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Measuring the Impact of Malnutrition

McLeod Health makes the case for improvement
through a feasibility assessment with Junum

The Challenge

McLeod Health implemented the Cerner® Millennium® EHR in 2018. While highly effective for many clinical use cases, the organization soon found it wasn't optimized for supporting nutrition care partnerships between physicians and dietitians — including identifying and diagnosing malnutrition.

The Solution

That's when McLeod turned to Junum. Our MalnutritionCDS™ solution integrates with Cerner to **help hospitals accurately diagnose malnutrition within their existing EHR workflows — and improve revenue capture accordingly**. To start, we began with a feasibility assessment.

WHAT IS A FEASIBILITY ASSESSMENT?

During this critical process, Junum works with hospital stakeholders to identify the greatest opportunities for improvement by comparing the hospital's current malnutrition workflows to evidence-based clinical guidelines and best practices. It typically lasts approximately six weeks.

The Process

Starting with a series of in-depth interviews, Junum sought to understand McLeod's current state and identify where we could make the greatest impact, clinically and financially. The interviews helped us document workflows for rounding, charting and reporting, and gave us a more complete picture of all touchpoints for malnutrition care throughout the system.

During the interviews, the McLeod team provided critical data points like:

- Nutrition care workflows
- Clinician notes templates
- System alerts
- Query templates
- Case mix index
- ICD-10 reports (DRG, CC/MCC)
- Payor denials
- Clinician training protocols
- Patient assessments
- Oral intake documentation
- Internal reports related to malnutrition
- Nutrition care coordination

We then brought all this information together into a findings report. Here, we shared practices that were working well at McLeod, and opportunities for Junum to help improve malnutrition care.

STEERING COMMITTEE & KEY STAKEHOLDERS

Clinical Nutrition Manager

Physician Champions

SVP of Care Coordination

CDI/Coding Manager

AVP of Information Technology

VP of Innovation

Key Findings

Through the assessment, we uncovered several key learnings that helped McLeod make the clinical and financial case for improvement.

McLeod was leaving reimbursements on the table.

We confirmed instances where physicians were not aware of a patient's malnutrition status even though RDs had documented findings of malnutrition.

Even when malnutrition was coded, payor denials were common.

Missing or inconsistent documentation was often the culprit. We identified opportunities to align workflows across disciplines.

A validated screening tool could help.

We identified an opportunity for nursing workflows to include a validated screening tool like MST to increase RD referrals for nutrition assessments.

We found synergies with other SDOH projects.

McLeod was already working on related social determinants of health (SDOH) projects to help the organization better identify and address food insecurity. Junum can leverage its detailed nutrition assessment data for use by case managers.

Next Steps: Digital Transformation and Software Implementation

Using learnings from the feasibility assessment, Junum then outlined a digital transformation plan for McLeod. This involved agreeing upon financial models and KPIs to track progress, and documenting deliverables and risks for both Junum and McLeod. Now approved, Junum will implement the software to help McLeod make an impact on the metrics that matter.

Project Timeline
- 3-5 months

Key Performance Indicators
- RD assessment rates
- Physician malnutrition diagnosis rates
- % of DRG CC/MCC

Monthly Activities
- Gather baseline data
- Steer clinical workflows
- Determine site-specific implementation plans

Ongoing Activities
- Quarterly scorecards
- Real-time data reporting
- Customer support

Looking Forward

Malnutrition is a concern at hospitals nationwide. And its true impacts — both clinical and financial — are too often hidden by lack of data. Working through a feasibility assessment with Junum helped McLeod identify, quantify and elevate the issue with a data-driven approach. We look forward to continuing our partnership to deliver the full benefits of better malnutrition care at McLeod.

Ready to learn what better malnutrition diagnosis could mean for your hospital?

Learn more at junum.io — or contact us today at sales@junum.io.