St. Thomas Elgin General Hospital Drives Efficiency and Productivity and Improves Clinical Decision Making with Smartsheet

St. Thomas Elgin General Hospital (STEGH) is a fully accredited hospital serving the City of St. Thomas, Ontario. STEGH offers a full range of services, including outpatient care, diagnostic imaging, inpatient acute care, emergency services, post-acute care, and regional satellite services.

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With the operational efficiencies we're seeing from Smartsheet, we've changed how the conversations evolve during our morning huddle. Instead of focusing on gathering data, we're doing more critical thinking and problem solving.

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Monica Olanski, Vice President, Patient Services and Information Technology Services and Chief Information Officer at St. Thomas Elgin General Hospital

St. Thomas Elgin General Hospital

Customer:
St. Thomas Elgin General Hospital

Industry:
Healthcare

Organization Size:
Large (1,000-9,999 employees)

Region:
North America

Website:
stegh.on.ca

St. Thomas Elgin General Hospital (STEGH) is a 179-bed facility dedicated to caring for patients in the city of St. Thomas, Ontario and eight municipalities within the County of Elgin, Ontario. STEGH cares for patients by providing comprehensive 24-hour coverage in internal medicine, surgery, obstetrics, pediatrics, anesthesia, emergency, mental health, and family medicine.

Background

St. Thomas Elgin General Hospital (STEGH) is a 179-bed facility dedicated to caring for patients in the city of St. Thomas, Ontario and eight municipalities within the County of Elgin. STEGH provides comprehensive 24-hour coverage in several areas: internal medicine, surgery, obstetrics, pediatrics, anesthesia, emergency, mental health, and family medicine.

For several months, STEGH has used Smartsheet to track hospital admissions and discharges, visualize and analyze clinical data, and streamline the morning bed huddle – the daily meeting that kicks off each workday. *"We're an organization rooted in continuous quality improvement, and we rely heavily on our data to make the right decisions,"* says Kat Jacobs, the hospital's manager of lean transformation & strategic initiatives. *"Smartsheet helps us better manage our data and innovate as we move forward and meet our changing demands."*

Before using Smartsheet, STEGH needed a better way to track important operational information. *"St. Thomas and Elgin County is growing faster than our hospital can keep up with. Alongside that growth, our patient census is growing and we needed a better way to measure our metrics,"* says Monica Olanski, vice president, patient services and information technology services and chief information officer at STEGH. *"We had an outdated process for tracking occupancy rates. Our clinical leaders would provide information on admissions, discharges, and staffing issues during our daily bed huddle conversation. One leader would enter data while trying to facilitate the call, and another leader would document the information on a whiteboard to track the metrics. We had rich conversations and a lot of data, but we weren't able to track data in a way that could help us inform our future decisions,"* says Olanski.

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Solution

Before adopting Smartsheet, STEGH engaged key stakeholders and ensured frequent communication on the upcoming changes. *"We followed our strategic pillar of achieving operational excellence during adoption,"* Jacobs explains. *"People understand that change won't happen overnight, and they were very willing to accept small iterative changes throughout the process."*

Now, clinical leaders use Smartsheet to enter daily occupancy metrics, staffing levels, access and flow metrics, and other key data from their computers or from their mobile devices using the Smartsheet mobile app. At any given time, up to 30 employees are entering clinical data into Smartsheet, allowing the organization to track patient census and discharges and admissions for its acute medical units.

Simplified reporting and more productive morning huddles

Because clinical managers at STEGH no longer need to manually enter data into spreadsheets each day, the organization has increased its overall operational efficiency. *"If I'm creating a summary report for the CEO, it's very easy to pull that data now. It was very challenging and time-consuming to do that previously,"* says Tina Oliveira, director of medicine and emergency at STEGH. *"Everything is more standardized and centralized now, which simplifies and enhances the efficiency of our reporting."*

Better staffing utilization

STEGH utilizes Smartsheet to monitor staffing levels more accurately by closely managing patient census numbers. *"With the data from Smartsheet, we can easily see where we might be short on staff, so we can then get the right people to the right units,"* Olanski says. Smartsheet also aides in managing population overflow in the hospital's

In a Nutshell:

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Monica Olanski

two acute medical units. *"If we have patients in our overflow unit, we will exceed our overall occupancy. Having an accurate count in Smartsheet is invaluable for planning,"* says Jacobs. *"As our population grows, it will be beneficial to see how frequently we need to use overflow beds."*

By leveraging Smartsheet to track occupancy, flow, and staffing trends, clinical leaders can make more informed decisions.

More informed clinical decisions

By leveraging Smartsheet to track occupancy, flow, and staffing trends, clinical leaders can make more informed decisions. *"We're in phase one, which involves collecting and centralizing the data, but we're approaching phase two – understanding the metrics we're reporting to inform future decisions,"* says Olanski. *"Data tells and stories sell. With Smartsheet, we now have both – the data and the narrative, which helps us make better decisions about the hospital overall."*

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