

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Hospital System Uses Joint Commission Initiative to Enhance Patient Care

Health Management Associates, Inc. Turns ORYX into Real Time Patient Care Improvement

New York, NY – Hospital Management Associates, Inc. (HMA) has used the recent JCAHO ORYX initiative to begin a real-time, continual patient care improvement process. Using an enhanced version of PowerAbstract™ developed by Meta Health Technology, HMA is able to provide an immediate and ongoing improvement to the care they deliver. JCAHO ORYX is the name given to the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations' initiative to integrate performance measures into the accreditation process. The purpose of the ORYX initiative is to provide a critical link between accreditation and patient care outcomes, thus increasing consumer confidence. It also has as a goal to guide and stimulate continuous improvement in patient care and within healthcare organizations through refinement of performance-based standards.

To accomplish its mission, ORYX established a methodology for reviewing data trends and continuously monitoring performance to assist health organizations in identifying best practices and issues that required attention. ORYX's intent is to improve patient outcomes by examining discharge data to improve care outcomes for future patients. Originally there were over 200 core measures in the ORYX program, but in April of 2001 four core measures were identified against which standardized performance measures would be applied across all accredited healthcare organizations.

The HMA team sought to establish a methodology that would apply the ORYX measures in real time while a patient was still in the hospital receiving care, thus providing an almost immediate improvement to the care process. To achieve this goal, HMA put together a team from their company and an outside vendor. The HMA team included: Jim Jordan, Vice-President, Information Systems; Tim Prentis, Manager of Programming; three HIM

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Directors, Joanne Bailey from Florida, Amy Mabry from Mississippi, and Jenna Morris from Oklahoma; and from Meta Health Technology in New York City, Eli Nahmias and Julius Blum.

The team realized their strategy would require a more sophisticated data collection and reporting strategy than just abstracting core measures data after the fact. The system would also have to work in all 44 of HMA's facilities which include both small and large hospitals. The HMA information technology team and the HIM Directors had been working with Meta Health Technology for some time prior to the ORYX project, so a positive working relationship was already in place. They asked Meta to join them in the project because they knew Meta would provide an innovative yet practical solution, and deliver it on a timely and cost-effective basis.

"We understood that we had been given a significant challenge," said Eli Nahmias, President and CEO of Meta Health Technology. "But, I was confident that our development team, led by Julius Blum, was up to that challenge. I also believed that our PowerAbstract™ product could be customized to meet this need and the finished data collection system has proven this to be correct," Mr. Nahmias continued.

Using the ORYX core measures requirements, the HMA team outlined the data elements they wanted collected in real time at the point of care. HMA wanted to work with current abstract data, so their decisions on care improvements would be based on viable information. Meta Health Technology examined the required data elements and then enhanced their PowerAbstract system to abstract these elements and make them available to the HMA team and caregivers. This has allowed HMA to accomplish their goal of providing an immediate improvement to the care they provide.

Meta also created help screens for each data element that was to be collected. In addition, they designed a Work List screen specifically for the ORYX project. The user can drill down to the abstract details right from the work list, which includes the chart location so it can be used as a pull list as well. "It is very easy to collect the data we need with PowerAbstract," said Joanne Bailey, HIM Director at

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Brooksville Regional Hospital, in Brooksville FL. "It's one of the most robust products I have seen for ORYX collection," Ms. Bailey added.

About Health Management Associates, Inc.

Health Management Associates, Inc., headquartered in Naples, FL, operates acute care hospitals in the southeast and southwest areas of non-urban America. When HMA acquires a hospital, it upgrades the quality of healthcare delivery and expands the facility's medical services so that community residents don't have to commute to major urban centers for specialty medical care, except in rare instances. HMA also introduces hospital management practices that improve a patient's hospitalization experience, principally through decentralized management with centralized operating systems.

About Meta Health Technology

Meta Health Technology is a full-service provider of software solutions that enhance day-to-day operations in today's Health Information Management department. Meta's specialty is HIM, and its products are designed to meet the specific needs of the HIM department. Headquartered in New York City, the company has served the healthcare industry exclusively for over 25 years. Meta's clients range from small community hospitals to many of the largest and most prestigious medical facilities across the United States and in Canada. The company provides a level of client service that is unmatched in the industry.

Meta's CHARMS 2000™ is a comprehensive suite of HIM applications designed to automate and augment critical HIM functions, including EMR, abstracting and coding, chart tracking, deficiency management, release of information, document imaging, electronic signature and department management. CHARMS 2000 is designed for acute care and other hospitals, HMOs and large physician groups.

More information about Meta Health Technology is available on the Internet at www.metahealth.com, or by calling 800-334-6840.

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