

Solutions for Oncology

Lynx Mobile® & iKnowMed™: Working Together to Optimize Practice Efficiencies and Growth

Case Study: North Shore Oncology Hematology Associates

Chicago cancer care provider streamlines workflow and saves time with integrated technology solutions, impacting more than just the bottom line.

AT A GLANCE

Need: Automate manual processes throughout office workflow to reduce administrative burdens, control costs, and allow for more time with patients.

Approach: (1) Utilize Lynx Mobile for improved inventory management and charge capture; (2) Implement iKnowMed EHR for more accessible information and enhanced patient care; (3) Activate EHR Orders Integration feature to leverage benefits provided by the seamless integration of iKnowMed and Lynx Mobile.

Results: With Lynx Mobile, North Shore was able to enhance their just-in-time purchasing process, which allows them to stock appropriate on-hand inventory across two locations. Furthermore, they reported a 2–5% increase in charge capture for eight physicians.¹ By implementing iKnowMed, the practice reported increased efficiencies due to accessibility of patient information, resulting in enhanced quality care and patient safety. Together, the two technologies enabled clinical staff to more accurately record interactions with patients, impacting more than just the bottom line.

“We are very pleased with our relationship with McKesson Specialty Health. We value their partnership because their technology and resources are well-aligned with our vision to improve quality care in the community oncology environment.”

*— Michael K. Cochran, MD,
Managing Partner at North
Shore Oncology Hematology
Associates*



“With Lynx Mobile, we are able to continue to reduce product on our shelves and we always have the right supply available when we need it, so patient care is never compromised. In addition, we’ve seen a 2–5% improvement in charge capture, which is a pretty significant increase if you consider that just one missed, unaccounted-for drug could equate to thousands of dollars out the window.”

— Pete Muhlbach, Practice Administrator at North Shore Oncology Hematology Associates¹

Overview

For more than 25 years, North Shore Oncology Hematology Associates, LTD has been a leading cancer care provider, with eight physicians serving the north and northwest suburbs of Chicago. The importance they place on quality care and patient safety is evident in how they run their practice today as well as in the strategic business decisions they make to remain sustainable for years to come. They are one of a small group of practices in the Chicago area certified by QOPI® (Quality Oncology Practice Initiative), a voluntary, self-assessment and improvement program launched by ASCO. The practice was already using the Lynx Station® for inventory management, then in 2007, they upgraded to the Lynx Mobile® inventory management, charge capture and reporting solution. In 2011, realizing the need to have a certified, oncology-specific electronic health record (EHR) system to improve workflow efficiencies and help them achieve CMS’ EHR Incentives, they implemented iKnowMed™. Both Lynx Mobile and iKnowMed have enhanced North Shore’s billing and inventory processes and also support the practice’s vision for excellence in patient care and safety.

Lynx Mobile Streamlines Inventory Management Processes and Dramatically Improves Cash Flow

In 2007 North Shore transitioned to Lynx Mobile from the Lynx Station technology to help them further streamline their inventory management and purchasing processes. This decision saved the practice money and a lot of guesswork. “Before Lynx Mobile, we tried to determine whether we had the right inventory by manually counting what patients needed for their next visit, based on paper records of treatment history. This led to inaccuracies and a greater potential for over-purchasing,” explains Pete Muhlbach, Practice Administrator.

By implementing Lynx Mobile, North Shore is able to streamline their “just-in-time” purchasing process, which allows them to

purchase only the drugs needed to treat patients scheduled in a specified time frame. Once a patient is treated, the nursing staff can “queue” treatments (or schedule in advance) to calculate the drugs needed for upcoming appointments. Utilizing the “just-in-time” purchasing method, North Shore is able to continue reducing overall inventory without compromising their quality of care.

Lynx Mobile also positioned the practice for more accurate billing by helping to ensure that all drug charges related to a patient’s treatment are captured. When a drug is dispensed for a patient, Lynx Mobile captures the dosage given to that patient and calculates any associated waste.

As an added benefit, when the practice identifies variances in inventory, Lynx Mobile reporting helps them pinpoint when the variance occurred, allowing them to easily locate the discrepancy and reconcile it. According to Cathy Semerau, Nurse Supervisor, Lynx Mobile’s reporting tools give her staff peace of mind that nothing was overlooked. They were able to match inventory based on physical counts compared to what is charged out, virtually eliminating slippage. “Before Lynx Mobile, it was easy to miss charges by administering a drug and not recording it for billing purposes. We had to keep a separate, manual log in the patient’s paper chart for waste,” says Semerau. “With all of this automatically calculated in Lynx Mobile, we were able to greatly reduce missed charges by reviewing the inventory reconciliation reports at the end of each day to catch any discrepancies.”

As a result of Lynx Mobile’s charge capture capabilities, North Shore has seen a 2–5% improvement to their bottom line due to fewer missed charges across all eight physicians and both locations!

iKnowMed Enhances Patient Care through Timely Access to Information

With the support of Lynx Mobile, by 2011 North Shore had a solid infrastructure in place to improve inventory management

and charge capture. Yet they were still challenged with inefficiencies posed by a paper-based patient record system. After comparing leading, web-based certified EHR systems in the market, North Shore ultimately decided that iKnowMed would best meet their needs because it had an established user base of more than 1,000 physicians and was developed with input from the oncology physicians who use it. The practice also required an EHR that would seamlessly integrate with Lynx Mobile so they could optimize workflow efficiencies for chemotherapy ordering, administration, and reporting.

Arguably the greatest impact iKnowMed has had on North Shore's day-to-day operations is the instant accessibility it provides to patient records. Patient data is electronically available to multiple users from any online location, including patient demographics, prior and future treatment information, radiation treatment, tumor markers, reports, lab result trends and other patient information. Instead of spending time tracking down paper charts and trying to interpret hand-written notes, physicians, nurses and billing staff can access patient information exactly when they need it. Nurses can easily determine by looking at the flow sheet whether treatment has been approved before administering it, and billing staff can quickly determine if they need to follow-up with the patient's insurance company to ensure coverage and reimbursement to the practice. "The workflow efficiencies have made everyone's lives easier," says Theresa Nicholson, Director of Operations.

North Shore has also experienced greater efficiencies with lab trending due to the automation benefits of the lab interface. "When we had paper charts, our staff used more than one reference lab. Our staff had to sort through the various lab results and manually file them in the appropriate patient charts. Also, in order to look at lab trends, a physician would have to review the paper charts and manually flip through

the labs to determine the best course of treatment for a patient. Now, the physician just has to look at one screen in iKnowMed to see everything. All the lab results are automatically populated into the patient's record, so it's easy to view the patient's CBCs before approving the day's treatment and sending the order to Lynx Mobile for the drugs to be mixed," shares Muhlbach.

Additionally, iKnowMed's charge capture functionality complements Lynx Mobile by calculating Evaluation & Management (E&M) codes as well as chemotherapy administration codes based on the documentation in the system. This has provided an additional control feature for the practice. Nicholson explains: "Previously in Lynx Mobile, at the time of dispense, we selected a chemotherapy administration code based on how long we anticipated the treatment would take. Now that we can document start and stop times in iKnowMed, it automatically calculates the chemotherapy administration codes so we can be sure that we are accurately capturing the time associated with the patient's treatment. There is no need to worry about going back in and adjusting the actual infusion time. As a result we can reduce the potential for errors and inaccurate charges."

Lynx Mobile and iKnowMed Unite for a Comprehensive, More Accurate Approach to Chemotherapy Administration

When North Shore went live with iKnowMed in 2011, they were among the first to benefit from EHR Orders Integration. This feature allows information to flow seamlessly between iKnowMed and Lynx Mobile in real-time, to help reduce errors and save staff time when preparing and administering chemotherapy treatments. In addition, just-in-time purchasing capabilities are enhanced because iKnowMed populates Lynx Mobile with *planned* orders already entered into the EHR, instead of queuing a patient in Lynx Mobile based on treatment *history*. New patient treatments and

"The convenience and flexibility that iKnowMed provides has been invaluable, especially when I need to access patient records while away from the office. When I am on rounds at the hospital, I can check a patient's history and lab results online, ensuring safe and uninterrupted care."

— Dean G. Tsarwhas, MD,
Physician at North Shore
Oncology Hematology
Associates

“It is really important to have a physician leader to drive practice-wide initiatives and move them forward. If you don’t have all physicians working together to adapt to new systems, you risk a counter-productive environment that could inhibit progress. As they use the technology more and more, they truly start to realize the benefits available.”

— Pete Muhlbach

changes to existing patients’ regimens are immediately available in Lynx Mobile, which improves the accuracy of drug purchasing and cash flow. “This feature lets us accurately anticipate and order only the drugs needed for the patient’s next treatment,” says Semerau.

Additionally, because a nurse can see any changes to an order in real-time prior to dispensing, patient safety is enhanced. “We don’t have to rely on what was done historically, or on paper orders, which may have changed. The interface ensures accuracy and in turn, increases patient safety,” notes Semerau.

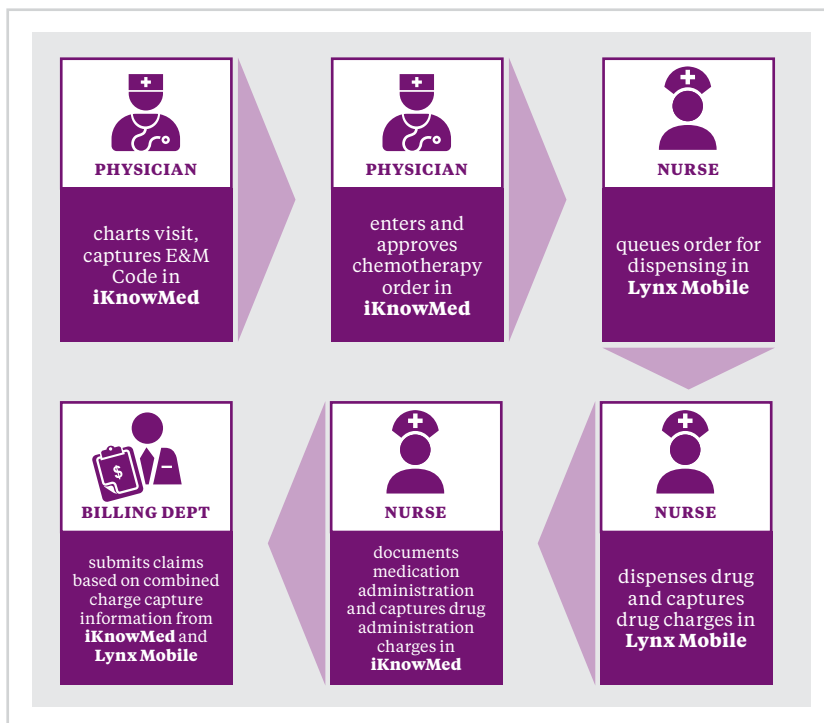
Bringing iKnowMed and Lynx Mobile together in a singular workflow also optimizes the charge capture benefits demonstrated by each system. Upon dispensing, data for the drugs and associated waste is now sent automatically from Lynx Mobile to iKnowMed. This drug data is then combined with the calculated chemotherapy administration and E&M codes, and sent through an interface to the practice management system for final review and billing, leading to improved charge entry and billing accuracies. “There is no need for duplicate data entry, which eliminates the risk of transposing numbers in the two systems. It’s also a great double-check to ensure all charges are accounted for,” comments Nicholson.

Looking Ahead

The North Shore staff attributes much of their success with McKesson Specialty Health’s technology solutions to the structured implementation training and assistance they received, as well as the ongoing support from their own senior management. “It is really important to have a physician leader to drive practice-wide initiatives and move them forward,” advises Muhlbach. “If you don’t have all physicians working together to adapt to new systems, you risk a counter-productive environment that could inhibit progress. As they use the technology more and more, they truly start to realize the benefits available.”

With the improvements in patient safety and the time- and money-savings they have already realized through Lynx Mobile and iKnowMed, North Shore is looking forward to continued success with McKesson technology. “We are very pleased with our relationship with McKesson Specialty Health. We value their partnership because their technology and resources are well-aligned with our vision to improve quality care in the community oncology environment,” says Dr. Cochran.

EHR Orders Integration



Learn More Today

To learn more about Lynx Mobile and iKnowMed, call 800.482.6700, option 4, email us at msh.providers@mckesson.com, or visit www.mckessonspecialtyhealth.com/oncology.

¹ Similar results not guaranteed and will vary by practice.