

# UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER MEDICAL CENTER'S STRONG MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

## PICKS BEST OF BREED PHARMACY SOLUTION

### Assessing the Need



Advanced health care services, world-class research and medical education have distinguished Strong Health as a leading healthcare system. Located in Rochester, NY, Strong Health is a major health center handling the most complex health services, and includes

Strong Memorial and Highland Hospital. Among their services: adult critical care including cardiovascular and oncology, regional perinatal and pediatrics services, psychiatric services and major transplant, trauma and burn centers, Strong is a health system with complex and demanding information systems needs and expectations. In addition to their routine inpatient demands, Strong Health has expanded new system requirements to support major compounding and manufacturing demands, home care, mail order services and ambulatory care services.

After a decade of experience and satisfaction with the existing BDM Information Systems Inpatient Pharmacy System at Strong Memorial, Strong Health opted for a prudent full market search in assessing new information system options. In addition to assessing all the major information systems options, pharmacy project coordinator Dave Webster and his team looked at similar healthcare organizations and the recent decisions they had made relative to system selection.

- Looking for a new, state of the art pharmacy information system in a high-acuity patient care environment spanning the continuum of care
- Because of growing health system complexity, team selects a full market search rather than simple upgrade
- **Selection priorities:**
  - Flexibility
  - Safety
  - Integration
  - Reporting
  - Value

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### System Review



A team was assembled to oversee the analysis and selection process with two project managers representing pharmacy and information systems. Because of the complex and diverse care delivered at Strong, the system requirements were demanding.

System flexibility quickly became a primary selection factor, in addition to safety and the ability to integrate with an array of technologies employed by Strong's medication use system. Primary integration challenges: an in-development provider order entry system (SMS, to be completed late 2002), ADT, McKesson Automation RobotRx, Pyxis unit-based cabinets dispersed throughout the organization and future plans for point-of-care technology and laboratory results system..

### Selection Process

The selection team -- comprised of representatives from information systems (technician and administrator), pharmacy (staff pharmacists, technicians, and management), administration and finance -- developed and issued an RFP to support the selection process. In addition, an independent consultant was hired to assess vendor integration capabilities and delivery history.

The RFP process (development through selection) was time intense, covering an 8 month period which included demonstrations and site visits. RFP responses and demonstrations were evaluated using a weighted grid with one-on-one follow-up with team members for debriefing and

- **RFP Timeline**

The RFP was mailed to vendors in September, 2000, with responses due two weeks later. Vendor demos were conducted over a 30 day span, completed in late October. Vendor selection occurred in November, followed by contracting. Expected installation time was 6-9 months with a January, 2001 start.

- **Decision Factors**

- Customization
- Financial Tracking
- Dosing Tables
- Database access
- Integration

- **Tips for implementation success**

- Advance planning
- Realistic timelines
- Vendor commitment
- Shared expectations
- Adequate resources

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summary of relative impressions and ranking of the various systems. The decision to choose BDM's latest generation RxTFC® Pharmacy Information System software was based on a variety of factors and first-hand knowledge of many of the most attractive feature functions. The flexibility to build custom attributes, ability to easily financially track high cost items, dosing tables customized to the facility and specific age-ranges, access to Medispan databases, and the proven track record on system integration with a wide range of mainframe and peripheral systems tipped the balance to BDM. The track record of a decade of comfortable relationships with BDM staff made the decision that much easier.

### Implementation Pearls



Webster credits BDM's planning and process as the factors that contributed to a near flawless installation. "They were absolutely up front about the time commitment that would be needed, and provided our team with resources to get the job done."

Detailed lists for the database building team, an excellent framework for mutual expectations and the resources that would be required, enabled the team to start the implementation process in July with a January go-live date. "We were fortunate to have a great BDM project manager and support staff, who were terrific about timeline management and follow-up."

Planning and preparation, as much education and training as possible, and a start well in advance of the actual go live date were key to success.

Communication was also a critical success factor for the implementation. Frequent reporting to nursing staff and hospital administration focused on the improved system capabilities,

- **Keep Everyone Informed**

House Staff  
Nursing  
Pharmacy Staff  
Technicians  
Administration

- **Invest in Training**

Decrease anxiety

Highlight key system features

Create comfort level

Reduce resistance to change

Smooth transition

Focus on ease of use, speed, capabilities

Target all users

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particularly reporting and emphasized the enhanced feature functions that could be anticipated.

Realizing that one of the challenges of any major system change is training of the users, the implementation team also worked closely with pharmacy and nursing staff, well in advance of the go-live date.



A young and excited pharmacy staff quickly lost any change anxiety as they recognized the ease of use, speed of order entry, and enhanced capabilities the system offered.

The implementation team provided nurses with clear examples of what system features

would be different, how labeling would change and how the new system would impact their work processes. The investment in developing a comfort level with the anticipated changes for the pharmacy and nursing staff, reduced anxiety and resistance and led to a smooth transition with no service interruptions or changes.

The final go-live decision was a joint one between the transition team and the BDM project team. "Amazingly, there were no big bumps, despite a one week postponement due to some internal billing process changes. The implementation process was scheduled over a weekend, with the BDM project manager and two additional BDM staff members on site with the implementation team.

Were there any surprises? Not really, according to Webster. But there was some reassuring evidence of the success. Shortly after the installation was completed the robotics dispensing system went down. "It was a real test of the backup systems which rely heavily on BDM generated reports such as patient profiles and cart fill lists."

- EVERYTHING THAT BDM TOOK ON, THEY DID WELL.

IT WAS A GREAT EXPERIENCE.

Dave Webster

Associate Director  
Pharmacy

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### Progress, Learnings and Next Steps.....



With only occasional need for reminders regarding workarounds and a few minor glitches, Webster is focused on options for system refinement and improvement.

The system capabilities needed for Strong Memorial and Strong Health were delivered. "We are on track with our vision. The flexibility that we were looking for has been demonstrated in countless ways, from dosing table changes, to out of range warning safety checks."

Future plans include potential system expansion to multiple facilities and to the outpatient system. The plan for phased implementation and expansion is on track and Strong Memorial has the system and capacity it needs and the expertise to grow into other applications.