

Caldwell UNC Health Care

Achieving value through partnership

Overview

In April of 2013 Caldwell Memorial Hospital in Lenoir, NC became a part of the University of North Carolina Health Care System (UNC Health Care; UNCHC). Through this transaction both parties sought to preserve and enhance existing acute care hospital services to better serve the North Carolinians of Caldwell and surrounding counties into the future, provide improved access to high quality, cost-efficient and innovative health care services across the continuum of care, explore efficiencies in administrative and operational functions to achieve economies of scale while preserving the hospital as a major employer in the area, and extend and expand the tri-fold mission of patient care, medical education, and research of UNC Health Care. Looking back on the first six years of this endeavor it is easy to see the examples of success in achieving these goals.

Information Technology (IT)

IT is often one of the most expensive infrastructure elements for any hospital. The financial expense and expertise required to operate a comprehensive IT platform are often too burdensome for a small independent hospital to support on its own, and underscores the need for affiliation with a larger entity for many small hospitals. The UNC Health Care Information Services Division (ISD) operates all aspects of Caldwell's IT infrastructure, including the *Epic@UNC* electronic medical record. UNC Health Care's information technology platform includes:

- Over 400,000 patients with a *myUNCCChart* patient portal account
- Over 44,000,000 patient records exchanged across 1650+ hospitals and 3800+ clinics
- 4.5M unique patient records managed
- 4.8 Petabytes of data stored (equivalent of 7.2M CD-ROM discs of data)

ISD forms the foundation of integration for UNC Health Care hospitals, including clinical quality improvement, back-office functions, and data sharing allowing for providers hundreds of miles away to consult on a patient, helping more patients stay close to home for their care.

Facility Enhancements

Over \$35M has been invested by UNCHC in physical infrastructure at Caldwell, including essential "behind the wall" improvements, as well as construction of state-of-the-art facilities. Two of these facilities in particular have already helped to position Caldwell for future growth in the community.

The McCreary Surgery Center is a state-of-the-art facility for inpatient and outpatient surgeries, and includes comfortable family and friend waiting areas and a private conference room for physician and family conferences.

Construction has contributed substantially to physician recruitment and retention. Following construction, Caldwell saw a 15% increase in surgeons operating at the site.



Photo of tour following opening of newly constructed surgery center in Lenoir, NC



Caldwell UNC Health Care employee with new MRI machine on the hospital campus

Additionally, in summer 2019, a new ambulatory surgery center will open. This surgery center will be the only one in the region to focus exclusively on orthopedic and spine surgery.

Investment in diagnostic imaging has also contributed to Caldwell's long-term stability. Caldwell now has three different diagnostic imaging locations, enhancing patient access to these services close to home.

Preparing for Vale Based Payment

UNC Health Care has made large investments in population health infrastructure, including the establishment of two clinically integrated networks, UNC Health Alliance and UNC Senior Alliance, in addition to growing internal resources for our network hospitals and physician practices across the state. One such department, *Practice, Quality and Innovation & Population Health Services* specifically supports population health and outpatient care improvements across the system. Supporting these efforts was the Care Access and Service Integration (CASI) team, which strives to connect the right patient with the right provider at the right time in the right location. The CASI team served 22 Caldwell clinics (8 primary care, 14 specialty) from September 2017 – August 2018, focusing on optimization of provider schedules, increasing scheduling accuracy, improving patient access to appointments, and launching an online scheduling platform and enhanced patient reminders via *Epic@UNC* and text messages.

The CASI team partnered with clinic management and scheduling teams to implement these improvement efforts, resulting in impressive outcomes. Over 5,100 patient appointments were scheduled online in the first 18 months of implementation of online scheduling. Caldwell also now outperforms industry benchmarks in key metrics including scheduled utilization (a measure to ensure efficient use of providers' schedules) for their primary and specialty care practices.

Clinical Programs

UNC Health Care and Caldwell have worked together across many different clinical areas, with significant clinical value generated in Pharmacy. In calendar year 2018, benefit was generated for Caldwell through UNCHC System Pharmacy Services through contracting and sourcing, 340B program support, health plan pharmacy benefit management, controlled substances oversight and medication repackaging, among other activities. In addition to reducing expenses and maximizing resources, Caldwell received the support of the System Pharmacy & Therapeutics (P&T) committee including drug evaluation and selection, medication policy, and formulary standardization. System P&T and formulary standardization all of which lead to better patient outcomes via streamlined processes and policies, and reduction in drug expense. In addition, Pharmacy Analytics and Financial services provide high quality data driving financial and clinical decisions.

UNC Health Care is particularly proud of the cancer partnership with Caldwell. May 2015, McCreary Cancer Center at Caldwell Memorial Hospital became a service of UNC Hospitals and part of the broader UNC Cancer Care network. Not only does this bring financial stability to the program through UNC Hospitals ownership, it also guarantees access to academic-quality cancer care provided by UNC Faculty

Physicians from the UNC School of Medicine. UNC Hospitals is proud to provide cancer care to Lenoir, NC and surrounding communities. Services provided include medical oncology, radiation oncology, chemotherapy and blood product infusion, and laboratory services.

Conclusion

In six years of partnership with Caldwell Memorial Hospital, UNC Health Care is proud to reflect upon the value generated with the leadership at Caldwell and the community of Lenoir, NC. As the largest public health care system in North Carolina, UNC Health Care is committed to ensuring all North Carolinians have access to high quality health care close to home. Supported by IT and clinical integration efforts, close working relationships among leaders, and a shared commitment to quality health care, Caldwell and UNC Health Care together have strengthened the care available for Lenoir, NC and the surrounding communities.