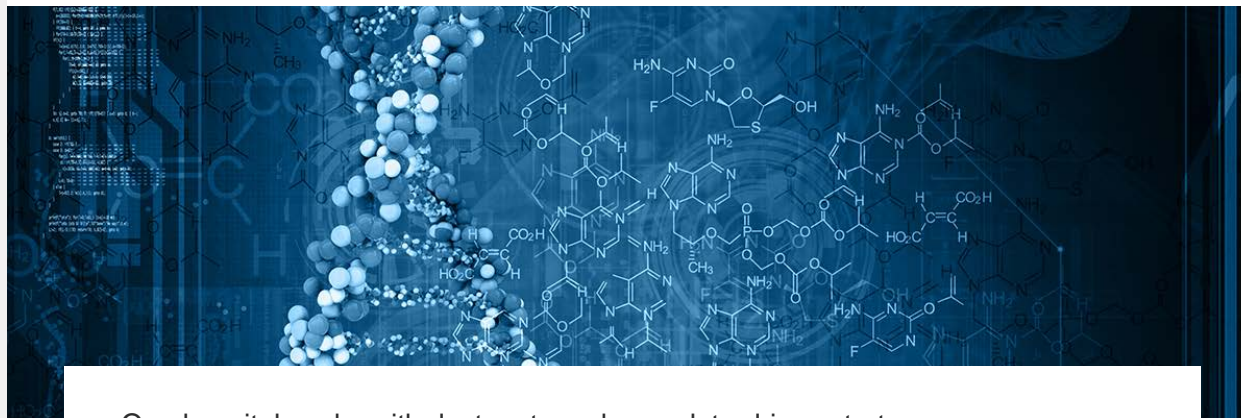


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One hospital works with doctors to embrace data-driven strategy

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by
Ed Burns
Senior News Writer

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Any hospital's data analytics strategy has to involve physician performance measurement. But as a hospital in Georgia found out, doctors aren't always eager to put their performance on the line.

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An old saw says you can't improve what you don't measure, and nowhere is this more true than in healthcare. The industry, which has long been beset by quality and cost issues, is still relatively new to electronic data collection, and many in the field hope that data will pave the way toward a better future.

There's just one problem: Many doctors don't like the idea of having their **performance measured** as part of a data-driven strategy.

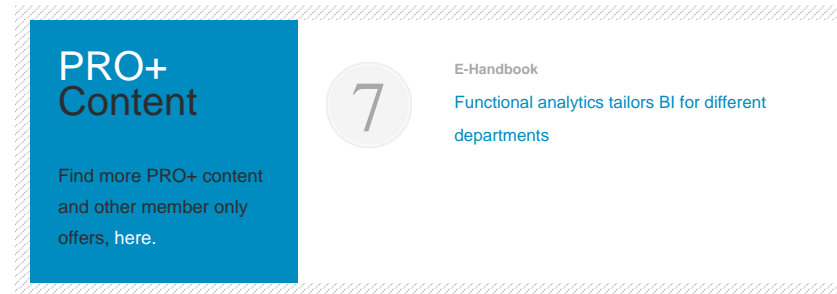
"The challenge with physicians is always the buy-in to data," said Beth Grimes, director of enterprise data analytics at Gwinnett Medical Center in Georgia. "It really is all about getting physicians to look at a higher level of information."

Gwinnett operates two hospital facilities in the cities of Lawrenceville and Duluth, plus various medical centers in other locations. About a year ago, it implemented a **business intelligence system** from **Dimensional Insight Inc.** that lets the hospital track physician performance.

Grimes and her team are looking at things like how long patients stay in intensive care units, how much antibiotic medication patients receive and the average patient length of stay. The goal is to ensure that physicians are following evidence-based treatment guidelines in order to improve treatment outcomes and reduce costs. Physician leaders as well as hospital administrators are the primary users of the BI tool.

Today, there is pretty good **adoption of the BI reports** among clinical teams, and most

physicians have embraced the data-driven strategy. But this wasn't initially the case. Grimes said most clinical staff members were used to thinking about things in terms of their specific roles in treating a patient. Specialists tend to take ownership only of the area in which they specialize. But most of the metrics the hospital is tracking reflect more general team-based outcomes.



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Grimes said it took some effort to get physicians on board with having their performance tracked as part of a team rather than an individual.

Part of the process of getting clinical staff on board was identifying physicians in leadership roles who were [ready to embrace the data-driven strategy](#). Grimes said having doctors talk to other doctors about the importance of this arrangement made clinicians more receptive to the message than they would have been had administrators forced it on them.

"If we can get those physician champions in place, they make a big impact," Grimes said. "It's not administration saying you've got to make changes."

Once Grimes and her team built that initial base of support, clinicians' natural competitiveness took over. She said nobody wanted to be the first to embrace the [new data analytics strategy](#), but nobody wanted to be the last, either. Once people saw which way the wind was blowing, they oriented themselves in the right direction.

Grimes said it wasn't easy getting the clinical staff on board with this kind of measurement, but she believes it will bear fruit in the form of improved quality and lower costs, which will make it worth it. "No one group can make changes in a box," she said. "It takes a full team effort, and they really are working more collaboratively."



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- STEP-3: Decompose the business model that reflects the business strategy, especially within the context of the digital age
- STEP-4: Identify the business processes that reflect the business model
- STEP-5: Map the data landscape and the organisation units
- STEP-6: Using the data strategy framework as a foundation, formulate the data-driven-strategy

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