Quinte Health Care

Uncovering opportunities to enhance patient care with better resource allocation

Overview

The need
With the Canadian provincial Ministries of Health moving towards patient based funding, Quinte Health Care (QHC) wanted finer control of an increasingly complex budgeting process.

The solution
By deploying the Canrock Performance Management Solution For Hospitals & Healthcare Providers based on IBM® Cognos® Express software, QHC automated and formalized budgeting across the organization.

The benefit
Through unprecedented visibility, granularity and accountability in budgeting, QHC can easily identify ways to better allocate resources, helping the organization maximize service levels to patients.

For healthcare organizations, failing to make the most of your resources can have very real consequences for patient welfare – but if budgeting data is locked up in spreadsheets, how do you spot opportunities to improve resource allocation?

Quinte Health Care (QHC) asked itself this very question, and came to the conclusion that it was time for a change. The organization implemented a new, formalized budgeting process – delivering greater visibility and control to make better decisions about where resources are most needed.

Stretching resources further

QHC's finance division faces the complicated task of managing budgets for 250 diverse departments across four major hospitals. With the Canadian provincial Ministries of Health moving towards a procedure-based funding model and away from funding based on the previous year's budget, the finance team knew it would need to tackle more complex budgeting demands than ever before, and did not know if its existing approach was up to the challenge.

Angela Abram, Director of Financial Systems at Quinte Health Care, explains, "Previously, we relied on spreadsheets for budgeting – 250 of these to be exact! Each of these spreadsheets needed to be manually pre-populated, submitted and consolidated, a time-consuming and error-prone process."

"We found that our financial analysts were spending more time making the budgeting process work than on analysis," she continues, "As a result, we ran the risk of overlooking departments that were under- or over-resourced, potentially missing opportunities to enhance patient care."

Solution components

Software
- IBM® Cognos® Express
- Canrock Performance Management Solution For Hospitals & Healthcare Providers

IBM Business Partner
- Canrock Solutions Inc.

Running thorough diagnostics

The team set out to define the goals for a new budgeting solution, working closely with a large stakeholder group within the organization to understand how to ensure rapid uptake and maximum benefit to all.

Brad Harrington, Vice President and CFO at QHC, says, "We released an RFP [request for proposal] that outlined our objectives: a high adoption rate, complex staff budgeting logic, the ability to drill down to all levels of very detailed budgets and a customized work flow that would help us track budgets and formalize the approval process. Canrock Solutions won the public procurement process with their Canrock Performance Management Solution For Hospitals & Healthcare Providers, which incorporates IBM Cognos Express software."

Administering the cure

QHC tasked IBM Advanced Business Partner Canrock Solutions with deploying the solution in time for the organization's next budgeting cycle – a very tight deadline.

Barry Hillier, Director of Information Systems and Knowledge Management at QHC adds, "We did not make it easy for Canrock: asking them to get the solution up and running within just two and a half months – a month less than they would have preferred! To their immense credit, Canrock delivered not only the required solution within the allotted time, but even some nice-to-have features we were not expecting."

Canrock Solutions supported QHC with in-depth training and support for users, ensuring rapid uptake of the new approach to budgeting at the organization. In place of spreadsheets, QHC now relies on a web-based solution that offers managers unprecedented control over the budgets that they work on.

Angela Abram says, "By investing time in bringing managers along with us on this journey, we have succeeded in showing them the true benefits of the Canrock and Cognos solution. The buy-in has been tremendous, and the feedback extremely positive."

Healthier outlook

Automating key parts of the budgeting process, the solution helps QHC's finance team work more efficiently and contributes to a lower level of risk.

> *"Armed with insights from IBM Cognos software, we can make complex decisions like staffing changes supported by accurate data and calculations."*
>
> — Brad Harrington, Vice President and CFO, Quinte Health Care

Angela Abram comments, "Previously, implementing an organization-wide change to our underlying budgeting assumptions meant making changes to spreadsheets one-by-one, which could take a few analysts more than a day. Now, a single person can affect the change in just a few minutes. Removing the human element from this kind of work also hugely reduces the risk of error, allowing us to be confident in the accuracy of our budgets."

The solution enables greater visibility and granularity of budgets across the organization, driving better allocation of resources. A new formalized approvals process introduces unprecedented accountability around budgeting decisions.

Brad Harrington elaborates, "IBM Cognos software enables us to drill down deep within budgets, eliminating any ambiguity around expected expenditure. Armed with this sort of insight, we can make complex decisions like staffing changes supported by accurate data and calculations. And because we know exactly who has signed off what, we can spot opportunities to challenge leaders to do things differently and work more efficiently."

Moving faster

QHC is already seeing the impact of the Canrock and IBM solution on the time needed to create annual budgets, as Angela Abram explains, "We succeeded in finalizing this year's budget two weeks ahead of time, even though we were implementing and training users on a brand-new system. In the future, we expect even bigger time savings, as users get more familiar with the solution."

Brad Harrington concludes, "Quinte Health Care expects to grow into the Canrock and IBM solution, and see this as only the beginning of our journey. The solution is well-suited to accommodate changes in the Canadian healthcare industry, helping us prepare for the future. As we develop the tool further, and embed it further into our everyday operations, we see the potential for it to reveal even more ways to make the most of our resources and ultimately serve patients better."

About Canrock Solutions Inc.

Canrock Solutions is a leading planning and performance management service provider that leverages powerful IBM Business Analytics technology to deliver reporting, budgeting and forecasting solutions that simply work.

To learn more about products, services and solutions from Canrock Solutions, please visit www.canrocksolutions.com

About Quinte Healthcare

Quinte Health Care (QHC) has 1,800 staff members and 320 medical staff who provide a wide range of high-quality health care services to a region of 160,000 residents. Care is provided through four hospitals – QHC Belleville General Hospital, QHC North Hastings Hospital, QHC Prince Edward County Memorial Hospital and QHC Trenton Memorial Hospital – and includes inpatient services, four emergency departments, operating rooms, a rehabilitation day hospital, children's treatment center, ambulatory care clinics, community mental health programs and a range of diagnostic services.

About IBM Business Analytics

IBM Business Analytics software delivers data-driven insights that help organizations work smarter and outperform their peers. This comprehensive portfolio includes solutions for business intelligence, predictive analytics and decision management, performance management, and risk management.

Business Analytics solutions enable companies to identify and visualize trends and patterns in areas, such as customer analytics, that can have a profound effect on business performance. They can compare scenarios, anticipate potential threats and opportunities, better plan, budget and forecast resources, balance risks against expected returns and work to meet regulatory requirements. By making analytics widely available, organizations can align tactical and strategic decision-making to achieve business goals.

For more information

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Business Analytics software

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