



HealthCare Solutions®

Optimizing IT

CTGHS helps St. Bernards Healthcare improve IT support

Business Background

St. Bernards Healthcare (SBH) is an integrated delivery network (IDN) with owned and managed medical facilities in 23 counties throughout Northeast Arkansas and Southeast Missouri. Over 2,200 employees deliver quality healthcare in a variety of community settings, using a range of IT systems.

Uncertainty surrounded SBH's existing system plans, primarily related to its core software vendor, and the proliferation of additional systems. Implementation issues related to new systems and ongoing support for aging legacy applications were taxing the resources of both IT and stakeholder communities.

To ensure the optimal resolution of these issues, SBH senior management needed a better understanding of the effectiveness of its current application portfolio, including an accurate assessment of user satisfaction with its current technology support. It called on CTG HealthCare Solutions (CTGHS) for assistance.

Business Objectives

SBH asked CTGHS to perform an objective assessment of its IT portfolio and organization. Management wanted to know how well they addressed user needs and satisfaction, and how effectively and appropriately they resolved stakeholder concerns and expectations. The review of current IT capabilities would serve as baseline data for a gap analysis that would measure the divergence between current and projected future clinical and business needs. SBH also asked CTGHS to compare its system plans with those of similar IDNs.

SBH senior leadership determined that issues related to the involvement of technology and supporting stakeholders in both

decision-making and operations were equally important. Their primary objective was to obtain CTGHS' guidance in identifying the appropriate 'next steps' that would enable them to:

- Realize optimal value and effectiveness from existing systems
- Reach a decision on expanding or replacing current technology
- Improve user satisfaction, as measured by users' perceptions of the ability of the SBH IT department and current systems to meet their needs

The CTGHS Solution

CTGHS performed a multi-phased assessment of the SBH organization to collect the information needed to advise senior leadership on the requisite next steps. The engagement began with an evaluation of the SBH IT organization's current state. Activities included:

- Individual and group interviews of selected key stakeholders to gauge the effectiveness and ability of current IT systems and the IT organization to meet SBH's enterprise needs
- Inventory of current IT systems/applications and interfaces
- Study of the IT organization through interview sessions and documentation review by operational state (departmental services) and functional role
- High-level research of like-sized healthcare organizations

The initial evaluation was followed by an assessment of the organization's desired IT future state, consisting of:

- Determination of its IT future needs, as identified in future visioning workshops facilitated by CTGHS
- High-level research on industry trends



All the findings of both studies were used to integrate SBH current abilities and future needs with its enterprise strategic goals and user expectations. CTGHS presented the results in three phases:

- *Interview key findings*, including stakeholder comments regarding current systems and IT support
- *Current state of information technology at SBH*, encompassing the IT organization as well as all systems and interfaces
- *Gap analysis of the SBH current state* compared to its desired future state, with recommendations

CTGHS extracted pertinent data from several diverse sources to present the relevant points, with well-defined and clearly articulated conclusions. Concrete recommendations for corrective actions and migration paths were prioritized and mapped along a time line to support the achievement of both immediate and long-term objectives.

Some recommendations could be initiated immediately. Others required revision to existing policies, culture, and staffing levels. Formal deliverables presented to senior leadership included an IT assessment roadmap and recommendations.

Business Benefits

CTGHS' conclusions and recommendations supplied the guidance SBH needed to execute straightforward and practical follow-up activities in support of its objectives.

SBH decided it needed a chief information officer (CIO) as well as a director of IT to facilitate immediate improvement of end

user satisfaction. It asked CTGHS for interim CIO assistance to supplement the IT organization and mentor its IT director. We provided a seasoned, senior CIO to oversee the transition period during which SBH selected its permanent CIO. The interim CIO oversaw the initial restructuring of the IT department and supplied interim management support for several months until the permanent CIO was appointed.

During this coverage period, SBH launched one of the recommended key initiatives: improvements to the IT governance structure, which built on the collaborative consensus reached in the future visioning sessions held as part of the IT assessment. An initial step was the 'formalization' of a uniform IT governance structure. An open forum where clinical and business leadership collaborated with the IT department significantly decreased the propensity of individual departments to purchase their own software solutions, which often fit poorly with the organization's overall strategic IT plan.

Findings and recommendations from the IT assessment and documentation from the interim CIO, provided the newly-appointed CIO with a solid background of pertinent data. A face-to-face review session of key highlights from both projects enabled him to orient himself quickly to his new role. Since that time, several additional recommendations resulting from the IT assessment have been initiated.

Key to the project's success was CTGHS's in-depth expertise in SBH's application suite, backed by extensive knowledge of a wide range of major healthcare application vendors, as well as the mobilization of experienced CIO, nursing, and technology consultants with real-time experience in managing IT and user expectations.

"CTGHS was able to ascertain an open, unbiased view of our stakeholder needs and translate that into an actionable plan for realistic next steps for our organization. We have referred back to some of their specific findings and recommendations several times since project completion, and found them invaluable."

*—Harry Hutchinson,
St. Bernard's Healthcare
CFO*

CTGHS helps healthcare institutions and related organizations maximize the potential of their information systems to achieve their financial and clinical objectives. Our consulting, clinical, financial, advanced technology, and IT management solutions resolve high-priority IT issues and provide significant return on investment for our clients. CTGHS is recognized for our ability to mobilize healthcare and IT expertise, to deploy our proven Exemplar® methodologies, and to draw upon our corporate knowledge base in a client-responsive and cost-effective manner. We rely on AssureWare™, our standardized engagement management methodology, to deliver consistent, timely results.



HealthCare
Solutions®