

Atlanta Area Hospital Pharmacy

Prominent Atlanta Area Hospital Pharmacy Attains 80%

Decrease in Patient Wait Times with Qmatic



OVERVIEW

A premier Atlanta area hospital, founded in the late 1800s, is considered one of the largest health systems in the United States. From a humble beginning as a clinic with just over 100 beds, it is today one of the country's largest public hospitals, prepped 24/7 for any possible emergency. As a multifaceted healthcare provider for two counties, the hospital health system provides over 65 services to the surrounding communities, including pharmacy services at multiple locations: the busiest of which serves upwards of 450 patients a day.

THE CHALLENGE

Due to their large size and high traffic volumes, the hospital pharmacies were in urgent need of an accurate and efficient system for tracking patient volume, wait times, staffing requirements and workload. While pharmacy executives had a clear vision of what they wanted to accomplish, they lacked the business tools to monitor their environment and ultimately produce any necessary changes.

Open twenty-four hours a day, 7 days a week, the hospital pharmacies had a seemingly endless line of patients. Pharmacy staff struggled to keep up with the high patient volume in such a busy,

fast-paced environment. In an attempt to address their unending and stressful patient backlog, the pharmacy began sending patients away by scheduling appointment times that were often hours later. Although at times providing a temporary reprieve, this workaround did not solve their waiting problems or furnish pharmacy executives with any tangible data to identify a permanent solution. "We had no idea what the actual patient volume levels were, or patient wait times. We didn't have the information we needed to efficiently serve the large volume of patients we were seeing," said the hospital's Senior Clinical System Analyst.

THE SOLUTION

The hospital Pharmacy Department turned to Qmatic for a Patient Flow Management (PFM) solution that would address their servicing and data needs. With the Qmatic system, the pharmacy could track and analyze patient flow and wait times, as well as staff servicing times. Armed with statistical data, pharmacy staff could determine and prove to pharmacy executives that the pharmacy was woefully understaffed. By sufficiently staffing the pharmacy to manage the patient flow, especially during peak times, as well as implementing a clear patient flow method, the pharmacy was finally able to reduce wait times.

Patient Input and Tracking

Upon entering the pharmacy, patients are directed to a self-serve check-in kiosk where they select the type of service they need from multiple options. Their service choice is recorded in the system and is associated with an alphanumeric identifier. The system instantly begins tracking the patient. The identifier, as well as other information such as estimated wait time, appears on a ticket printed from the same device. Once registered with the system, the patient can sit comfortably until called for service.

Clear Patient Direction

When a station becomes available, a member of the pharmacy staff calls the next patient by their identifier. This same identifier also appears on strategically placed LED displays in the waiting area, clearly directing the patient to the appropriate counter for service.

Collection of Statistical Data

Qmatic's PFM solution records milestone data like waiting and service times on every patient transaction, as well as staff and workstation performance levels and service summaries. This data provides insight into daily operations and supplies the tangible information necessary to make functional improvements, effectively schedule staff, and defend staffing and budgetary requests.

THE RESULTS

"Qmatic allows us to have a better picture of our patient flow," said the Pharmacy Technology Manager at the hospital pharmacy. By understanding staffing needs, the pharmacy was able to reduce business hours from twenty-four hours a day, 7 days a week, to a more manageable and less stressful 7:00 am to 8:00 pm. The new hours also decreased the overall pharmacy operation costs and were much easier on pharmacy staff. Meanwhile, the pharmacy maintains the decrease in patient wait times: from upwards of 5 hours down to 60-90 minutes. "The Qmatic solution provides good statistical information," said the hospital's Senior Clinical System Analyst. "For the

pharmacy, it resulted in a better understanding of staffing requirements. The outcome was a better patient experience."

BENEFITS OF THE QMATIC SYSTEM

- Access advanced, state-of-the-art technology: A click of a staff member's button from the Qmatic system does it all: the next patient in the appropriate queue is called instantly to service by an audio announcement, while visual LED displays at easy-to-see locations result in efficient and instantaneous patient direction.
- Benefit from tracking across multiple queues: Once entered into the Qmatic system, the patient is issued a ticket with an alphanumeric identifier. The Qmatic system begins tracking patients across different queues and throughout the service process.
- Gain insight into service and staffing processes across multiple locations: Collected data helps provide insight on needed skill sets to appropriately staff individual offices. The Qmatic system can record milestone data on every patient transaction and can track staff and workstation performance levels and service summaries.
- Collection of Statistical Data. Qmatic's CFM solution can record milestone data on every patient transaction, such as wait times for each queue, and can track staff and workstation performance levels and service summaries. This data provides insight into daily operations and supplies the tangible information necessary to make functional improvements, effectively schedule staff, and defend staffing and budgetary requests.

QMATIC

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