Encore, A Quintiles Company, Evaluates Kettering Health Network Information System Staffing Levels

CHALLENGE

Encore was engaged to provide KHN with an Information System Organization (IS) staffing evaluation that included evaluation of the Epic Symphony project as well as the IS organization in general. Specifically, the evaluation included:

- Collecting and reviewing existing KHN Business and IS strategic planning documents, as well as Symphony tactical planning documents to develop an understanding of the strategic goals for the organization and the responsibilities of IS to those goals

- Compiling and reviewing the list of planned IT projects and initiatives

- Reviewing existing project charters (other than the Epic project), service level agreements or other commitments made by IS to the organization

- Clarifying specific objectives for the implementation in terms of functionality, timeline, and budget requirements

- Evaluating appropriate IS staffing levels and skill mix to meet the service levels expected by KHN users, while anticipating the changing needs of healthcare as a result of health reform

- Determining (at a high level) any gaps in planned IS project objectives with respect to preparing and supporting the organization to meet short-term challenges presented by health care reform and other recent industry trends

- Developing an evaluation of staffing needs by role for the future with recommendations including consideration for internal staff, vendor staff and consultants as appropriate

Deliverables for this project include:

- An IS staffing evaluation with recommendations as described above

- Benchmarking against similar organizations and industry metrics, along with a detailed listing of all sources (Gartner, Chime, HIMSS) and assumptions used in generating the staffing evaluations and recommendations, with identification of any estimates used that will require further analysis and refinement to improve the level of accuracy

- A deliverable that outlines the objectives and organizational needs of KHN detailing the staffing and structure required to meet these goals along with recommendations, as appropriate, which will serve as a support document for discussion of the organizational, operational, and budget requirements

SOLUTION

Encore staff conducted a number of one-on-one and group interviews with key IS and operations staff to ascertain, at a high level, the schedules, demands, and issues associated with the IS organization in general and the Epic Symphony project specifically. Encore used industry benchmarks from Gartner and Computer Economics, its Epic practice experiences with similar clients and its specific knowledge of IT organizations to evaluate the current and future staffing needs of the Kettering Health Network.

Key takeaways from this evaluation include:

- The KHN IS leadership staff is experienced, knowledgeable, creative, and managing day-to-day tasks in a reasonable manner, given the current staffing levels

- The Epic Symphony project has required significant resources from both the KHN enterprise and especially the IS organization and has put strain on the organization. Staff in many areas both Epic and non-Epic related is stressed by the volume of work. Priorities and accountabilities are difficult to maintain given the multiple demands on the organization (i.e. maintenance for legacy systems and build, optimization, and support for Epic)

ABOUT KETTERING HEALTH NETWORK

Kettering Health Network (KHN), named for the renowned inventor Charles F. Kettering, strives to live up to Kettering's legacy of innovation every day. KHN is comprised of eight hospitals in Kettering, Ohio. With the strength of over 10,000 employees and 2,000 physicians, KHN has been named three consecutive years to the Thomson-Reuters' Top 10 Health Networks in America.

Since mid-2009, KHN and the IS organization have been in multiple and increasingly labor-intensive stages of implementing the Epic Enterprise System (Symphony) for its eight hospitals, over fifty healthcare centers and its owned and some affiliated physician practices. At the same time, the IS organization has been supporting the legacy systems, many of which will continue after the Epic Symphony project.