

## Bronson Healthcare Group: *Setting the Stage to Support the Continuum of Care*

### Business need: Technology solutions to support the continuum of care

With three hospitals, a Level 2 trauma center, 190 employed physicians, a regional reference lab, and plans to pursue business partnerships with unaffiliated physician practices, Bronson Healthcare Group in Kalamazoo, Michigan, placed heavy demands on its IT systems. When the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) became a reality, Bronson had to take a hard look at its environment and assess whether its IT systems could support the new meaningful-use requirements.

### Challenge: Many systems, minimal integration

Bronson had two deeply entrenched clinical systems that had been in place at two of its hospitals for more than 15 years. The organization's ancillary departments relied on niche systems that provided high functionality within departments but fell short in sharing data with other units. In the meantime, Bronson's expansion plans would add to its existing integration challenges.

Whether it stayed with its current systems or chose a replacement, Bronson needed to find a way to grow without compromising its commitment to clinical excellence. Success hinged on two key factors:

1. **Patient-centered care** — Bronson's electronic medical record (EMR) must present a complete patient story in all hand-off communications, no matter where the patient presented for care.
2. **Clinician adoption** — Bronson needed all of its departments and facilities to rapidly embrace any new technology.

### Solution: Evaluate systems from the patient's perspective

Bronson worked with Dearborn Advisors to put patient-centric care and clinician adoption at the center of its system evaluation. The two organizations used their combined expertise to reengineer the vendor selection process, and their own expectations along the way. Bronson's leadership in quality provided the project vision while Dearborn's expertise in vendor selection and end-user adoption provided a framework for the process.

The two groups identified Bronson's commitment to patients as priority number one and determined that Bronson's existing, disconnected IT systems, were not up to the task. From there, Dearborn and Bronson worked together to develop selection criteria around a patient-centered care continuum. They rewrote system requirements around the Institute of Medicine's STEEP criteria, which calls for care that is Safe, Timely, Effective, Efficient, Equitable, and Patient-centered.

Dearborn helped Bronson turn vendor selection into an opportunity to engage clinicians across the organization in its patient-care initiatives. "Dearborn's physician-adoption expertise was very important. They helped us stay focused on the continuum of care at all stages of vendor selection," says Donna Roach, FHMISS, CHCIO, Bronson's Vice President of Information Technology and Chief Information Officer. The Bronson-Dearborn team recruited clinicians to participate in each stage of the process: first creating patient-centric care scenarios, and then using them to evaluate vendors.

Physicians and nurses at first ranked system criteria differently, based on their typical activities and interactions with patients. The use of STEEP criteria was the unifying foundation for an objective and patient-centric approach to the vendor evaluation. With the understanding that patient needs are key to adoption, Dearborn worked with the clinicians to look at systems through the lens of patient care. By the time Bronson invited vendors to the table, all of its key players were ready to evaluate systems as a true team. The process resulted in a level of end-user engagement not typically seen until much later in the EMR lifecycle.



- Patient-centered care and clinician adoption—the center of system evaluation
- Vendor Selection—an opportunity to engage clinicians across the organization in patient-care initiatives.



Dearborn Advisors, LLC



Bronson Healthcare Group

## Setting the Stage to Support the Continuum of Care

### Vision

- ◆ To transform vendor selection into a unifying process
- ◆ To set the stage for a true continuum of care
- ◆ To be a national leader in healthcare quality

### Results: Quality across the continuum of care

Bronson selected an enterprise system that aligns with the organization’s strategic goals and commitment to STEEEP. Rather than experiencing a setback by replacing its existing systems, Bronson is now in a better position to realize its vision of being a national leader in healthcare quality.

By incorporating the selection process into the overall IT plan and involving more than 150 end-users in the decision, Bronson and Dearborn transformed vendor selection into a unifying process and set the stage for a true continuum of care.

- ◆ Physicians, nurses, and clinicians share the vision of an enterprise system that connects care providers around patient needs.
- ◆ Departments are ready to give up their “best-of-breed” systems for a system that supports the full continuum of care.
- ◆ Clinicians and administrators at all levels of the organization feel comfortable with how the system has been selected and what it can help them accomplish.

In addition, the process enabled shortening the selection period by approximately half.

Bronson now is in a better position to meet the ARRA criteria as it relates to the timeframes established by the Government.

### About Bronson Healthcare Group

Bronson Healthcare Group in Kalamazoo, Michigan, is a not-for-profit, tertiary healthcare system serving southwest Michigan and northern Indiana. With a workforce of nearly 5,000 and a medical staff of over 700, Bronson offers a full range of services, from primary care to advanced critical care and multiple service locations. The health system’s record of clinical and workplace excellence has been recognized with numerous national achievements, including the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award, the AHA-McKesson Quest for Quality Prize, and designation as a Magnet Hospital for Nursing Excellence.

### About Dearborn Advisors, LLC

Dearborn Advisors, LLC is a professional services firm that partners with healthcare organizations to maximize their return on clinical information technology investments. Dearborn has a unique leadership position in clinician adoption and clinical systems deployment. This allows the company to achieve its mission: to add value for clients by providing advisory services that measurably enhance performance.

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