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Benefis Transforms OR Medication Management Through Automation and Collaboration

Customer Profile

Founded in 1996, Benefis Health System (Benefis) is a not-for-profit integrated delivery network serving a 38,000-square-mile region in Montana. Currently, Benefis maintains 220 inpatient beds in its Great Falls locations, along with 400+ employed providers, and two critical access hospitals, making it one of Montana's most essential healthcare networks.

The Challenge

Before implementing Omnicell's XT Anesthesia Workstations (AWS), Benefis relied on case trays to manage OR medications, a process that was both labor-intensive and inefficient for the provider. For 15 operating rooms, more than 50 trays had to be prepared daily by a dedicated pharmacy technician, whose entire shift was spent reprocessing trays for the next day. This workload increased dramatically when 12 additional endoscopy suites were added and an ambulatory surgery center (ASC) was built in a different city. Each tray only held about 15 commonly used medications, leading to frequent stockouts and forcing providers to retrieve additional drugs from Omnicell cabinets in the OR Core. For Benefis, this workflow lacked real-time inventory visibility, disrupted operations, and limited flexibility for both pharmacy and anesthesia teams.

The Solution

Benefis decision to transition to Omnicell's AWS was driven by strong OR leadership and early anesthesiology support. During a major endoscopy space renovation, the OR team requested AWS units be incorporated into the project plan and budget. Benefis' pharmacy leadership recognized the need for consistency and scalability, expanding from a single-area implementation to a hospital-wide rollout. The goals were clear: to improve medication access, reduce diversion risk, and streamline workflows.

Benefis Health System
Great Falls, Montana

Challenge

- Inefficient OR workflows
- Visibility and control of medications
- Frequent stockouts

Solution

- XT Anesthesia Workstation

Impact*

- 4% reduction in inventory discrepancies achieved within just a few months
- Over 94% medication scan compliance rate
- Simplified OR workflow
- Decreased stockouts through better inventory visibility
- Enhanced patient safety

Early engagement and provider buy-in proved critical to the success of the technology implementation. Logan Tinsen, Benefis' Pharmacy Director, explained, "We had buy-in from the OR team and anesthesiology early and put a lot of effort into training and ensuring alignment from the start."

To simplify training and faciliate ease of use, all AWS units were configured identically at launch. Continuous communication with anesthesia leadership was meant to ensure alignment and rapid issue resolution. As Logan Tinsen noted, "Setting up one machine early let providers come in, schedule time, see where the drugs were, and tell us what to move or change."

For Benefis sustained collaboration has been a decisive success factor. Logan Tinsen emphasizes the importance of rapid, direct communication with anesthesia leadership to resolve issues quickly and reinforce compliance. Benefis' anesthesia lead, Dr. Matthew Kunkel, shared, "Implementing AWS brought about a learning curve for our anesthesia team, but the automation benefits quickly outweighed the initial challenges. Having streamlined access to medications at the point of care has reduced manual steps and improved overall workflow efficiency."

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Logan Tinsen, Pharm.D., FMPA
Director of Pharmacy

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Dr. Matthew Kunkel
Anesthesiologist

The Impact*

A strong partnership between pharmacy and anesthesia enabled Benefis to achieve a 94% medication scan compliance rate. This high level of compliance aims to ensure accurate medication tracking and to reduce the risk of errors, which is intended to enhance patient safety in the OR. Following recent optimization efforts, Benefis has already achieved a 4% reduction in inventory discrepancies and remains committed to sustaining this momentum and driving toward a zero-discrepancy goal.

Looking ahead, Benefis says that it plans to leverage AWS data for deeper insights into cost control and waste reduction. Continued collaboration with anesthesia will remain central to maximizing the value of OR automation, which should drive efficiency, improve financial outcomes, and support sustaining the highest standards of patient care.

*Impact discussed represents data based on individual customer experience. The use of the word impact in relation to Omnicell's products or services does not imply that any specific impact or improvement will be achieved. Results may vary. Additional detail available upon request.

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