

UPMC Pinnacle's full-scale evaluation of transfer center leads to Central Logic



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Ramin Yazdanfar, MD
Transfer Center Medical Director, UPMC Pinnacle

UPMC Pinnacle

Health System

- Seven acute-care hospitals in Pennsylvania
- 1,160 licensed beds, 160+ outpatient clinics and ancillary facilities
- 2,900+ physicians and approximately 11,000 employees
- UPMC Pinnacle has Joint Commission certification in advanced heart failure, advanced inpatient diabetes, advanced stroke, knee and hip surgery, and spine surgery

Challenge

- Health system acquisitions and rapid growth caused inefficient patient transfer practices
- Needed software to help facilitate patient movement across seven sites

Solution

Central Logic Transfer Center provided UPMC Pinnacle with:

- Easy-to-navigate and user definable software
- Integrated and centralized access to On-Call Scheduling
- Holistic reporting and analytics of critical Transfer Center activities
- Clinical consulting providing best practices to ensure maximum ROI

Health System Profile

A health system based in Harrisburg, PA, UPMC Pinnacle includes seven acute-care hospitals with 1,160 licensed beds, more than 160 outpatient clinics and ancillary facilities, more than 2,900 physicians and allied health professionals, and approximately 11,000 employees. The healthcare hub serves Dauphin, Cumberland, Perry, York, Lancaster, Lebanon, Juniata, Franklin, Adams, and parts of Snyder counties of Pennsylvania. UPMC Pinnacle has earned Joint Commission certification in six areas, including advanced heart failure, advanced inpatient diabetes, advanced stroke, knee and hip surgery, and spine surgery.

Challenges and Opportunities

Two Potential Partners with Different Core Strengths

Healthcare mergers and acquisitions have a way of magnifying issues with processes and protocols. This certainly proved to be the case when the health system then known as Pinnacle Health grew from three to seven hospitals through the acquisition of four hospitals from Community Health Systems. Shortly thereafter, Pinnacle itself was acquired by the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC).

With this rapid growth came the recognition of significant shortcomings in the organization's patient transfer practices, according to Ramin Yazdanfar, MD, Transfer Center Medical Director, who joined Pinnacle just prior to the UPMC acquisition.

"There was a pressing need to get everyone on the same page in how we facilitate patient movement across the system. Everything was done on paper, even sticky notes, and the transfer center lacked coordination across all seven sites. There was no easy way to track issues with patient transfers — you basically had to root through a stack of papers," he recalls.

Dr. Yazdanfar and Connie Lauffer, System Director of Capacity Management, led the evaluation and selection of a transfer center partner and solution. At the outset, UPMC Pinnacle leadership already had one option: a transfer center solution offered by their electronic medical record (EMR) vendor. But, as easy as it might seem to go with a known entity, would the health system be better served by a company with an exclusive focus on transfer center solutions?

The Evaluation and Selection Process

Significant Advantages Point to One Clear Choice

In search of an answer, Dr. Yazdanfar visited UPMC's MedCall transfer center, which had partnered with Central Logic for more than seven years. Due diligence also led him to a large, state-owned integrated health care system, which had deployed the EMR vendor's transfer center solution.

Following these visits and after a thorough evaluation process, UPMC Pinnacle's leadership decided that the advantages offered by the Central Logic transfer center solution surpassed those of the EMR vendor's. In a presentation to the IT and finance departments, Dr. Yazdanfar and Lauffer outlined key advantages of partnering with Central Logic versus the health system's EMR vendor, including:

- A company that's 100% dedicated to the development, implementation, and ongoing support of not just patient transfers, but healthcare access and orchestration solutions
- User definable scripting for transfer center agents, ensuring that no detail is missed and eliminating the need for memorization
- Easy-to-navigate workflow that mirrors the actual sequence of a patient transfer
- Time stamping of every step within the transfer process, making it easier and faster to pinpoint issues with a patient transfer
- Integrated and centralized access to On-Call Scheduling, which would enable agents to quickly identify physicians and providers who are currently available in any of the system's seven hospitals
- A diverse array of real-time analytics dashboards that are pre-built and easily shareable, without the need to submit a request to IT
- Vendor-agnostic integrations that ensure holistic reporting and analytics of all critical transfer center activities
- A tenured clinical consulting team to provide best practices and ensure maximum ROI

"We were really happy with what Central Logic had to offer upfront," states Dr. Yazdanfar.

Validation of the Health System's Decision

Easy Implementation, Easy for Staff to Use

Central Logic proved to be the right choice for UPMC Pinnacle, starting with an easy implementation of the solution, according to Dr. Yazdanfar, who adds: "We experienced very smooth integration of the Central Logic solution with our EMR solution."

Just as importantly, he says, "We needed a transfer center solution that was easy for staff to learn how to use. That's exactly what we got. Very quickly, our transfer center was up to speed and effectively using the system. With a step-by-step checklist, Central Logic makes it so easy to capture all essential details from every call."

One of the solution's power users is Dr. Yazdanfar himself. "My day-to-day role includes reviewing pending transfers and addressing cases that are flagged by our transfer center team. Central Logic makes it easy for our agents to notify me, in real time, of an issue that needs to be resolved. I don't have to sort through hundreds of transfers to find the issue."

Robust Reporting to Fuel Vital Initiatives

With Central Logic, UPMC Pinnacle has gained reporting capabilities that far surpass what the EMR vendor was able to offer.

Whatever the question related to patient transfers, we have the answers at our fingertips. This is especially important as UPMC Pinnacle strives to boost the volume of incoming transfers in a highly competitive market.

Ramin Yazdanfar, MD
Transfer Center Medical Director, UPMC

"We know we're leaking too many patients to other health systems, and we're committed to increasing referrals and the retention of current patients. But

before we can make improvements, we need a better understanding of how many patients we're losing to competitors, why they're leaving our system, and the revenue involved. With Central Logic we can do a better job of tracking and monitoring these trends."

Data gathered through the Central Logic solution will empower UPMC Pinnacle to make improvements in other areas. For example, because the transfer of patients is such a time-sensitive endeavor, reducing patient transfer times plays a major role in the satisfaction of referring physicians and their patients.

"We have to prove ourselves every day, with every call. We'd better darn well get it right the first time. If we do, providers will call again and send more patients to us," says Dr. Yazdanfar.

More Than a Software Vendor — 'a True Partner'

In this relatively early stage of deployment, UPMC Pinnacle has just begun to realize the full potential of its partnership with Central Logic. But already there have been a number of "wins," especially in terms of optimizing transfer center processes and delivering valuable intelligence to the health system's decision-makers.

One other thing is clear to Dr. Yazdanfar: "Central Logic is more than just a software company. Their solution is also about having a true partner who has been with us every step of the way. It's also a big plus for us to know we can talk to Central Logic experts whenever we have a question. This is not a feeling we've had with other major companies."

Executive Summary

Like many other health systems today, UPMC Pinnacle faced a crucial decision regarding the selection of a transfer center partner and solution. Ultimately, the choices boiled down to Central Logic and the health system's current EMR vendor. Transfer Center Medical Director Ramin Yazdanfar, MD, framed the decision this way: "Would we choose a partner that has transfer center as its core strength, or one for which it's a sideline business?"

Following an exhaustive evaluation process, including visits to facilities using both solutions, UPMC Pinnacle chose Central Logic. This decision has been validated

after several months of experience with Central Logic as a partner. Dr. Yazdanfar cites several key advantages:

- An easy implementation process, including smooth integration with the EMR solution
- Easy for transfer center staff to use, with intuitive workflows and scripting to ensure that all important details are captured from every call
- Time stamping of calls, enabling fast identification and resolution of any issues with a patient transfer
- The ability to quickly generate a variety of valuable reports, without the need for IT department assistance
- The flexibility to tailor scripts, reports, and more to accommodate the health system's unique needs and preferences

Dr. Yazdanfar emphasizes that UPMC Pinnacle is in a relatively early phase of its experience with Central Logic and has only scratched the surface in terms of all the expected benefits. For example, the On-Call Scheduling component, when activated, will enable transfer center staff to identify, in real time, the availability of physicians and other providers in all seven hospitals.



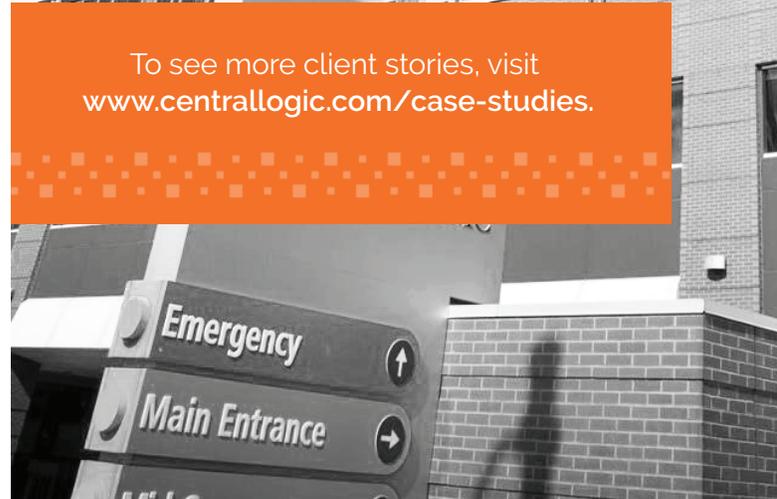
We're excited about the many ways our partnership with Central Logic will help us be even more responsive to referring physicians and enhance our ability to deliver the highest quality patient care on a timely basis.



Ramin Yazdanfar, MD
Transfer Center Medical Director, UPMC



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About Central Logic

For health systems, managing patient transfers is a life-saving endeavor. Central Logic is a pioneer in the space and was founded solely to support this mission. Our flexible, purpose-built solution provides superior real-time visibility and unmatched business intelligence to optimize the operations of health system access centers. Clients count on Central Logic to deliver strong growth, find new ways to improve patient outcomes and make their operations more effective, today and into the future. Based in Utah, Central Logic is an industry leader with a 93% customer retention rate. The company has been named a "fastest growing private company" by both Inc. 500 and Utah Business Magazine. For more information, visit www.centrallogic.com.

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