

AAMI's Benchmarking Solution Enhanced with New Features

Dave Viers used AAMI's *Benchmarking Solution* to measure his clinical engineering department's overall performance, but he needed more.

Viers and his colleagues at Sisters of Mercy Health System in Chesterfield, MO, wanted the online tool to show the costs of repairing and servicing high-cost modalities, such as computed tomography (CT), ultrasound, and sterilizers because "that's where the greatest opportunities to reduce costs are." Viers, a corporate clinical engineer at Sisters of Mercy, says, "Comparing our cost with other facilities may highlight areas where someone is doing particularly well in controlling costs." And that, Viers notes, could be a practice worth copying.

Viers's suggestion and others have been incorporated into the new enhancements of AAMI's *Benchmarking Solution*, which now includes more detailed questions on a department's device inventory and associated costs.

Launched last year, AAMI's *Benchmarking Solution* helps clinical engineering departments measure their practices, policies, and procedures against others, and monitor their progress through the year. The online tool can be used to measure staffing, budgeting, inspections, and other issues.

Subscribers answer a series of questions about their department and operation. They can then see how their facility compares to others. The clinical engineering experts who drafted the questions made the enhancements in response to subscriber requests.

For example, the experts broke down two questions about the total number of devices in an inventory into four categories: imaging, laboratory, general biomedical equipment, and non-patient care equipment.

This will help subscribers compare certain types of equipment at other

facilities. "By segmenting the inventory in key medical equipment categories, we gain a better understanding of the facilities that have high-end modalities on their inventory versus those that don't," says Michael Lane, a benchmarking subscriber and associate director of instrumentation and technical services for the University of Vermont in Burlington, VT.

More questions were also added for other subjects, including one about the Case Mix Index (CMI) Adjusted Discharges, an unfamiliar term for many clinical engineers.

Matt Baretich

"It is a very common measurement that financial departments in the hospital use to measure workload," says Matt Baretich, one of AAMI's subject matter experts and president of Baretich Engineering Inc. in Fort Collins, CO. "It measures how many inpatients you have in a year, adjusted for the outpatient workload and for the intensity of surfaces." Departments could compare themselves to other hospitals that have a similar workload.

"It is really helpful to have conversations among the different subscribers."

AAMI's *Benchmarking Solution* also has more questions about demographics, including whether the department is managed in-house or outsourced. These added demographics can help subscribers assess their performance, procedures, and policies against similar facilities.

Efforts are also increasing to encourage subscribers to learn from each other through AAMI's benchmarking e-forum—which is available to all AAMI benchmarking subscribers—webinars with AAMI's benchmarking experts, and other opportunities to discuss benchmarking-related issues.

"It is really helpful to have conversations among the different subscribers," Baretich says. ■

Ready to Benchmark?

AAMI's *Benchmarking Solution* is available for a one-year subscription. The list rate is \$890 and the AAMI member rate is \$760.

For more information about how to subscribe to AAMI's *Benchmarking Solution*, visit www.aami.org/abs or call 877-249-8226. ■



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