

# Introducing a New Level of Efficiency and Control



Client:  
Southeastern Regional  
Medical Center

## Solution:

- SMARTworks® Clinical Enterprise

## Results:

- Forms consolidated from 700 to 400
- Forms costs reduced \$400,000 annually
- Time to process patient records reduced by 5–6 days
- HIM hold days (accounts receivable) reduced by \$2.5 million

## Benefits:

- Swifter, more efficient admissions process
- More timely, accurate information
- Reduced needless delays in the admissions process
- Improved privacy, security of patient data to address HIPAA concerns
- Improved billing and collection efficiency

## Situation

A 429-bed healthcare provider, Southeastern Regional Medical Center (SRMC) serves more than 14,000 inpatients and 275,000 out patients each year. Through a staff of 1,900 employees and 125 physicians, SRMC is dedicated to providing compassionate care and efficient, high-quality services.

Located in Lumberton, North Carolina, SRMC is a private, not-for-profit healthcare provider that serves an estimated 275,000 patients throughout Southeastern North Carolina annually with a comprehensive program of acute care, intensive care and psychiatric services. Accredited by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations since 1962, SRMC strives to maintain the highest standards of care through a progressive medical staff and a well-run, well-equipped facility.

## The Challenge

Like so many hospitals around the country, Southeastern Regional Medical Center's staff faced the challenge of managing an overwhelming amount of patient and medical data in order to care for their patients—vital data that only could move as quickly as their manual system would allow. Admissions were slow as staff compiled the necessary forms, labels and wristbands, relying on a cumbersome embossing system to identify each item. Patient records, progress notes and orders were not readily available to all who needed them; the staff often had to walk forms to the ER, lab or pharmacy to assure information was transferred to where it was needed. And billing was no more efficient. It took several weeks to index patient records before a bill could be issued.

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## The Solution

Southeastern Regional Medical Center was determined to find a better way. Spearheaded by their Health Information Services (HIS) Director, the medical center made the decision to transition to electronic medical records (EMR). McKesson's Horizon Patient Folder was their HIS system of choice, and they selected Taylor Healthcare's SMARTworks® Clinical Enterprise to pave the way to EMR. An integrated solution that combines bar code technology with forms automation software, SMARTworks Clinical Enterprise enabled them to improve the flow of patient information through their delivery network and simplify indexing of all patient records.

To lay the groundwork for EMR implementation, Taylor Healthcare worked with staff from throughout the hospital – Admissions, Information Systems, Nursing, Health Information Services, Risk Management and the Business Office – to audit SRMC's documents and processes, and develop a blueprint for automating the patient and clinical documentation. As a result of the audit, SRMC was able to consolidate its forms from 700 to some 400 documents.

Document automation was phased. Southeastern Regional Medical Center first used SMARTworks Clinical Enterprise to produce the face sheet of the patient record, printing it with two bar codes – one with patient demographics and the other with information related to the specific admission. Then as SRMC implemented its imaging system, it moved to electronic forms across the organization.

*Taylor Healthcare has been a good partner. While we were focused on implementing the imaging system, we depended on them to convert our forms.*  
– Director, Health Information Services

## The Results

Today, Southeastern Regional Medical Center has some 400 forms in its system, which are created and bar-coded on demand, when and where they are needed. Only a handful of preprinted forms are not automated, such as the large six-part, two-sided fold-out form used in Nursing. Forms, such as these, are labeled with a bar-coded sticker on front and back to facilitate easy indexing.

Now as a patient is registered, the Admissions staff generates the consent form and admission form, which accompany the patient to his or her room. SMARTworks Clinical Enterprise automatically signals the printer nearest that room to begin printing all of the necessary forms. By the time the patient reaches the assigned floor, forms are printed and bar-coded labels created for those few forms that aren't electronic. So the patient's treatment can begin without delay.

SMARTworks Clinical Enterprise has introduced a new level of efficiency and control. "When we were in a paper world, we had stacks of loose documents that often didn't get filed in a timely manner. If someone needed to locate one, the staff would have to sift through stacks of paper," the HIS Director recalled. "Today, there are no loose documents. Each and every document is printed on demand with the bar-coded information. The staff can just pull them off the printer and put them in the chart. The nurses love it."

# Introducing a New Level of Efficiency and Control

## Improved Access to Data

Just as important, SRMC has improved access to patient data. Charts on patients treated in the ER yesterday are now available to physicians electronically by 9 a.m. Instead of having to search for everything, it's right there at their fingertips.

"Instead of having to make 100 trips a day to the Emergency Room to provide information, the ER staff can pull up the information themselves electronically. They don't have to wait for it to be delivered," the HIS Director reported. "That couldn't happen if we had to index each and every document manually. With all of our forms bar-coded, it simplifies indexing and helps assure quality control. That's critical to us," she stresses.

*The system allows us to meet our mission of providing timely, accurate information to better care for our patients.*

*- Director, Health Information Services*

## More Efficient Billing

Patient billing is much more efficient, too. Within 48 hours of discharge, inpatient charts are electronic as well. That's had a significant impact on accounts receivable. SRMC reported its HIM hold days (accounts receivable) went from \$4 million down to an average of \$1.5 million.

"When McKesson came back for a post-installation audit, they were astounded by the productivity of the indexers. What had previously taken days, many times a week, was being accomplished in just two days," the HIS Director revealed.

## The Bottom Line

Not surprisingly, SRMC is well pleased with SMARTworks Clinical Enterprise. It's been a critical contributor to the success of Southeastern Regional Medical Center's EMR system. The benefits have been substantial. The HIS Director summed up its value simply ...

"The system allows us to meet our mission of providing timely, accurate information to better care for our patients."