



## UpToDate Helps California's Woodland Healthcare Achieve High Marks for Patient Safety, Improve Quality of Care, and Lower Costs

Woodland Healthcare, an integrated health system, consists of Woodland Memorial Hospital (108 beds and nearly 400 medical staff) and the Woodland Clinic (more than 100 providers). Built on a proud tradition of excellence in patient care that dates back more than 100 years, Woodland Healthcare is ranked one of the country's top health systems for quality, and was named one of the safest hospitals in California by a recent national survey.

More than ever before, success in healthcare is predicated on an unwavering focus on quality outcomes and patient safety. That's certainly true for Woodland Healthcare, an integrated health system comprised of Woodland Memorial Hospital (108 beds and nearly 400 medical staff) and the Woodland Clinic (more than 100 providers). Built on a proud tradition of excellence in patient care that dates back more than 100 years, Woodland Healthcare is ranked one of the country's top health systems for quality, and was recently named one of the safest hospitals in California by a recent national survey.

Driving that pursuit of excellence is an institution-wide commitment to clinical decision support (CDS), spearheaded by Michael Patmas, M.D., chief medical officer at Woodland Healthcare. For more than 12 years, Patmas has been an avid CDS proponent as a sponsor and user of UpToDate®.

"When I joined Woodland Healthcare, I was very pleased to learn that our clinic provides subscriptions to UpToDate to our physician members through our medical malpractice insurer," he said. "Our first motivation at

Woodland Healthcare was to improve patient care, in addition to capturing a compelling discount in the malpractice premiums we pay, and I knew there was far more potential value for us. So, one of my first moves was to expand our subscriptions to our nurse practitioners and physician assistants. Next, we sought to increase awareness across our clinical staff that we had this great resource available. We educated our staff, gave demonstrations, and even held Grand Rounds about UpToDate. At every Quality Committee meeting, I distribute summaries of previously discussed topics."

Patmas continues, "When we deployed UpToDate in our Emergency Department, we saw direct variable costs decrease 11 percent in the first year. Our readmission rates are low, and mortality and HAI rates are less than 2 percent. Overall, our quality, margins, and utilization rates have all improved. Now, can we point to explicit data tying that directly to UpToDate? No, but in my career, I've deployed or championed UpToDate in three separate organizations, and in each instance, things improved significantly and

quickly. There's no question in my mind that UpToDate has a significant and positive impact on cost and quality.

"Today, Woodland Healthcare is actively using UpToDate to achieve significant improvements in the quality of care, improve ED performance, and even increase its success rates in Recovery Audit Contractor (RAC) appeals. We were successfully able to appeal three RAC audits, which included management of COPD and stroke. The decision for these to be overturned was based on the most current evidence found in UpToDate," said Patmas.

"Ultimately, we changed the culture of our health system. For instance, we had an oncologist who was initially skeptical, feeling there couldn't be anything useful to his practice. So I carefully pointed out that leading oncologists were using UpToDate and that it merited a closer look. He gave it another try and then came back at our next meeting and said, 'This really IS great.' I now routinely have doctors approaching me and saying, 'Hey, this is a great tool.'"

#### A KEY TO THE CULTURE, A KEY TO CLINICAL SUCCESS

Patmas noted that UpToDate usage is now fully integrated into the typical daily workflow of Woodland Healthcare physicians. "It's embedded within our culture," he said. "Here, it's the norm to refer to UpToDate when a clinical question arises and it's part of our daily lexicon. Our thought leaders, specialists, and veterans – they're all champions and supporters of UpToDate. In fact, we conducted a survey to see what our actual

usage is and found that 95 percent of our physicians say they're using UpToDate."

UpToDate is also a critical component when making shared decisions with patients about their care.

"[UpToDate] has information specific to patients on topics of interest concerning their disease or condition. The information can be emailed or printed, which is helpful while discussing care plans with patients. By providing information and reviewing it with patients, it helps us as physicians establish 'best practices,'" said Marcia Gollober, MD, physician at Woodland Healthcare.

According to Patmas, Woodland Healthcare clinicians are taking advantage of UpToDate to achieve advantages on several fronts. During patient encounters, physicians, PAs, and NPs can consult UpToDate to facilitate clinical decisions and determine the optimal course of care. "UpToDate gives our physicians greater confidence in their decisions," said Patmas, "because it's based on such a broad, deep, and current body of clinical knowledge, research, and best practices. It helps us make the right patient-management decisions the first time. That improves patient safety and helps to avert any unforeseen costs.

"I believe it ought to be a standard tool throughout healthcare – including providers and health plans, who need to ensure their coverage decisions are based on updated information. When you consider those important factors, the ROI on UpToDate is very high. I can't fathom why any hospital or health system would not encourage widespread adoption of UpToDate. There's no question: Adopting UpToDate is the best decision I've made in my career as a healthcare leader."



Dr. Michael Patmas

*"Throughout my career, I've repeatedly seen significant improvements in the quality of care when physicians adopt UpToDate."*

Dr. Michael Patmas  
Chief Medical Officer  
Woodland Healthcare



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