

Clinical Drug Information

Florida Hospital Takes Action to Improve Patient Education

Lexicomp® Online delivers valuable information to help clinicians and benefit patients

CLIENT PROFILE: BAY MEDICAL CENTER

Understanding medical terminology can be difficult for anyone, but imagine what it must be like for someone who does not read well – or someone who does not speak the same primary language as his or her medical caregiver.

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– Christie Wave, R.N.
Clinical Educator
Bay Medical Center

educated about their care. The Joint Commission further requires that patient education is ongoing, interactive, and consistent with the patient’s plan of care and education level.

That’s what it’s like for many Americans. And with these barriers to understanding clinicians’ instructions, how many patients are not appropriately caring for themselves when it is time to go home from the hospital or doctor’s office?

Improving patient education is a movement backed by hospitals, individual caregivers, and federal regulators. The Joint Commission is one organization that is leading the charge, demanding that healthcare institutions show evidence that patients and their families have been appropriately

Bay Medical Center in Panama City, Florida, is making large strides in meeting the Joint Commission requirements; even taking it one step further and improving upon them.

“Part of our efforts to assure proper education to our patients includes improvements in our technology,” said Christie Wave, R.N., clinical educator for the Bay Medical Center. “Having the most up to date and useful information in the hands of our clinicians is a big step toward improving care and education for our patients.”

Led by Stephen E. Melvin, PharmD, pharmacy clinical coordinator for the Bay Medical Center, the hospital began its search for an electronic drug information provider. The 15 members of the pharmacy team were challenged to evaluate three vendors over six months, based on ease of use, clinical relevance, and price.

Among the top drug information references was Lexicomp Online from Wolters Kluwer Clinical Drug Information. “After the six month evaluation, we found that Lexicomp Online offered all of the qualities we were looking for, all at a fair price. In fact, when we switched, we saved \$40,000 annually compared to our previous online drug information provider. It was a winning situation all around,” Melvin said.

Shortly following the adoption of Lexicomp Online in the pharmacy, the Bay Medical Center signed on for a site-wide license, offering access from any workstation in the hospital. While all clinicians find the information valuable, the nursing staff, in particular, at the Bay Medical Center was fast to adopt the new technology for point-of-care information and for counseling patients at discharge.

CHANGING NEEDS OF NURSES

Because hospital stays are becoming shorter and more aging Americans are facing chronic illnesses, now more than ever nurses need effective ways to help patients learn the skills they need to care for themselves at home. This includes providing patients with easy-to-follow information on their drug regimens and their illnesses.

Lexicomp Online provides superior point-of-care drug information and, in addition, allows access to Clinical Drug Information's vast library of patient education materials.

"In terms of patient education and point-of-care decision-making tools, Lexicomp Online really offers our staff much more information than we had access to before, including IV compatibility, drug interactions, and easy-to-use, printable handouts," Wave said. "Lexicomp patient education materials really answered our need to provide clear, concise information at a grade-school reading level to help us meet Joint Commission regulations. The fact that they are available in up to 19 different languages also helped us better serve the hospital's diverse patient population."

Lexicomp Online provides caregivers with continually updated patient-facing handouts and seamless navigation, enabling them to access timely drug information with just a click. According to Wave, the information is easy to follow for both patients and clinicians. They appreciate the simplicity in how the information is presented and the detailed color illustrations that accompany it.

"In addition, the Lexicomp support and customer service team is fast and effective, which helps us keep pace with the continuous changes to drug information from the FDA and drug companies," she said. "We are assured we have the best information possible. And if there's something I can't find, such as a procedure, I just let someone from Lexicomp know, and they quickly update or add information for us."

Wave also commented on the professional appearance of the patient handouts. "You can print a title page with the patient's name and the topics presented, which offers personalization that patients appreciate."

DATA INTEGRATION

To assure an uninterrupted information flow when integrating a database-driven, online tool such as Lexicomp Online into an existing system, it is imperative that it works well with the existing infrastructure – including electronic medical records (EMRs) and computerized physician order entry systems (CPOEs). Clinical Drug Information partners with other technology companies to smoothly integrate Lexicomp references into many existing programs.

"Because Lexicomp partners with our EMR provider, clinicians can click on a drug in the patient's record and be transferred immediately to the monograph in Lexicomp Online," Melvin said. "We've experienced worry-free integration, and (Clinical Drug Information) worked very well with our IT department to make the transition go smoothly. It has worked flawlessly with our system from day one."

The popularity of Lexicomp Online is steadily growing at the Bay Medical Center, with access to the program at every workstation in the hospital. According to reports issued by the hospital, each month the number of Lexicomp users increases as more caregivers learn of its valuable features.

"It's really great information and a great tool for helping our patients adhere to their discharge instructions," Wave said. "It's truly made a difference in how we communicate this important information."

The Wolters Kluwer Clinical Drug Information and Bay Medical Center relationship continues to grow as they collaborate in the development of the hospital's online formulary. "This is definitely a collaborative effort, and we are grateful to have their expertise to help us through the process," Melvin said.

About Bay Medical Center

The Bay Medical Center is a 413-bed hospital with more than 260 physicians on staff. It documents an average of 57,000 admissions a year. For more information about the hospital, visit www.baymedical.org.