

Clinical Scheduling



“ I chose the template, we counted down three, two, one, and clicked send. We all rushed to the staffing office so we could see the phones start lighting up, and it was instantaneous. Within five minutes, we had signed up three people to work multiple shifts. Within 20 minutes, we had signed up about ten people for multiple shifts.”

Amy Bonin
Oregon State Hospital

OVERVIEW

Clinical scheduling is often challenging for hospitals and healthcare facilities. Studies have shown that workloads have increased for nursing positions decreasing job satisfaction, increasing clinical turnover, and decreasing patient safety. Last minute call-ins or covering vacation schedules can be costly and time-consuming. Amy Bonin, Manager for Centralized Staffing & Timekeeping at Oregon State Hospital implemented a communication system specifically to cover clinical shifts.

Before implementation it would take hours to cover one shift, now it takes just a few minutes. She breaks down the process she put in place and shares the results.

PROBLEM

The scheduling staff were so tied up trying to cover open shifts for the clinical staff they had little time for anything else, manually calling as many people as they could to fill spots. It was inefficient and demoralizing to staff who always felt behind in their duties.

SOLUTION

The Oregon State Hospital team, implemented Everbridge notifications and saw a marked decrease in last-minute scheduling, decreased patient coverage gaps, and improved job satisfaction for both administrative and clinical staff.

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ABOUT OREGON STATE HOSPITAL

Oregon State Hospital is a 24-hour facility with a centralized staffing office that also is open 24-hours a day. They handle the scheduling for seven nursing programs covering 29 units at the hospital. Overall, they are responsible for coverage for 1,100 nursing staff.

Before Everbridge, “we have three to four schedulers and they were spending literally the majority of their shift, about four or five hours, manually calling as many people as they could,” said Bonin. “We had a manual list of people that were our ‘go to’ people, and we knew that they would actually pick up the phone and say, ‘yeah I’m willing to work.’”

Bonin said there were issues with burning out the clinical staff who regularly filled in and schedulers were not able to handle other duties. For Oregon State Hospital, schedulers are administrative staff in a centralized staffing office who handle several other HR-related tasks in addition to clinical scheduling. “The general office functions weren’t getting done,” she said. “So, our reports weren’t getting completed, certainly not in a timely fashion. We were never able to look past today’s hot fire. We were never able to look at what’s happening next Tuesday? Or two weeks from now? It seemed we could never get past the current day.”

EVERBRIDGE IMPLEMENTATION

Everbridge worked with Oregon State Hospital to develop clinical groups of staffing to cover the 29 units at the hospital. Here’s what they did:

1. Establish staffing groups to send messaging to specific skillsets as needs cropped up.
2. Send out templated messages based on the preferences of the recipient. Staff could opt to be contacted either by text message (SMS messaging), via email, or by a pre-recorded phone message.
3. When an opening arose, a message would be sent with a poll. Nurses receiving the message would respond with “yes, I’m available” or “no, I’m not available”
4. The scheduling staff would then contact the available nurses to book them into the schedule
5. All responses would be tracked on a dashboard easily visible to schedulers and the responses could later be downloaded into reports to help both the Finance and Human Resources departments

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THE RESULTS

The changes were dramatic from the very first message. Bonin describes the day with her team.

“I chose the template, we counted down three, two, one, and clicked send. We all rushed to the staffing office so we could see the phones start lighting up, and it was instantaneous. The phones were ringing off the hook. We’ve never had phone calls like that. Within five minutes, we had signed up three people to work multiple shifts. Within 20 minutes, we had signed up about ten people for multiple shifts.”

When the first launch was over, they had reached over 900 staff and hired 40 shifts of overtime covering open spots over a two-week period. “This was a huge success for one message,” said Bonin.

One of the unexpected results was a larger pool of nurses to draw on for shift coverage. The group messaging allowed them to target the right message to a larger group of people who were willing to work more hours. A win for the employees and for the scheduling staff who no longer had to rely on their “go to” lists.

Now that the system is fully deployed Bonin and her staff can work predictively. “We can now staff a couple of weeks ahead instead of putting out daily fires,” she said.

The results have been dramatic. The hospital was

considering hiring additional central staffing help but found with the new system the current staff could comfortably handle the work load. In addition, clinical staff loved the benefits of the new system:

- + Clinical staff chose how and when they were contacted to fill shifts
- + Knowing schedules up to two weeks in advance made home life easier
- + Clinical floor managers reported decreased stress, knowing shifts would be covered in a timely manner
- + Improved patient care as staffing shortages became a rarity

LESSONS LEARNED

If Bonin had to do it again she would have created deeper layers of customization for groups, and done a splashier roll-out campaign to the nursing staff to help them with the transition to the new process. Overall though, Oregon State Hospital is pleased with the new scheduling process and continues to use Everbridge as their messaging platform.

Resources [This is just here to validate the lede graph statement about studies.

Nursing Workload and Patient Safety – A Human Factors Engineering Perspective: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK2657/>

About Everbridge

Everbridge, Inc. (NASDAQ: EVBG), is a global software company that provides critical communications and enterprise safety applications that enable customers to automate and accelerate the process of keeping people safe and businesses running during critical events. Everbridge is based in Boston and Los Angeles with additional offices in San Francisco, Beijing and London.

For a full product description, along with best practices and product details please see the Everbridge User Guide and Everbridge University.

