

## Mount Carmel Hospital uses Automated Rostering to maximise staff resources and improve patient care

*eRostering improves efficiency for Dublin-based private hospital and supports good governance*

Mount Carmel Hospital in Dublin has replaced its traditional paper-based system for producing staff rosters with SMART workforce management solutions from Kronos. It has deployed SMART's eRostering system starting with the busier wards and finishing with the operating theatres and out-patients department – to manage complex shifts and produce efficient rosters. In a very short space of time, the hospital has noticed considerable benefits in the utilisation of nursing staff. It also has the ability to plan ahead and arrange cover for unplanned changes which results in consistently high standards of patient care.

### The Challenges

The major challenge Mount Carmel faced was instigating a significant shift in culture by promoting the benefits of eRostering. As a well-established hospital, Mount Carmel has loyal and long-standing staff who are proud of their clinical excellence. However, as times have changed, there has been far greater emphasis on helping ward sisters and nursing staff understand the importance of using automated technology to produce efficient rosters that tangibly support the smooth running of the

organisation. As a hospital reliant on a traditional paper-based system for many years, providing easy-to-understand, quality hands-on training whilst maintaining excellent patient care was an additional hurdle to be overcome. The hospital also has a higher proportion of part-time staff than is typically found within hospital organisations, many of whom hold (historic) restrictive contracts of employment.

### The Solution – A Change in Culture

Mount Carmel has deployed SMART's eRostering system across all four wards to support 210 nursing staff, manage complex shifts and produce efficient rosters that maximise the talents of highly skilled clinicians and provide fair rosters for everyone. Staff can even access the system themselves (including remote accessing) to request changes to their shifts, book holidays or report sickness leave.

The SMART solution has been sensitively configured and installed to meet Ireland's strict Trades Unions policy of consulting staff prior to changing shift patterns and rosters.



### Fast Facts

- eRostering has saved time and money
- Wards are now more efficient in the use of staff
- Real-time, accurate information strategically supports workforce planning
- Flexibility of system means it can be fine-tuned to meet the exact and changing requirements of a busy hospital environment
- Staff able to request shift swaps, apply for extra shifts and book annual leave online
- Intrinsic part of Mount Carmel's good governance framework

“SMART always produces impressive results. What attracted me first was the logical methodology the system applies to calculating staffing requirements. The technology can track and identify roster trends over any given period of time, quickly and efficiently.

The beauty of SMART lies in its total transparency. It is fair to everyone and is easily understood by nurses and non-clinicians alike. I consider it to be a vital part of our overall good governance framework.”

Dr Nigel McCarley, Chief Operating Officer, Mount Carmel Hospital

In line with Dr McCarley's own pioneering Timeframe Analysis methodology that maps a typical workload across the day and across the week and flags up what and how many staff are needed whenever there is a change in workload, SMART can be fine-tuned to Mount Carmel's own schedule.

The successful implementation of SMART, giving hard evidence of positive results, has been the catalyst for cultural change at Mount Carmel. From a strong resistance to change, staff at all levels are beginning to appreciate the benefits of eRostering.

Next on the agenda is installing SMART's patient acuity solution, Real Time Hospital, to provide a 360 degree view of all staffing requirements to minimise risk and maximise safety. It then plans to centralise all eRostering in the foreseeable future.

### **Putting Patients First**

SMART has enabled Mount Carmel to become more efficient in its use of key resources, meaning the most appropriate skills are allocated to the right wards at the right time. In addition to properly identifying workforce requirements (expressed in whole time equivalents), SMART has allowed for the proper identification of the specific skills and expertise required within discreet service environments, based on the typical patient population. SMART has also improved the capacity for managers to redeploy nursing staff across service environments as activity/acuity changes leading to a reduction in the use of 'Bank' nursing staff.

SMART Real Time Hospital acuity solution provides a continual, comprehensive overview of the hospital rosters allowing managers to quickly identify periods of either overstaffing or understaffing, based on the predetermined minimum staffing requirements within each area. This also improves management decision-making

### **Time & Cost Savings**

Mount Carmel has been able to prove the benefits of eRostering in real terms. Already, the hospital has saved significant amounts of time through the more effective management of rosters, reducing considerably the 'overstaffing' within many rosters. The time saved has released clinical skills back into patient care, where it matters most and where senior nurses excel.

SMART has improved the equity in allocating staff to shifts that attract a premium pay. The SMART scoring system automatically allocates the 'premium' shifts to staff that have the lowest score; ie. staff that have had fewer premium shifts.

The automated link to the hospital payroll has removed the requirement for managers to calculate premium payments for nursing staff, eliminates the potential for errors and further reduce the time required to manage the rostering process.

### **Management Information Aids Better Forward Planning**

The accurate, real-time information provided by the SMART system has enabled Mount Carmel to analyse their use and deployment of staff. Rather than look through paper or spreadsheet records, managers can quickly generate reports to identify the busiest times of day or year and track holiday or sickness absence and plan future rosters accordingly. SMART has also eliminated the requirement for storage of paper records of ward rosters.

### **Anticipated Additional Benefits:**

- **A greater focus on workforce planning and deployment, minimising the requirement for reactive staff adjustment**
- **Improved capacity to deliver coordinated experiential learning for nursing staff**
- **More effective control of expenditure both on permanent staff and in the use of bank nursing**

### **Move Fowards Centralised Rostering is Fair To Everyone**

Mount Carmel has plans to move towards centralised rostering in the near future to improve the cost-effectiveness of rosters and enhance the deployment of staff across all areas rather than a traditional one-ward perspective. SMART will enable staff to have a clear view of rostering across the whole organisation, allowing them to fully utilise specific skills or address potential shortages on certain wards quickly and efficiently. It will eradicate the duplication in ward management time, facilitate annual leave planning and support the integration of timesheets and absences into one system.

A centralised approach to eRostering will depersonalise the process for managers who have often built up a strong sense of camaraderie with their staff. This will bring greater transparency to the process and dictate greater equity in allocation of premium working hours, fair for everyone.

### **About Mount Carmel**

Mount Carmel offers a wide range of medical and surgical services – from maternity care and specialist clinics to surgery and a dedicated orthopaedic unit. The hospital is also proud to be registered members of the Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI) in Ireland which is a global campaign by the World Health Organisation and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

#### **SMART**

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