Integrated Success

Embedded supply chain experts at Oklahoma City-based INTEGRIS Health combine national-level resources with clinician trust.

Every layer of communication can potentially create another roadblock to decisive action. The partnership between Oklahoma City-based INTEGRIS Health and Vizient helps reduce this concern. Because Vizient® supply chain experts are embedded within the INTEGRIS Health team and bring national-level resources to the table, the partnership supports the health care system's core pillars of excellence and strategy in numerous, tangible ways.

"It's not an us versus them environment. The partnership creates a true integration of Vizient expertise with INTEGRIS Health expertise. When we become embedded, that's the furthest level of integration," says Micah Parker, vice president of supply chain. This is all central to a five-year strategic partnership, Parker explains.

Aligning Key Values

Key to the success of the INTEGRIS Health and Vizient relationship is the careful alignment of the two organizations' foundational values. By mandating that each initiative supply chain pursues is viewed through INTEGRIS Health's seven pillars of excellence and the framework of people, processes and technology, the joint team has built a foundation of flexibility.

CASE STUDY

INTEGRIS Health

The end goal is always improving outcomes for patients and closing the gap between supply chain and patient care. When clinical caregivers need supplies from trusted partners, and processes are in place to ensure those supplies are safe, patients benefit directly. "It's pushed efficiencies because we're part of Vizient, and it's fostered acceptance because we're part of INTEGRIS Health," says Liz Kuhlman, senior strategy and operations manager.

Integration and Alignment Create Success

A key example of alignment between clinicians and supply chain is highlighted in the physician-led Cardiac Tech Committee. Through a collaborative process, INTEGRIS Health physicians partner with supply chain to introduce new devices to a committee of their peers.

Supply chain has a seat at the table and is a significant driver of the committee's input. "We bring opportunities to the group, and they help guide us down the path of what is feasible and what is not. All new products must be introduced by the physician who is requesting the product, not by supply chain, and then peer reviewed to determine if the product is appropriate for the organization," Parker says. The core goal is to answer a two-fold question: Could this bring value to the organization and is it worth the cost?

The result is improved patient outcomes coupled with savings. For example, making a commitment to work mostly with one partner for cardiac rhythm management has resulted in upwards of $2.5 million in savings.

A Culture of Trust

The integration of people from the two organizations, and the intentional alignment of values leads to a valuable byproduct – a culture of trust. Supply chain brings information and supplier relationships to clinical caregivers and approaches initiatives in a spirit of collaboration.

"We focus on the combined efforts of people, process and technology to bring proactive and optimal supply replenishment into clinical care areas and get clinical providers back at the bedside, so to speak. From that effort, we have seen the ticking down of supply expense and the increase in supply availability," says Matthew Ziehme, associate vice president at Vizient.

Accelerated Pivots Require a Strong Foundation

As the COVID-19 outbreak worsened, the supply chain at INTEGRIS Health was tested to meet demands, but because of the foundational work put in place by Micah Parker and his team, INTEGRIS Health was able to effectively pivot as the crisis unfolded.

"Going back to people, processes and technology, because of how we've been integrated and embedded allowed us to pivot, and it never broke," says Andrew Scott, principal, member performance at Vizient.

Taking actions like procuring hand sanitizer from a local brewery, containers from a dairy farm to hold the sanitizer and working with a backpack manufacturer to procure PPE, were all possible because people understood their roles, processes were in place to ensure necessary precautions were taken, and the technology was available for communication and documenting. "Because we know how to interact within the pillars and because we've been functioning within the partnership and relationships, we could build relationships outside the normal channels. We used the same operational model to produce ebb and flow," says Liz Kuhlman.

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> —Micah Parker, vice president of supply chain, INTEGRIS Health

This collaborative foundation was critical as the COVID-19 outbreak unfolded. According to Micah Parker, the groundwork laid prior to the pandemic enabled INTEGRIS Health to pivot quickly and provide clinicians with the supplies they needed.

A Template for Success

The relationship between Vizient and INTEGRIS Health provides an impactful framework for how hospital leaders and performance improvement partners can work together successfully. By embracing aligned goals and integrated expertise, Vizient and INTEGRIS Health can build long-term strategic success while also retaining agility when challenged with the unexpected. "There's a speed to value we are able to achieve because of the alignment between INTEGRIS Health and Vizient teams. If you think about an issue that might arise in the traditional world, typically in some instances, organizations are not going to be as connected as we are to figure it out in hours or a day instead of weeks," says Andy Scott, principal, member performance at Vizient.

The success of the INTEGRIS Health partnership with Vizient has been irrefutable. The leading maturity indicators in six key areas—governance and process, finance, transactions and technology, customer, supplier, and people—have improved significantly and are on track to meet all 2022 goals. The organization is on target to hit its initial goal to implement a cumulative cost savings of $56 million by October 2022.

The Values Matrix

An important factor in this successful partnership has been the alignment of key values across Vizient and INTEGRIS Health.

PEOPLE	PROCESSES	TECHNOLOGY

INTEGRIS Health Pillar	Vizient Pillar	Goal
Quality	Governance and process	• Control the plan-to-pay process and use leading practices • Reduce the transactional burden and improve information
	Transactions and Technology	
Affordability	Finance	• Reduce operating and purchasing costs
Experience	Customer	• Improve service delivery through the understanding of patient and clinician needs
Engaged Caregivers Safety	People	• Invest in employees to improve their contribution to the team • Zero harm to patients and caregivers
Access	Supplier	• Leverage supplier expertise and resources to drive better outcomes

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