Bottomline Technologies®

"We wanted a solution that would not only work well with Lawson, but would work well with what we had today. We are advancing (with C-Series) and are leap years ahead of where we were with our old product."

– Jeff Couch, IS Manager, Shepherd Center

C-Series® Helps Shepherd Center Modernize Technology Systems and Disbursement Processes

Provider Profile

- **Provider:** Shepherd Center

- **Type:** Acute care specializing in the rehabilitation of spinal cord and brain injuries

- **Region:** Based in Atlanta, Georgia serving patients from across the nation for specialized care

- **Source Systems:** Lawson, Siemens MedSeries® and Soarian™

Shepherd Center

Situation

Shepherd Center is a private, not-for-profit hospital specializing in medical treatment, research and rehabilitation for people with spinal cord injury, brain injury, multiple sclerosis, chronic pain and other neuromuscular problems. Located in Atlanta, Georgia, Shepherd Center is ranked among the top 10 rehabilitation hospitals in the nation by U.S. News & World Report.

The average patient stay can be as long as 45 days and the hospital treats and trains both the patient and their family in their ongoing medical care as well as the new skills needed to navigate life beyond the hospital. The extended Shepherd Center facility includes an ICU, 5 nursing units, 2 spinal cord injury units, 2 brain injury units, a neurology specialty unit, and several patient clinics for pain, multiple sclerosis, urology, wound, and multi-specialty care. They also maintain 2 off-campus locations for rehabilitative care.

Despite the recent downturn in the economy, Shepherd Center has experienced increased demand for its unique brand of specialty care resulting in a staff increase of 300 percent – from 500 to 1,500 employees since 1995. Across the board, clinical and back-office systems were antiquated, running primarily on "green screen" AS-400 based applications. In the case of finance, payments were managed from an iSeries® third-party application integrated to Siemens MedSeries, with routine checks output to laser printers.

Shepherd Center's finance team routinely required a diverse menu of disbursement types and formats, including:

- 250 weekly AP checks

- 8-10 apothecary checks

- Approximately 5 weekly checks on behalf of their Foundation

- More than 90 bi-weekly payroll checks

- 1,100 direct deposits

- Patient refund checks

Specific challenges arose when new check formats, logos or signatures were needed or when emergency checks or other special runs were required. In these cases, users were literally forced to log-off the MedSeries system in order to perform a special job run. When on-demand payroll checks were required, a typewriter was the technology employed.

Solution

In December of 2011, Shepherd Center began a project to overhaul and update the technology supporting clinical and non-clinical systems. The decision to revamp all systems is a multi-year project for the IS team at Shepherd Center.

During this period, end-users will be required to operate in a dual-system environment as financials, payroll, and patient charting and accounting are migrated in phases.

With the confirmed selection of Lawson 9.x as their primary financial system, Shepherd Center turned to Bottomline's C-Series solution to provide the ease-of-use, flexibility and centralization demanded by both IS and end users. C-Series provided straightforward, pre-packaged integration to Lawson Financials and payroll and allowed for easy incorporation of patient and payer refunds. Adding and modifying new output streams, payment types, and system integrations are significantly easier in C-Series, which supports the hospital's diverse requirements and its desire for a phased implementation approach.

Why Bottomline?

To support the efforts of its internal team, Shepherd Center collaborated with a consulting firm specializing in Lawson implementations. When considering payment automation, Shepherd Center wanted a vendor whose solution was proven to work specifically with Lawson. But beyond ease of integration, Shepherd's number one user requirement was to retire the typewriter and avoid the productivity impact of special check requests. Additionally, Shepherd Center required a solution with a high level of ease of use that could adapt to organizational change without requiring IS involvement.

Bottomline was recommended for review along with two other vendors. A committee, including the HR Director, Controller, Payroll Coordinator, and IS Manager, made the final decision after carefully assessing all three vendor solutions. "We chose Bottomline after reviewing the product and seeing the demo. As far as the other vendors, we preferred (Bottomline's) look and feel, plus the reference calls were very strong. Everybody that we spoke with had positive feedback regarding Bottomline," explained Jeff Couch, Shepherd Center's IS Manager.

Results

Everyone Benefits

Shepherd Center has now completed the first of several phases in its transition to Lawson. In this initial phase, Lawson 9.x has been activated to manage financials across the health system. C-Series now manages check processes from Lawson Financials, which has resulted in significant productivity and usability improvements for check reprinting and inquiry. This includes the tedious former process of producing special checks. Now staff can easily request, enter and process special runs through the Lawson/C-Series integration. With C-Series, the check request can be fulfilled seamlessly, without any impact to Lawson users.

"That's been our biggest improvement," added Couch. "It's just much better than in the past. I'd say the entire business office and financial business department benefits from this. People posting payments or doing journal entries; in the past, if we had to do a special check run, they had to be kicked off the system to do it. Now they just put the information into Lawson, run the interface job, and we print the check. It saves time."

Service and Support

Bottomline personnel worked closely with Shepherd Center to ensure a successful implementation of Lawson AP with C-Series. While the stringent bank requirements for approving a check format was new to the hospital's IS team, Bottomline's experts, familiar with the bank's needs, were proactive in gaining the necessary bank approvals. Additional best practice improvements were recommended to help avoid a formerly unrecognized point-of-failure in the management of MICR check printing.

"[When we went live] Bottomline was fantastic," said Couch. "We haven't had to call for any support."

Future Expansion Plans

Shepherd Center's automation journey continues with the migration of payroll to Lawson and patient accounting to Siemens Soarian. As the project progresses, the use of C-Series will continue to expand as well. Next on the automation docket is payroll. At go-live, C-Series will assume all payroll check generation, including a simplified process for on-demand check generation that will finally eliminate the use of a typewriter. In addition, administrative controls will be transitioned from IS to finance personnel allowing, for the first time, independent processing of AP and payroll checks.

Also in the current plan, with the activation of Siemens in early 2014, is the production of patient and payer refund checks from Patient Accounting. At that time, C-Series will be Shepherd Center's single payment automation solution and will support both business office payments, including routine and special checks from AP and payroll, and revenue cycle payments.

About Bottomline

For more than 20 years, Bottomline has been focused on delivering a unique combination of award-winning products and customer-driven services that deliver measurable business value while responding to changing industry and organizational demands. In healthcare, Bottomline provides data-rich, context-aware solutions to streamline patient, revenue and financial processes. The result? Better patient outcomes, improved patient and clinician satisfaction, and increased operational efficiencies for Stage 1 and beyond.

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