Meridian Health Provides Easy Access to UpToDate within the Clinical Workflow

ABOUT MERIDIAN HEALTH
Meridian Health is a leading healthcare provider in New Jersey with five hospitals, 1,800+ beds, nearly 13,000 team members, and affiliations with more than 2,000 of the area's finest physicians. Meridian Health has consistently been rated among the top-performing health systems in New Jersey for clinical quality and has been cited as one of the FORTUNE “100 Best Companies to Work For” for six consecutive years.

AN EXCEPTIONAL COMMITMENT TO QUALITY
Meridian Health has long maintained strong commitments to quality and accountability. In 2013, it was selected by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services to participate as a Medicare Accountable Care Organization (ACO). The Meridian ACO goal is to promote evidence-based medicine, patient engagement, and care coordination. It closely monitors and reports on quality metrics with the objective of improving care for individuals.

In keeping with this commitment to quality, Meridian Health has been providing UpToDate® to its clinical staff since 2006. UpToDate supports Meridian's mission to provide the highest standards of care by consistently answering clinical questions with current, evidence-based answers and recommendations.

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Dr. David Kountz
Vice President, Academic Affairs
Jersey Shore University Medical Center

"We continually reassess point-of-care educational opportunities and other tools, and have always come back to UpToDate," said Dr. David Kountz, Vice President, Academic Affairs, at Jersey Shore University Medical Center, a Meridian Health facility. "Physicians really value UpToDate, and we believe it provides the best value for our medical staff, nursing staff, and residents."
“Like many health systems, we’ve been going through quite a growth phase, and our team includes a range of employee and affiliated physicians at multiple facilities,” explained Dr. Kountz. “UpToDate is an important value add for our medical team, and we know providing access from within the clinical workflow ensures they are taking full advantage of UpToDate.”

EMBEDDING UPTODATE IN THE CLINICAL WORKFLOW

In 2015, Meridian Health decided to embed UpToDate into the organization’s Siemens Soarian® clinical dashboard. They upgraded to an UpToDate Anywhere subscription, which offers remote access via an EHR system and a variety of native mobile applications.

By providing UpToDate access via mobile devices and the Soarian dashboard, Meridian Health leadership enabled the clinical staff to access evidence-based recommendations for care anytime, anywhere. As a result, UpToDate use by the entire clinical staff increased by 75% in the first 5 months of providing UpToDate Anywhere access. Increased use of UpToDate has been associated with improved decisions and better quality of care and health outcomes.

The Soarian platform is available to all clinicians across the Meridian Health campuses and hospitals via a range of mobile devices. “Integrating UpToDate with a platform that is available at all Meridian facilities, including remote access for affiliated private practice physicians, was important for ensuring all patients receive the same high standard of care,” Dr. Kountz stated.

Physicians who securely sign in to the Soarian dashboard are automatically signed into UpToDate, explained Debra Hawn, Clinical Training Supervisor. “No secondary password is required. UpToDate is a link on the home page, to make it as easy as possible for clinicians to get answers to their questions. This approach essentially makes the dashboard a ‘one-stop shop’ for our clinicians.”

“UpToDate is a strong, unequivocal resource that you can rely on as a basis for decisions, particularly when there is a difference of opinion among physicians,” continued Dr. Kountz. “As a result, we wanted to make access as easy as possible through the dashboard.”

COLLABORATION AND TRAINING: KEYS TO SUCCESS

The Meridian project team worked with the Customer Success and Training Teams at UpToDate to create a multi-month implementation plan that outlined the steps required for integration and training.

“We had a good internal team structure and good support from UpToDate, which allowed us to meet our milestones,” said Dr. Kountz. “The support of our Clinical Excellence Committee and senior management was key. In addition, we had the right
people involved with the appropriate expertise — a strong IT team, our librarians, the training team, our CME committee, and physician and nursing leadership."

The UpToDate Customer Success and Training Teams worked with Meridian trainers to prepare them for the launch. "We use a train-the-trainer model, and deploy Physician Application Liaisons to visit our private practice physicians’ offices, so it is important that our team is fully up to speed," said Ms. Hawn.

An additional on-site training session focused on the clinical team, providing a refresher for long-time staffers and alerting the entire staff to new features. According to Ms. Hawn, "Having a representative from the UpToDate Team on site to help with training was a huge benefit to our clinical staff."

“Even for physicians who use UpToDate regularly, it’s useful to have a recap of key features and the functionality for remote access,” said Dr. Kountz. "It’s important for new members of the medical staff as well as our established clinicians to leverage the full utility of UpToDate."

The training session also encouraged clinicians to register to begin earning CME/CE credits using UpToDate. "Clinicians can accrue credits with searches conducted through the integrated platform," said Ms. Hawn. "As soon as clinicians sign in, the credits they have accumulated display at the top of their screen," she explained. “It's a wonderful feature and a powerful integration.” Within 5 months, the UpToDate Anywhere registration rate of clinicians at Meridian tripled, jumping from 26% to 83%.
“The success of our integration project resulted from strong alignment of IT and leadership, close collaboration with UpToDate, and a well-structured process plan,” said Dr. Kountz.

ABOUT UPTODATE:
UpToDate is an evidence-based, physician-authored clinical decision support resource which clinicians trust to make the right point-of-care decisions. More than 6,300 world-renowned physician authors, editors and peer reviewers use a rigorous editorial process to synthesize the most recent medical information into trusted, evidence-based recommendations that are proven to improve patient care and quality. More than one million clinicians in 180 countries and almost 90% of academic medical centers in the U.S. rely on UpToDate, and more than 60 research studies confirm UpToDate’s widespread usage and association with improved patient care and hospital performance, including reduced length of stay, adverse complications and mortality.

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