

"We were at a point where we knew we had to find a new Dynamics GP solution. We stumbled on a great solution with RSM that really had everything we were looking for. After many promises that did not come to fruition, having new promises where everything came through and building that trust was huge for us."

Melanie Bestland, Supply Chain Manager, Lakewood Health System

OPTIMIZATION ASSESSMENT HELPS HOSPITAL PROPERLY LEVERAGE DYNAMICS GP

Overview

Lakewood Health System is a nonprofit hospital in Staples, Minnesota, ranking as the largest critical access hospital in the state. The hospital was founded in 1936, and leverages innovation for enhanced care and continued growth.

Background

Lakewood Health was in the process of transitioning to a new Epic health care technology foundation, and sought a compatible enterprise resource planning (ERP) solution to align with Epic. The organization chose Microsoft Dynamics GP and initially worked with another implementation partner, but the hospital quickly began realizing problems with that provider's strategy. The hospital experienced several configuration and process issues, and both the timeline and the budget for the project were significantly exceeded.

For example, a hospital typically has supplies distributed among a multitude of departments from a central supply room. While Dynamics GP can flow those costs automatically to specific departments, the configuration was not set up in that manner, resulting in unnecessary manual processes.

In addition, the implementation partner sold Lakewood Health integration tools, but did not use them, instead relying on costly custom scripts to manage the same processes. Training was also a challenge, as employees received little guidance, and what was provided was often inconsistent.

Ultimately, Lakewood Health's implementation partner did not have the necessary experience in the health care industry to provide proper advice and guidance. Lakewood Health had the right tool, but the organization did not receive the right configuration and training from its previous partner. Therefore, the organization sought a new provider to optimize the Dynamics GP solution, and increase productivity and efficiency.

"Even after go live, we were without a true system that we could use," commented Melanie Bestland, supply chain manager for Lakewood Health System. "The process was extremely stressful, cost us quite a bit of time and money, and we needed to make a change."

Project

Lakewood Health began talking to local health care systems that use Dynamics GP, and RSM was recommended by multiple

hospitals. After gathering universally complimentary feedback on our industry-specific solutions and advice, Lakewood Health contacted RSM, and a beneficial relationship began.

"RSM informed us about the true capabilities of Dynamics GP, and they had solutions for us, but they were also realistic," commented Bestland. "Unlike what we heard from our previous provider, we did not want to hear yes to everything when the system may not align with our strategies, and we learned that we might have to adjust processes to fit the system."

The RSM team initiated a Dynamics GP optimization assessment for Lakewood Health, spending two and a half days on-site evaluating the hospital's processes and determining what was working and where improvements could be made. RSM met with employees from materials management to accounts payable to understand how they performed their tasks. The RSM team asked questions to determine why users could not get key information, or why extra work was sometimes needed to complete certain tasks.

Some of Lakewood Health's processes were effective, but some needed adjustments and many certainly did not utilize existing functionalities within the Dynamics GP system. In some cases, RSM provided instant feedback to tweak processes and provide improvements. However, the most significant benefit for Lakewood Health was RSM taking the information gained from understanding users' work processes and recommending configuration and process changes.

"RSM outlined a better way to perform many processes," said Bestland. "We received a very comprehensive, very long document about current state operations and solutions for each area that we had difficulty with."

The RSM team has worked with Lakewood Health to implement many of those recommendations and utilize Dynamics GP's full range of effectiveness. For example, RSM helped create effective integrations with the Epic system, which enabled general ledger accounts to update automatically, rather than continuing manual processes. While customizations to Dynamics GP are sometimes necessary and beneficial, Lakewood Health's implementation partner created unnecessary customizations for these processes that were costly and ultimately ineffective.

"There were numerous things where just checking one box saved incredible amounts of time," said Bestland. "Many times, one checked box was all we needed to do things that we continuously asked for that ended up becoming the next customization."

In addition, RSM helped fill the training gap for Lakewood Health's Dynamics GP users. While previous training was rushed

and not very thorough, RSM spent time to train, or retrain users to smooth out many key processes and eliminate additional manual functions. Users did not realize how much Dynamics GP could help them, because previous processes were not challenged; instead, existing practices were simply recreated with further customization.

"I feel like there are so many things that we can do with Dynamics GP," commented Bestland. "I feel like we are due for a second optimization study to understand what the system can do for us and leverage best practices from other hospitals. That would have never happened with our previous provider."

In the end, RSM's depth of experience in the health care industry enabled Lakewood Health to take full advantage of the Dynamics GP platform and begin to realize its true vision for the solution.

"That's where RSM's strength was; the team had experience with many, many hospitals to draw from," said Bestland. "The comfort factor that we felt of knowing that RSM knew what they were talking about, understood our problems and dealt with them many times before was integral to our success."

Outcomes

While Lakewood Health's implementation partner rushed the process, RSM took the time to understand the organization's needs and goals for Dynamics GP. RSM's Dynamics GP optimization project helped Lakewood Health effectively leverage the ERP solution to create more streamlined, efficient processes. The hospital's integrated technology platform enables more visibility and accuracy while saving significant time and money.

"We were in a major struggle and nowhere near an ending point, even six months after go live," said Bestland. "I feel like we saved \$100,000 by switching to RSM for costs we were getting charged that were getting us nowhere."

Key benefits of RSM's relationship with Lakewood Health include:

- Creating effective integrations with existing and new technology systems
- Training users to understand the functionalities of the Dynamics GP system and the efficiencies it can create
- Saving \$10,000–20,000 a month on customizations and maintenance costs that yielded little benefit
- Leveraging Dynamics GP's core functionality to solve several problems, including general ledger and accounts payable integration

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