

Freeman Health System Drives Culture Change and Significant Cost Avoidance with Hayes Evidence-Based Health Technology Assessments

Hayes

Transforming Healthcare with Evidence



“I set out to prove we could save more than the cost of our Hayes subscription by including clinical evidence in our technology review process. After just 6 months, we’ve already accomplished that goal, and by the end of this year, we will have a huge return on our investment. If evidence-based documentation becomes part of your culture or process, it really pays for itself.”

Robert Essner
 Director of Materials Management
 Freeman Health System

Customer Situation

Freeman Health System, a 404-bed, 3-hospital system in Joplin, MO, has an award-winning process for analyzing clinical technology purchases known as iSURP (Intranet Supply Utilization Review Process). The iSURP committee includes key stakeholders from throughout the hospital system, including clinicians, physicians, finance, risk management, purchasing, infection control, and education. iSURP serves as a gatekeeper for Freeman’s supply formulary, ensures that the hospital system stays in compliance with all vendor contracts, and measures the cost impact of any new purchasing decisions.

The committee, which meets quarterly, reviews a package of information for potential new purchases that includes product information, pricing, clinical data, and other pertinent information. Bob Essner, Director of Materials Management, and Estella Ramirez, MM Clinical Coordinator, oversee the process. They are tasked with coordinating the flow of information to the committee and ensuring that all appropriate information is available to determine whether or not the product should be added. They also communicate with hospital staff to indicate whether a product has been approved or denied. iSURP is a well-managed process that has received awards from both the VHA and Amerinet.

However, Essner and Ramirez also knew that iSURP could be even more effective by including an unbiased perspective on clinical evidence as part of the package of information reviewed by the committee. Mr. Essner says, “A primary goal of iSURP is to buy product in a most economical way to meet our needs. We standardize purchasing, emphasize cost containment, and focus on clinical outcomes provided by the technology we purchase.

SOLUTION OVERVIEW

Customer:

Freeman Health System

Customer Profile:

Freeman Health System is a 404-bed, 3-hospital system providing comprehensive healthcare and behavioral health services to an area that includes more than 450,000 from Missouri, Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Kansas.

Not-for-profit, community-owned, and locally governed, Freeman focuses on meeting the health and wellness needs of those it serves as well as the needs of future generations. The system’s employees and board of directors play an active role in identifying the health needs of the region.

Location:

Joplin, MO

Business Situation:

Freeman has a well-defined internal process for evaluating healthcare technologies called iSURP (intranet Supply Utilization Review Process) that has won Supply Chain awards from both VHA and Amerinet GPO’s. However, key stakeholders in the process knew that they needed a neutral, unbiased, third-party source of evidence-based information to balance marketing hype and physician preference that often drove decision making.

That can be a difficult challenge when we work with physicians and the manufacturers' representatives that sometimes have different motives."

Ms. Ramirez added, "The vendor is always going to tell you there is a clinical benefit. We had been searching for some time for a third party to provide the evidence that supports either bringing a new item in or justifies keeping an item we currently use."

Essner and Ramirez worked to identify a new resource for the committee that could provide added perspective on clinical trial information that was unpolluted by manufacturers' hype or physician preference. Essner adds, "We had come to the point where we knew we needed clinical evidence in the review package. We weren't comfortable assuming that the physicians and vendors were always right."

The Hayes Solution

A Google search led Freeman to Hayes, Inc., a health technology research and consulting company that provides health technology assessment reports on clinical evidence to payers and providers. Essner was impressed. "I didn't see anybody out there offering a similar service. I felt the comprehensiveness of the information in the Hayes Knowledge Center would be of benefit to our iSURP committee, and the fact that Hayes was a neutral third party not influenced by vendors was important to me."

Freeman subscribed to the Hayes Knowledge Center, a comprehensive online source of evidence-based health technology assessment reports. As part of its subscription, Freeman also receives a fixed number of hours per quarter of research and consulting services from the Hayes Clinical Support team.

The inclusion of Hayes research as part of the iSURP package made a quick and positive impact on the committee's work. Already, a culture change is underway at Freeman as the Hayes perspective on clinical evidence is included in the information reviewed by the committee.

Ramirez adds, "In one past case, the justification for purchasing a new technology was 'because it was requested by the doctor.' Now, we have a significant amount of clinical data in the justification section of our report. Our clinical staff knows that Hayes data is going to be included in our report, and they know we have a way of getting the evidence we need to support our decision."

Freeman's risk management department has also found Hayes research to be useful in instances of litigation where a decision to use or not use a healthcare technology has been questioned.

Essner has identified over \$300,000 in cost avoidance as part of the iSURP process. "Hayes may not have been the sole reason for our decisions, but we are changing our culture to focus on evidence-based outcomes. Mentioning Hayes gets our clinical staff to pay attention to this key change."

For More Information

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Solution:

Comprehensive health technology assessments, comparative effectiveness reports, and literature searches from Hayes, Inc. provide the Freeman iSURP committee with an unbiased perspective on clinical evidence that is now an integrated part of the review process.

Benefits:

- More in-depth understanding of financial and operational impact of technologies being considered for adoption.
- Health technology acquisition decisions based on impact of patient outcomes as found in the evidence.
- Cultural change is taking root at Freeman, as the clinical staff and the manufacturer's reps who sell to them know that evidence has become a key component in the review process.
- Stakeholders on the Freeman iSURP committee have a valuable tool to balance marketing hype, physician preference, and manufacturer-sponsored research.
- Freeman has identified \$300,000 of cost avoidance or cost savings that were a direct result of the new iSURP process and Hayes research.

The Hayes logo features the word "Hayes" in a bold, teal, sans-serif font. The letter "H" is stylized with a horizontal bar that extends to the left and then curves back to the right, creating a unique graphic element.

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