

Massachusetts General Hospital's Department of Radiology relies on Physician Scheduler™ for open, inclusive and equitable staff scheduling

Today's healthcare professionals want greater control over their work schedules. They seek a scheduling process that is open and inclusive, one that welcomes their input, ensures equitable treatment among all staff, and provides ample opportunity for revision.

At the Department of Radiology at Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH), one of America's oldest and most acclaimed hospitals, these expectations are being addressed through Physician Scheduler,™ the industry's most comprehensive and widely used physician scheduling software.

Physician Scheduler is a new-generation scheduling product, one that leverages the Web to ensure that all employees, at any place and time, have the chance to see how all schedules — their own as well as their colleagues — are evolving, and can consider schedule changes that would better meet their needs.

By providing constant and complete access to schedules over the Internet, the Physician Scheduler system not only enhances employee satisfaction and morale, but also encourages greater teamwork and group collaboration.

"With Physician Scheduler, the scheduling process is not cloaked or hidden in secrecy," says Kathy Rowell, Practice Manager, Department of Radiology at MGH. "Because everything is open and available, the process really improves employee morale. Everyone can see that schedules are developed in an equitable manner.

"In addition, because staff can view the schedules of their colleagues, they can better plan meetings and teaching schedules, and coordinate work with others. Our staff who are involved in teaching really love this part about the system."

Currently, Physician Scheduler schedules approximately 150 staff radiologists, faculty members, and radiology residents and fellows at MGH's Radiology Department. With roots dating back to 1896 and the making of one of the first x-ray machines in the country, the Radiology Department at MGH is renowned throughout the world. With a staff of more than 70 board-certified radiologists, the department has gained distinction in virtually all areas of medical imaging and nuclear medicine.

A powerful way to improve staff efficiency and effectiveness

Before the implementation of Physician Scheduler at MGH, which occurred in the summer of 2001, the hospital's Radiology Department had very limited ability to track and manage the time and availability of its staff radiologists and residents.

"We had no reliable way of measuring physician productivity or of pinpointing the time they spent in specific clinical and academic areas in any given day," Rowell explains. "Of course, we also had no way to determine the equity of their schedules across all these areas either."

Now, through the system's automation, they have historical and real-time perspectives of everyone's work schedules and experience.

"Data capture is key for us," Rowell says. "For instance, we have our residents' schedules in the system, and we use the data to precisely track how much time they spend in each academic section to ensure that they meet their educational requirements."

Enhancing the value of information management

The information that Physician Scheduler tracks and manages can provide key insights into important workflow processes.

For instance, the Radiology Department at MGH is using data from the product to help it implement a new imaging system.

"We're upgrading our PACS (Picture Archiving and Communication System), and we are using the scheduling system to help us figure out how we want the PACS to accommodate procedures for the day," Rowell explains. "We know that the Abdominal Imaging Division assigns our physicians to work on so many MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging) procedures, CAT (Computed Axial Tomography) scans and ultra-scans in a given day. This information has helped us set up our PACS so that it can deliver this set of abdominal imaging for interpretation, in a manner that is coordinated with work assignments."

"This is a powerful system. We're using the data we get from it in ways we never previously imagined."

About Massachusetts General Hospital

Founded in 1811, the Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH) is the third oldest general hospital in the United States and the oldest and largest in New England. The 820-bed world-renowned medical center offers sophisticated diagnostic and therapeutic care in virtually every specialty and subspecialty of medicine and surgery. Each year, the MGH admits approximately 35,000 inpatients and handles more than

1 million visits in its extensive outpatient programs at the main campus and at its four health centers.

MGH conducts the largest hospital-based research program in the country. The facility is the oldest and largest teaching hospital of Harvard Medical School, and nearly all of the hospital's staff physicians are on the Harvard Medical School faculty.

About AtStaff, Inc.,

AtStaff, Inc., based in Durham, N.C., enables healthcare organizations to reduce costs, increase profitability, enhance staff recruitment and retention, and improve patient safety.

The company combines Web-based staff scheduling and staffing automation with business process improvement services to deliver proactive staff management, and establish and support best-practice methodology.

Its enterprise-wide staff scheduling, nurse scheduling and physician scheduling software systems serve more than 1,200 healthcare organizations, medical facilities, nursing departments and group practices.

AtStaff.inc

For more information about AtStaff, Inc., and its healthcare scheduling products, access www.atstaff.com, or call us toll free at 866-80STAFF, or at 919-382-8282.