umtaudit
Auditing in the Health Care Industry: Case Study

The Challenge

To achieve and maintain organizational accreditation, hospitals need to be at a constant state of readiness. At the University of Chicago Medical Center, previous efforts relied entirely on a tedious process led by their Patient Safety department.

"All of our audits used to be done on paper. This required a lengthy phase of data entry and a lot of time was being spent on verifying the data" says Kristen Brennan, Data Analyst.

Prior to using Laubrass Software, audits of patient files were all hand written and manually logged into a data base. Mistakes or omissions could easily happen because of illegibility or misinterpretation of the paper forms.

The Solution

The department searched for a software program to facilitate the process of performing constant long term audits. "We reviewed two popular products to determine which was more flexible and quicker to translate audit data into interpretable reports," says Tom Best, Quality Analyst.

Best and his colleagues have now transferred all of their paper audits to a UmtAudit configuration that works on a handheld computer. The audit is setup with mandatory sections which reduce the possibility of omissions or mistakes. Now their staff uses a PDA to audit 5 patient charts per unit, in all 28 units every month.

The UmtAudit Software allows each of the hospital's departments to have virtually real time data about their unit, and they are always ready for an accreditation audit.

The Results

The University of Chicago Medical Center is now able to capture and distribute more data across all of its facilities while minimizing the work for the auditors.

By automating the audit process, the Medical Center can now easily transfer data and no longer waste time checking information. "We are absolutely more confident in the data, and save time because there is less of a need for data validation" said Tom Best.

"By converting our audits to an electronic system, we've gained a day or two back every week," says Brennan.

The team is using their own customized templates in the StatAudit program to dump data and post reports directly onto their hospital intranet for everyone to use. Having electronic files makes it quicker and easier to share data between the many different sectors of the medical center. "With the paper method of doing audits it would often take a week to get a report back to the department head, at which time the information could easily get lost in the shuffle… now they get reports within a day" said Brennan.

Furthermore, Tom Best explains that they are continually finding new ways in which UmtAudit can assist them in improving patient care at their facility. For example, they are currently working to improve and reduce the prevalence of pressure ulcers in the hospital. UmtAudit allows the team to collect data more frequently in a way that is easier to analyze.

Best and Brennan agree that they would recommend their electronic approach to other healthcare organizations that are involved in a long term manual audit process. Best said "We really value this new approach; we're saving a great deal of time."

More case studies available at www.laubrass.com