



Microsoft Dynamics Customer Solution Case Study



Overview

Country or Region: United States
Industry: Healthcare

Customer Profile

Winona Health is a multi-care health system with hospital, physician clinics, pharmacy, assisted living, long-term care, home care, and hospice.

Business Situation

The organization wanted to deploy a robust financial management solution with integrated human resources and payroll functionality, and integrate it with their Cerner Millennium patient information systems.

Solution

Winona Health implemented Microsoft Dynamics™ GP, integrated with Cerner Millennium, for a front-to-back office healthcare management system.

Benefits

- Single, integrated source for financial management information
- Integrated human resources and payroll
- Greater financial management efficiency and control
- Manageable total cost of ownership



Streamlining Operations to Deliver Better Healthcare Services

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Mike Allen, CFO, Winona Health

Managing the complex information needs of a combined hospital and community health system requires multiple systems such as clinical, materials management, human resources, and finances. Winona Health worked with Microsoft and ePartners to develop a comprehensive financial management system, integrated with its Cerner Millennium electronic medical record system, helping reduce administrative overhead and increase the quality, timeliness, and availability of financial information to managers and directors throughout the organization.



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Rod Hughbanks, Director of Information Systems, Winona Health

Situation

Based in Winona, Minnesota, Winona Health is a multi-care health system including a 99-bed hospital, 154 bed long-term care facility, assisted living facilities including memory care residences, physician clinics, and a pharmacy. Winona is located 35 miles east of the world-renowned Mayo Clinic headquarters in Rochester, Minnesota, and is approximately 100 miles from the major metropolitan area of Minneapolis and St. Paul. Consequently, Winona Health’s client base is primarily local, and it needs to place an extra-high premium on the quality of services as well as carefully managing the cost of care.

Improving the quality of healthcare services is primary to Winona Health’s mission, and they are constantly implementing ways to better serve their clients. Equally important to Winona Health’s management team is finding ways to improve the business management systems that support its mission.

In 2001, Winona Health set its sights on improving the quality of its financial management systems. Their goal was to integrate their entire system, and in doing so, they had a need for a very robust (enterprise resource planning (ERP) solution. Primary goals were to simplify the processes of collecting and reporting financial information, allowing managers and executives throughout the organization to have the information they needed to accurately assess current conditions and make well-informed decisions. The ability to streamline specific business processes, such as recording and depreciating fixed assets, was also an important consideration. And developing a single-source solution for managing human resources and payroll processes would help reduce paperwork and improve the overall effectiveness of the organization.

Of course, keeping a close eye on the bottom line is always a key consideration in any

organization, and Winona Health wanted to be sure any systems it implemented would help both drive productivity and reduce administrative overhead wherever possible. Finding a system that would be affordable to implement, support and maintain was crucial to Winona Health’s overall goal of containing costs while improving the systems that help it better serve its healthcare clients.

Solution

After analyzing solutions from other providers, Winona Health decided to implement Microsoft Dynamics™ GP (formerly known as Microsoft® Business Solutions—Great Plains®). Other systems either proved far too costly and difficult to implement and maintain, or lacked the key financial management, HR/payroll functionality, and ability to integrate with the clinical information systems.

“We were looking for business systems that could be integrated with our clinical systems,” said Mike Allen, CFO at Winona Health. “With Microsoft Dynamics GP, the integration with our clinical partner was superb. The functionality that was provided by Microsoft Dynamics met the needs we had, and we wanted a reasonable price point. Microsoft Dynamics brought all three of those to us.”

Key to Winona Health’s decision to select Microsoft Dynamics GP was the healthcare-specific experience and expertise of their implementation partner. ePartners, a Microsoft Gold Certified Partner, is one of the largest and most respected Microsoft Dynamics consultancies in the world, with more than 8,000 customers and implementations in 45 countries. Their dedicated healthcare consulting team utilizes Microsoft .NET technologies to enhance the patient experience and streamline hospital operations through secure electronic medical records management and rapid user adoption.

“ePartners has been an excellent vendor for us as far as enhancing the abilities of [Microsoft] Dynamics, and having their expertise in healthcare has been a huge benefit,” said Rod Hughbanks, Director of Information Systems at Winona Health. “ePartners put together the interface between Microsoft Dynamics GP and Cerner Millennium; they also did the installation and training, from the beginning to the end; and they’re continuing to work with us, through enhancements and releases. We feel really good about that partnership.”

Benefits

From the integration with patient care systems to financial reporting and analysis, Microsoft Dynamics GP has helped Winona Health accomplish its goals and position the organization for growth.

Integration with Cerner Millennium
Winona Health had been using Cerner’s patient information and materials management systems, so the integration between Microsoft Dynamics and Cerner Millennium was crucial.

By implementing Microsoft Dynamics GP and integrating it with the Cerner Millennium system, Winona Health has been able to reduce administrative overhead and increase the timeliness and availability of financial information to department managers and executives throughout the organization.

“The advantage of having our business systems integrated with our clinical systems is that the information travels untouched by human hands,” said Allen. “We’re looking for a consistency of information, reliability and relevancy of that information. By designing that system, having the information travel through that way each time, and getting the information out on the reporting side, we know we can depend on the information to be accurate, and that’s very critical.”

Integrated Human Resources and Payroll
Prior to implementing Microsoft Dynamics GP, Winona Health had primarily been managing its human resources information in a paper-based system. One of its key objectives in implementing an integrated financial management solution was to make sure that the payroll system had enough flexibility to manage the diversity of payroll situations common to healthcare facilities. For example, Winona Health has two different union contracts and needed to be able to administer the payroll rules resulting from the different contracts and policies including labor accruals, shift differentials, paid-time-off policies and others.

“Our organization consists of approximately 900 employees and it’s a very diverse organization,” said Bill Gould, Chief People Resources Officer at Winona Health. “We employ everything from physicians, to professional staff to entry-level staff. The flexibility of the Microsoft Dynamics GP system allows us to manage a number of different types of compensation and benefit programs.”

In addition to the robust human resources and payroll functionality available in Microsoft Dynamics GP, Winona Health looked to ePartners to help them manage the key healthcare-specific details such as labor and benefit accruals and shift differentials.

By implementing a flexible payroll system that enables Winona Health to manage all its payroll processes, it has been able to reduce the personnel needs for supporting those processes from 2 1/2 FTEs to one person spending 3/4 time on that same process. Microsoft Dynamics GP reporting capabilities offer the business information required for FTE reporting, departmental analysis, budget comparisons, and more. “It’s imperative that we have good data to evaluate the types of programs or systems that we’re trying to

improve,” said Gould. “Microsoft Dynamics GP provides good, solid data. It’s much easier to extract the data we need, to build very good assumptions, and to get very accurate formulas to determine the costs associated with human resources, benefits, and compensation.”

Winona Health has also been able to implement a more manageable hiring process with Microsoft Dynamics GP. Because all applicant information is recorded in the integrated HR system, it is much easier to pull the data required to fill vacant positions. Managers can compare candidates’ skills and experience to find the highest-qualified candidates, and once a candidate has accepted an offer, the information can be transferred directly into the employee record in payroll, saving time and ensuring accuracy. And because past candidates’ information is already on file, managers can easily recall former candidates with matching credentials when a new position opens.

“We actually use our Internet site to collect employee applications,” said Hughbanks, “and we can pull data directly from the online employee applications right into Microsoft Dynamics GP.”

Winona Health also uses Microsoft Dynamics GP to supply all its network security information. When a new employee comes in, HR sets them up in the system with their name, address, and demographic information, and that data is passed over to the Active Directory® service, so when an employee starts or is terminated, it’s an automatic process to update his or her Active Directory status. Active Directory is part of the Windows Server® operating system. All role-based security can be created and maintained in a single system.

Greater Financial Management Efficiency and Control

Implementing Microsoft Dynamics GP has delivered efficiencies throughout Winona Health. In the back office, several processes have been streamlined to reduce the amount of time needed to record and manage financial information.

Intercompany transactions help Winona Health manage costs and other adjustments that need to be shared across multiple business entities. By setting up intercompany accounts, Winona is able to apportion expenses to multiple companies with a single entry. “We have six companies,” said Marie Gernes, Director of Accounting at Winona Health, “and we are now able to generate one transaction for one of the companies and have it create transactions for each of the six companies. That’s a function we’ve never had before and it has saved us a lot of time.”

Fixed asset management also has become much more streamlined with Microsoft Dynamics GP. Winona Health records all medical and office equipment, vehicles, and other fixed assets in Microsoft Dynamics GP and can easily manage the value, depreciation, and retirement of those assets from a central system. “The Microsoft Dynamics GP Fixed Asset system has allowed us to cut the depreciation process,” said Gernes. “It’s probably a 10-minute process now, and we do have a lot of fixed assets.”

The ability to rapidly locate specific account and transaction detail has also dramatically improved processes, saving time every week and making the accounting team’s jobs much easier. “When we in accounting are analyzing different accounts, we’re able to drill into that account in the GL system,” said Gernes. “For instance, we’re able to drill into an account and see that it was an accounts payable invoice that hit, and then we’re able to drill into that invoice back into the accounts payable system and see the invoice number,

the date it was paid, where else it might have actually gotten classified to.”

Integration with Microsoft Office

Microsoft Dynamics GP is designed to make it easy for users to share and analyze financial data through built-in integrations with Microsoft Office. Winona Health uses the Microsoft Dynamics GP SmartList Builder capabilities to build lists of key financial data and export them to Microsoft Office Excel® for further analysis and to create charts and graphs to measure performance against key measurements.

“To me, the integration with Microsoft Office is huge,” said Hughbanks. “You can pull the data right into Microsoft Excel, Access™, or any of the other Microsoft applications. As an IT director, I view that as key to anything we would install at our facilities. When you have that integration, people are using tools they already know to manipulate data.”

Managing Total Cost of Ownership

Compared to other systems analyzed, Microsoft Dynamics GP represented a significant advantage in cost of ownership for Winona Health. The Microsoft Dynamics GP reliance on, and integration with, other Microsoft technologies helps reduce the number of operating systems, databases, and other technologies Winona Health needs to purchase, license, and support. Implementation was completed on time and within budget. The integration with Cerner Millennium makes it appear to the users as if they are using one system, reducing confusion and increasing staff productivity. The ability to customize Microsoft Dynamics GP payroll functionality to include healthcare-specific processes eliminates the need for separate systems or processes for managing payroll. And because Microsoft Dynamics GP uses a familiar Microsoft Office–like interface and is designed to work the way office staff are used

to working, the need for separate training sessions for staff was virtually eliminated. “The Microsoft Dynamics GP training was more of a live training,” said Gernes. “It was basically hands on. We went live, we were on it, and we did it.”

“An area that Microsoft Dynamics has really benefited us is total cost of ownership,” said Hughbanks. “If you look at the technology, it’s technology we know. So it costs less to implement a system when we know the server platform, we know Terminal Services, and we obviously know Microsoft Windows®. All of that leveraged together has provided a lower total cost of ownership, compared to other applications, other server platforms.”

For More Information

For more information about Microsoft products and services, call the Microsoft Sales Information Center at (800) 426-9400. In Canada, call the Microsoft Canada Information Centre at (877) 568-2495. Customers who are deaf or hard-of-hearing can reach Microsoft text telephone (TTY/TDD) services at (800) 892-5234 in the United States or (905) 568-9641 in Canada. Outside the 50 United States and Canada, please contact your local Microsoft subsidiary. To access information using the World Wide Web, go to:

www.microsoft.com

For more information about ePartners products and services, call (888) 883-9797 or visit the Web site at:

www.epartnersolutions.com

For more information about Winona Health products and services, call (507) 454-3650 or visit the Web site at:

www.winonahealth.org

Microsoft Dynamics

Microsoft Dynamics is a line of integrated, adaptable business management solutions that enables you and your people to make business decisions with greater confidence. Microsoft Dynamics works like familiar Microsoft software such as Microsoft Office, which means less of a learning curve for your people, so they can get up and running quickly and focus on what's most important. And because it is from Microsoft, it easily works with the systems that your company already has implemented. By automating and streamlining financial, customer relationship, and supply chain processes, Microsoft Dynamics brings together people, processes, and technologies, increasing the productivity and effectiveness of your business, and helping you drive business success.

For more information about Microsoft Dynamics, go to:

www.microsoft.com/dynamics

Software and Services

- Microsoft Dynamics
 - Microsoft Dynamics GP
- Microsoft Office System
 - Microsoft Office Excel 2003
 - Microsoft Office Outlook® 2003

Third-Party Software

- ePartners Healthcare Management

Hardware

- Two Dell PowerEdge 6850 server running VMWare Virtual Servers
- CPUs (per server): 4 Intel Xeon MP 3 GHz
- RAM (per server): 16 GB
- NICs (per server): 4

Partner

- ePartners