



## Customer Insights

*A continuing series in which customers discuss their experiences with CareTech Solutions' products and services*

**Sibley Memorial Hospital  
Crittenton Hospital Medical Center**

## Sourcing Strategies to Support Meaningful Use Adoption

*The following information is an excerpt from a speaking presentation given at the HIMSS12 Annual Conference by Kenda Tavakoli, CIO of Sibley Memorial Hospital, and Lynn Orfgen, retired President and CEO of Crittenton Hospital Medical Center.*

*“ Meaningful Use played a part in (my outsourcing decisions), because that was going to be my means to figure out what I could do and what I couldn’t do ... how to get help with those pieces that are not part of our core competencies.”*

**Kenda Tavakoli**  
Chief Information Officer  
Sibley Memorial Hospital  
Washington, DC

*“We’ve stayed the course very strongly to drive forward with Meaningful Use. We have a lot of support in place both inside the hospital and outside through our vendor, to support the physician and the nursing staff in driving toward full adoption of the EMR.”*

**Lynn Orfgen**  
Retired President and CEO  
Crittenton Hospital Medical Center  
Rochester, Michigan

## Keeping or Outsourcing Hospital Core Functions

As hospitals across the nation invest in and implement electronic medical records (EMRs) to satisfy Meaningful Use requirements, they must also think about their ability to successfully support clinical end-users to help ensure adoption in both the short and long run.

This creates a whole new work-stream for hospital IT departments, which are already stretched too thin. CIOs have to decide which of their IT support functions are “core” to their operations and which ones might be candidates for outsourcing to a healthcare-centric IT partner. CareTech Solutions’ sole focus on hospitals makes it a prime choice.

## Sibley Memorial Hospital: Meaningful Use Was Just One Challenge

Before Sibley Memorial Hospital recently joined a major health system, it was a stand-alone community hospital that was faced with the task of deciding how to handle the increasing pressure of the Meaningful Use timelines. The uncertainty surrounding the transition from ICD-9 to ICD-10 was another factor, as was the onset of virtualization and cloud computing, as well as housekeeping concerns like the rising cost of energy for heating and cooling.

The hospital did not have the resources it needed to deal with all the issues coming at it in a relatively short period of time. As outside pressures began to build, hospital leadership had to start looking seriously at outsourcing. Requirements for that solution were very basic – with three primary considerations:

- It must be cost-effective, working within a community hospital’s budget
- It must meet customer service needs – and even improve on the present level
- It must demonstrate improvement of business processes

## Taking a Hard Look at Hospital IT Core Functions

Sibley leadership found that the hospital was doing well with its core IT functions such as application management, project management, strategic planning and security – in short, the business of the hospital. They understood who their stakeholders were and what they needed to do. These functions would stay in-house.

But the leadership team realized it didn’t have the IT infrastructure and expertise needed, and it couldn’t afford to hire a chief technical architect. For example, end users were being inadequately served because of a help desk that was only available from about 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. If a physician came in at 10 p.m. and needed IT support, he or she couldn’t get it.

The answer for Sibley was to connect with a compatible IT outsourcing partner.

## Finding and Selecting an Outsourcing Partner

In fact, Sibley quickly narrowed its search when it focused in on CareTech Solutions – a healthcare-only IT provider with exceptional services rankings. A thorough vendor evaluation began looking at:

- Industry reputation
- Customer referrals
- Contractual specifications
- Customer interaction options
- Training and certification
- Staffing
- Reporting and data retention
- Systems
- Costs

*“CareTech is completely dedicated to hospitals and healthcare. Our cultures were already aligned in that regard because they completely understood my business and everything I was going through, and all of their other clients were going through as well.”*

**Kenda Tavakoli**  
Sibley Memorial Hospital

*“We have in our mission statement, the word “partnership.” We stress that word every day. And we have ... partnerships that help us maintain that independence.”*

**Lynn Orfgen**  
Crittenton Hospital Medical Center

## Our Valued Customers

**Sibley Memorial Hospital** in Washington, DC, is a non-profit, full-service, 318-bed acute care facility that is one of three hospitals in the community hospitals division of Johns Hopkins Medicine and has served the Washington area since 1890.

**Crittenton Hospital Medical Center** in Rochester, Michigan, is a 290-bed acute care facility providing a full continuum of clinical programs, nationally ranked for quality excellence, and with a medical staff of nearly 500 physicians.

Leadership decided they wanted an outsourcing partner like CareTech who offered flexible options to pick and choose from – they didn’t want a company to come in and do it all; they wanted to make sure that their IT staff was still the customer-facing part of the IT team. The following areas were outsourced:

- Database management
- Help desk
- Infrastructure management
- Network monitoring

### **Crittenton Hospital Medical Center: Independent and Fully Outsourced**

Originally Crittenton had a “home grown” legacy clinical IT system – a very good one, but not one that was going to take it into this century. The IT staff was small and efficient, but hospital leadership recognized the importance of IT early on, and it became a key business objective to turn the facility around, IT-wise. The hospital purchased an EMR in 2002, with the small staff struggling to get it into place. They tried buying services “a la carte” for several months, but it just wasn’t working. The decision was then made to find a partner with a lot more muscle to fully implement the EMR.

Crittenton Hospital Medical Center fully outsourced its IT in 2003 to CareTech Solutions. The hospital has since received the Most Wired Award for six years in a row, and Most Wireless Award for the last four years. In mid-2012 Crittenton met all Stage 1 requirements for Meaningful Use.

### **Costs and Results of Full IT Outsourcing**

A 2010 CHIME Cerner survey placed Crittenton Hospital Medical Center right on industry average with all HIMSS facilities, demonstrating that CHMC gained significantly in efficiency while moving toward Meaningful Use – more terminals, applications, devices in place, all supported by a smaller ratio of people.

### **Final Overview: Top 10 Tips for a Meaningful Outsourcing Relationship**

In closing, Tavakoli and Orfgen summarized their IT outsourcing experiences into a list of 10 tips to consider when in the process:

1. Ensure that the cultures of the two organizations are a good fit.
2. Understand the contracting terms and have an “out clause.”
3. Establish executive sponsorship roles; IT steering committee consisting of hospital and outsourcer leaders.
4. Open door to outsourcer executives for issue escalation when necessary.
5. Establish Service Level Agreements and measure performance based on agreed-upon metrics; make sure everything is clearly defined.
6. Expect best practices in setting IT and Meaningful Use goals, understand the impact, knowledge, project management, and address key issues.
7. Articulate a common vision and IT strategies with the business leaders.
8. Start small to reduce risk if necessary.
9. Get referrals and interview current outsourcer clients.
10. Clearly understand the reasons why you need to outsource.

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