

For Mercy Medical Center, It's About Supporting Their Team and Their Community



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We can work with referring facilities to ensure that their patients experience an easy pathway to a higher level of care.

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Robert Gavora, MHA
Director of Referrals, Mercy Medical Center

MERCYONE™

HEALTH SYSTEM SNAPSHOT

- Not-for-profit Catholic health provider based in Iowa
- Approximately 7,000 staff members including 1,000 physicians
- One of Iowa's largest employers and the Midwest's largest referral centers

CHALLENGES

- Patient volume growing year after year
- Needed centralized, streamlined way to handle patient transfers
- Outsourced patient transfer solution
- At risk for inefficient transfers, increased operational costs and missed revenue opportunities

SOLUTION

- Implemented ABOUT solution to create seamless, easy-to-use single platform for Mercy Connect staff
- One phone number to call for all patient transfers and related inquiries

RESULTS

- 13.1% increase in patient transfer volume in year one
- 9.3% additional growth in year two
- 39% increase in calls to Mercy Connect since deployment
- Smoother, faster pathway for patients to a higher level of care

HEALTH SYSTEM PROFILE

Mercy Medical Center-Des Moines is a not-for-profit Catholic healthcare provider comprising several Iowa facilities:

- Mercy Medical Center-Central Campus
- Mercy Medical Center-West Lakes
- Mercy Medical Center-Centerville
- Mercy Children's Hospital & Clinics
- Skiff Medical Center in Newton

MercyOne Central Iowa employs approximately 7,000 staff members, along with over 1,000 physicians and allied health professionals, making it one of Iowa's largest employers and among the Midwest's largest referral centers. Mercy Connect was the internal name given to their streamlined process for transferring patients from a broad range of facilities and internal departments to a higher level of care at Mercy Medical Center-Des Moines.

IN EVERY CHALLENGE, AN OPPORTUNITY

Like many facilities, Mercy Medical Center-Des Moines was in search of an easier way to move patients. The organization needed a centralized, streamlined way to handle thousands of patient transfers every year, which would improve outcomes and help them be in the best position possible to serve their community.

As volume grew, Mercy knew they were at risk for inefficient patient transfers, increased operational costs, and missed revenue opportunities. Initially, they used an outsourced transfer center, but the organization's leadership eventually determined that an internally managed solution would better meet the needs of the medical center's staff, physicians, patients, and referring sites.

IT'S ABOUT EFFICIENCY

Following a thorough evaluation, Mercy Medical Center chose ABOUT solutions to power Mercy Connect for both transfers and on-call scheduling.

The fully integrated Software-as-a-Service (SaaS)-based solution from ABOUT helped ensure timely and efficient patient transfers while capturing critical details of a patient's movement in real time. By centralizing and distributing provider scheduling and calendar data, ABOUT enabled the access center to

connect with the right physician on the first try, getting patients the prompt care they deserve while reducing the risk of leakage and adverse outcomes.

Perhaps most importantly? Referring facilities now only have to call one number (877-88-MERCY) to arrange patient transfers.

"This gives us a way to connect better with our referring facilities," said Robert Gavora, Market Director for Pain, Wound, and Infusion service lines at Mercy Medical Center-Des Moines. "We have nurses and mid-level providers answering the phones, which creates a better understanding of each case. We can work with referring facilities to ensure that their patients experience an easy pathway to a higher level of care."

Mercy Connect staffer Jody Gordon, RN, wholeheartedly agrees, pointing out the benefit of having complete information from any case at her fingertips.

"It makes documenting incredibly easy," said Gordon. "Having all this information in a centralized location makes it easy to answer follow-up questions."

IT'S ABOUT RESULTS

The big "win" for Mercy, its patients, and physicians has been the growth in patient transfers and the speed with which patients can be moved to their appropriate care setting.

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While we expected growth during the first and subsequent years after deployment, Mercy Connect has grown more quickly than we originally estimated.

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Robert Gavora

Director of Referrals, Mercy Medical Center

During the first year following go-live with ABOUT solutions, patient transfer volume grew by 13.1%. Year two results were almost as impressive, yielding an increase of 9.3%. From implementation, patient transfers rose by an average of 9% per year, and this growth trend continues to the present day.

"While we expected growth during the first and subsequent years after deployment, Mercy Connect has grown more quickly than we originally estimated," says Gavora.

He attributes this to a number of key factors, including the speed and ease with which transfer center staff can work through a patient transfer.

"This has helped make referring sites more loyal to Mercy Connect. They like that we have one number for all calls — regardless of your issue, we'll get your call where it needs to go or transfer your patient to Mercy for a higher level of care."

Another contributor to the growth in calls and transfers is the flexibility of ABOUT, according to Gavora.

"It has helped us diversify the types of transfers we take. We use it for ED, inpatient, and even outpatient transfers to Mercy Medical Center. In addition, we've started accepting transfers from clinics and other outpatient sites across Iowa, directly admitting these patients and bypassing the emergency department."

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Robert Gavora
Director of Referrals, Mercy Medical Center

IT'S ABOUT VISIBILITY

Mercy has capitalized on a wealth of information available via the reporting tools available from ABOUT.

"The quality and specificity of the data we get really help us drive the strategy for our transfer center. We can see where patients are coming from and which physicians referred them," said Gavora. "This data helps us do case reviews of transfers that were lost or denied; we can walk through them to determine the appropriateness of the transfer and whether there was

anything more we could have done to make sure the patient was transferred here."

In addition, readily available data enables prompt, informed action on time-sensitive issues, he adds.

"I recently received a call from the emergency department manager at one of our referring sites. She had a question about a patient who was referred to us. Within about five seconds, I looked up the case notes, and within 30 seconds, I was able to answer her question. That's a beautiful thing!"

IT'S ABOUT THE EXPERIENCE (FOR STAFF AND PATIENTS)

Gavora and his team appreciated the extra effort put in by ABOUT as part of a partnership that's gone well beyond what Mercy expected from a technology provider. Throughout set-up, go-live and beyond, ABOUT worked with Mercy to establish and refine processes in order to create a better overall experience. They helped staff members become intimately familiar with the new technology and operations so the new patient transfer strategy would become second nature.

Gavora recalls an instance in which he needed assistance with recreating a report. He called the ABOUT customer service number.

"Someone picked up the phone in about five seconds and walked me step by step through what I needed to do. It was nice to speak with somebody who never made me feel rushed...really took the time to work with me and answered all my questions. That's the customer service you would obviously prefer and hope to have. We have a vendor and a partner, and that's what we're looking for."

ABOUT eliminated the friction from the patient transfer experience without losing the human element. And for Mercy Medical Center-Des Moines, that has made a world of difference in the number of patients they can serve and the level of service they can provide to those patients.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Mercy Medical Center-Des Moines relies on ABOUT solutions to power its Mercy Connect access center. As a result, they've experienced year-to-year increases in

patient transfer volume, the visibility necessary to make positive adjustments, and an improved experience for patients and staff.

Key Takeaways:

- 13.1% increase in patient transfer volume in year one
- 9.3% additional growth in year two
- 9% average growth each additional year following implementation
- 39% increase in transfer-related calls to Mercy Connect
- Visibility into missed transfer opportunities, and the data necessary to make strategic corrections that prevent leakage and capture more patients
- Diversification in the types of transfers Mercy Connect can facilitate

Standout benefits for Mercy Connect since implementing solutions from ABOUT include:

- A single platform that brings all elements of the patient journey together, in one place
- Easy-to-use, customizable home pages tailored to different roles and responsibilities
- The ability to consistently connect with the right physician on the first try
- Quick look-up of real-time information about transferred patients
- One phone number to call for all patient transfers and related inquiries
- A knowledgeable team — nurses and mid-level providers — handling calls and ensuring the most appropriate resolution of each case
- A smoother, faster pathway for patients to a higher level of care



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About Us

ABOUT offers a flexible, purpose-built solution that empowers hospitals and health systems to operate as one connected network of care. We enable easy access for clinicians to move patients into and out of the acute care setting - getting them to the next, best care setting faster and easier. Complemented by our clinical experts and best practices, we provide health systems the necessary controls and insights to grow with resilience, drive clinician effectiveness, and improve patient outcomes.



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