

## Care Communications & The Medical Center of Arlington, TX

### *Interim HIM Management*

#### About the Medical Center of Arlington (MCA):

The Medical Center of Arlington (MCA) has 387 beds and is the only acute-care, full-service hospital in south Arlington, TX. Nearly 500 board certified or board eligible physicians representing more than 40 specialties are on staff. MCA is designated a Nurse-Friendly™ hospital by the Texas Nursing Association. MCA is JCAHO accredited as the only Primary Stroke Center in Tarrant County, and is the only Certified Chest Pain Center in the greater Arlington area. MCA is an award-winning facility recently recognized by the Texas Medical Foundation for quality in cardiac care. For more information visit [www.medicalcenterarlington.com/](http://www.medicalcenterarlington.com/).

#### Overview:

MCA needed an interim health information management (HIM) director while their current director was out on sick leave. In order to keep the HIM and other departments running efficiently, MCA sought out the HIM expertise and interim management services of Care Communications. During this period the assistant director left to accept a position closer to her home.

#### Challenges:

1. Identify an interim director with exceptional HIM management skills who could lead this influential department until the HIM director returned from sick leave and, assist the hospital in their search and later the orientation of a new HIM assistant director.
2. Maintain timelines and meet implementation goals related to several essential HIM initiatives that could either improve or significantly hinder the organization's health depending on success or failure.

Example: MCA had begun to transition to a remote coding system during this interim period and needed to keep this project on track.

3. Prepare the HIM department for several upcoming surveys

MCA was scheduled to undertake several surveys including corporate JCAHO mock survey; JCAHO Stroke survey; Chest Pain accreditation survey; JCAHO accreditation survey.

## Solutions:

1. Care Communications provided MCA with an interim HIM director, initially for a six-month engagement, possessing the necessary skills and experienced in leading HIM departments.
2. Care Communications' interim HIM director implemented organizational and schedule changes to help keep MCA's critical HIM initiatives on track:

### Transition to remote coding:

- i. Developed and implemented a hospital-wide discharge chart reconciliation policy; worked closely with each department to ensure the success of this new process.
  - ii. Ensure that the corporate timeline for routing charts to the scanning staff was met.
3. Care Communications' interim HIM director prepared the HIM department for each survey. She also worked with the physicians to reduce the percent of delinquent medical records.

## Results:

1. Care Communications' interim HIM director fit in well at MCA, so well that the organization took all the time it needed to find just the right person for the director and assistant director positions. The interim period extended beyond six months to 18 months. (The HIM Director resigned while out on sick leave.)
2. MCA's critical HIM initiatives remained on track

### The transition to a remote coding environment was successfully completed:

- i. MCA successfully changed its processes for 24-hour submission of charts for coding across many departments, including in-patient, ER and observation.
  - ii. Once the discharge chart reconciliation processes was in place and fine tuned, 100 percent of the in-patient, observation, day surgery and ER charts were made available to the scanning team, within 24 hours of discharge.
3. MCA passed each survey

*For more information on Care Communications' remote MPI cleanup or its many other health information management services, visit [CareCommunications.com](https://www.carecommunications.com).*