's Chief Financial Officer and Chief Operating Officer councils searched for a project through which VHA Georgia members could work together and also measure their success. VHA Georgia collected Solucient ACTION O-I data for five high-opportunity departments, including cardiac catheterization, radiology, lab, pharmacy and surgical services.

Together, the CFO and COO Councils determined that radiology was the area with the most significant opportunity and highest potential for success. As a result they established a Radiology Task Force to begin the collaborative effort.

VHA Georgia, VHA Inc., Solucient and 17 member hospitals demonstrated what the power of collaboration — backed by reliable comparative data — can accomplish. The team used the ACTION O-I comparative database, which provided detailed focus of opportunities and direction for improvement, as the cornerstone for their efforts — and reported more than \$5.5 million in total impact in 2005, of which nearly half is supply cost savings. The team anticipates an equally successful 2006, with a forecasted \$5.2 million in savings.

ACTION O-I Data Lays the Foundation for Success

The 17 hospital participants each formed teams of three to five people, including radiology directors, ACTION O-I coordinators, CFOs and/or COOs, and any other pertinent staff members. As part of the initiative, each hospital selected two or three areas of focus within their radiology department based on their own internal analysis of ACTION O-I indicators, measures and performance benchmarks.

VHA Georgia turned to ACTION O-I data to set goals and benchmarks for moving forward, while also building a database to track members' data on a monthly basis. "The ACTION O-I data was central to the project's success," says Mike White, VHA Georgia's vice president of business development and operations. "It served as our starting point to evaluate each radiology team and ensured that we were comparing apples to apples."

Jan Grimsley, a VHA director, provided support and coordination for the initiative, as well as compiled data analysis results for participants. She says that the ACTION O-I data was the linchpin that pulled the effort together. "In my mind, it was critical," she says. "The hospitals initially devised measures from the Solucient data sets for whatever radiology-based improvements they were working on, and they continually used that data to track and monitor their progress."

Karen Wisdom, senior vice president and chief operating officer at Hamilton Medical Center, Dalton, Ga., was expanding her organization's use of Solucient when she decided to participate in

the VHA Georgia Radiology Initiative. Wisdom believed that the synergies possible with a group outweighed any improvements Hamilton Medical Center could make on its own, and she saw the initiative as a way to learn more about what Solucient could offer her organization.

“This initiative was an exciting opportunity for us because it proved to be a learning curve for our use of Solucient data,” Wisdom says. “We used the ACTION O-I data to drill down to find the greatest opportunities and to help us prioritize our efforts.”

In addition, a Solucient account director was present at all team meetings and conference calls to provide support. “She was able to bring to the table experiences from other hospitals and was a valuable advisor and coach as far as how to best use ACTION O-I,” says White. “She kept the process moving, and was always available to answer questions.”

Wisdom also says that Solucient was very visible and helpful, including having a professional services expert speak at a team meeting. “They did exactly what they needed to do to support the project,” she says.

To date, Hamilton Medical Center has identified \$1.8 million in revenue enhancements and \$1.6 million in cost reductions, such as:

- improved coding and education in vascular services, as well as supply standardization
- reduced supply costs, improved work flow and reduced full-time employee hours for film librarians
- elimination of a magnetic resonance imaging lease expense

Other Keys to Success

Executive leadership support was also critical to the initiative’s success. The fact that this was a “top-down” initiative where member CFOs and COOs spurred on the movement and remained involved made a huge difference. “Their support was vital to our success,” says White.

Wisdom also believes the power of networking was a vital contributor to the group’s achievements, and she saw that power at work when she attended meetings. “I noticed the networking that occurred and the processes and hurdles that participants shared,” she says. “They discussed how to get senior management and physicians more involved in their efforts. That sharing of information was such an important part of this that I don’t think any organization could have achieved the same success alone.”

The role that VHA Georgia and VHA Inc. played proved crucial as well, says Wisdom. “They were the driving forces that held this group together,” she says. “Without VHA as the central vehicle through which we could communicate, our success would not have happened.”

In addition, with all initiative participants using and relying on Solucient data to drive their efforts, the group has already announced a surgical services initiative. “We now have a group of hospitals that, based on the success of the radiology initiative, wants to work together on other similar projects using Solucient data and analysis tools to identify opportunities and then track our progress,” says Wisdom.