

MDS Intelligence: A Complete Solution for Columbia County

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Shane McGuire
Columbia County



Columbia County Health System, located in Dayton, Washington recently began using MDS

Intelligence from Cerner Extended Care. After implementing the solution, the organization saw a noticeable improvement in the accuracy of their Minimum Data Set (MDS) files, and a significant reduction in time to complete assessments. Employees have better resident information available at their fingertips, and they are spending less time at computers and more time interacting with residents.

“I think the biggest takeaway from our work with Cerner is that we’re getting our health care workers back to health care, instead of using them as data entry clerks,” said Shane McGuire, Chief Operating Officer. “Our MDS Coordinator can be more proactive about the information she’s gathering from the system, and get that information back to the people who are actually working with the patients.”

Before implementing MDS Intelligence, Columbia County started using another Cerner solution, CareTracker, to collect resident information at the point of care. After CareTracker was a success, it was a logical step for the organization to begin using MDS Intelligence as well.

“It was a natural evolution in the process,” said Shane. “When we saw the profound affect CareTracker had on our staffing we really started looking at other areas that Cerner could help us address. It just made sense to transition towards MDS Intelligence knowing already that we had a proven track record of success with CareTracker helping us with our charting and minimizing overtime hours. We went into this fully expecting it to be successful.”

“It’s impossible, or nearly impossible, for one or two people to not only get all the MDS data in a system, but then to scrub the data looking for information,” said Shane. “It’s tremendously huge that the software is doing the work on the back-end for us and pointing out the areas where we’re at risk. It draws our focus onto the right topics. We expect better outcomes from state review.”

“It has made the process of doing the MDS a lot smoother,” said Tiffani Smith, MDS Coordinator at Columbia County. “To do an MDS before, it would take several days. Now I can do the actual MDS admit in hours, and the CAAs [Care Area Assessments] are so much faster and so much easier, too. I can do an admit assessment and CAAs in a day, if not less.”

“When Tiffani was out for a couple days, I started to do an MDS admission, and I haven’t done one in six to eight months,” said Stephanie Carpenter, Director of Nursing Services. “I went through the whole process and I was able to find all the information I needed, and it only took me three or four hours. And that’s someone who does not do them on a daily basis! It was a huge difference from our old system.”

So what’s next for Columbia County? “I think as we move forward with Cerner’s full EMR [PowerChart LTC] it will free up even more of the nurses’ time, and they will get back to being able to complete assessments more thoroughly,” said Stephanie Carpenter. “Things are only going to keep improving.”

MDS Intelligence: A Complete Solution for LTC

- Columbia County populates the MDS with information from CareTracker, so that each MDS is partially completed as soon as it’s started.
- The solution has a built-in scheduling tool that helps ensure every MDS is completed on time.
- MDS Intelligence checks for data inconsistencies as each MDS is completed. Within the first several months, it identified over 160 areas for Columbia County to review that might otherwise have been missed.
- After submission, MDS Intelligence analyzes and benchmarks results to identify financial opportunities as well as survey and audit risk points.

Cerner Extended Care is helping more than 3,000 long-term care organizations improve care, save time, and increase revenue. To learn more about MDS Intelligence visit mdsintelligence.com or call 800.338.3681.



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