

University of Alabama Health Services Foundation Looks to Lawson to Help Save Time, Costs

An integral part of a network of services that provides a complete continuum of care for patients from all around the world, University of Alabama Health Services Foundation partnered with Lawson® for a business system infrastructure that helps manage its entire scope of operations to save money and time.

Customer Profile

As the largest physician organization in the southeastern region of the United States, Health Services Foundation has almost 800 physicians in more than 35 specialties. They care for patients, teach medical students and seek ways to advance medical innovations as part of the University of Alabama at Birmingham Health System (UAB Health System).

An aging, homegrown, legacy computer system that was patched together formed the basis for a data system that couldn't keep pace with Health Services Foundation's world-class services. The organization implemented Lawson Financials, Human Resources and Supply Chain Suites, transforming the business infrastructure to one comprehensive solution designed for managing the health care challenges of today and tomorrow.

Business Situation

Health Services Foundation is feeling the pressure that many other healthcare providers are experiencing, increases in supply costs coupled with declining reimbursements: In an environment of already thin margins, this puts a significant strain on the materials management area to control and reduce costs.

Operational efficiency is a must. With 2,500 employees located over 20 square blocks of the university campus, Health Services Foundation can be a complex organization with loads of paperwork and information.

"Our old legacy computer system and its constant maintenance was really getting to be a challenge. The one main person who did most of the repairs was ready to retire," said Scott Jennings, director of accounting services for Health Services Foundation. "And we were still using a cash-based accounting system."

Solution

Within the first three months of going live with Lawson, Health Services Foundation discovered that the organization could reduce staff in finance by one and one-half positions. In addition, one position was eliminated in payroll. "We were fortunate to be able to reduce staff through attrition. No one was expecting to be able to have those kinds of cost-saving results that early," said Jennings.

Solution Overview

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Benefits

- Employees access and update employment, personal benefit and payroll information quickly and easily, freeing up HR staff to focus on more strategic, value-added activities
- Supply expenses contained and reduced through better, quicker access to consolidated purchasing data
- Streamline buying, billing and payment processes in materials management
- Easy integration with other financial systems, including legacy systems, because of the open architecture

“With Lawson, our supply chain management is moving toward a paperless process,” explained Jennings. “Process enhancements in materials management are important because our fixed costs continue to rise — but our reimbursements are declining or staying level. The expectations for materials management software is not just cost containment — but cost reductions. With better and quicker data, we are making big strides in saving money related to supplies.”

Jennings said that financial reports need to be easy-to-read and understand. “Online financial analysis with Lawson has been a significant improvement for Health Services Foundation. Before, departments had to wait for a hard close of the books — and then wait for a hard copy of the report,” Jennings said.

Information that is quicker, easier to understand and tailored to individual and departmental needs is fundamental to Health Services Foundation’s Human Resources department. “We use Lawson Employee and Manager Self-Service and have received positive feedback,” explained Jennings. “You just can’t fit everything on a paystub. There’s so much more information online — our 403B and retirement programs have options and choices that can be adjusted at certain points in time. And employees can manage their direct deposit, change of status, change of address — or whatever they need to do to stay current with any employment functions.”

Jennings believes that Lawson has addressed the organization’s complete information management needs by being flexible. “Lawson’s open architecture is a big benefit to us,” said Jennings. “We can use tools that we’re familiar with to get at the data. Lawson Add-ins for Microsoft® Office allows us to extract data and reformulate it however we need to. And we can put data back into Lawson through the same tool. Along with their strong experience in the healthcare technology marketplace, Lawson’s open architecture technology is a big plus for our organization.”

Contact Lawson

For more information about Lawson business solutions, call 1-800-477-1357, direct at +1-651-767-7000 or international at +44 (0) 1344 360273, or visit www.lawson.com.

For more information about Health Services Foundation, visit www.health.uab.edu.

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“With Lawson, we can distribute financial information to the departments online — and they can review them and make any adjustments before we close the books. Managers can look at every transaction that impacts their departments. We save a lot of time.”

Scott Jennings
Director of Accounting Services,
Health Services Foundation