



GE HealthCare

Could new
information
tools finally save
nurses time?

**Progress from
the frontline.**



Nurses are the heart, soul and backbone of patient care.

Nursing includes a myriad of tasks and skillsets, from the bedside to care management to leadership. Essential duties have evolved to include nursing rounds, discharge huddles, intake prioritization, quality tracking, protocol support, and more obligations around the clock. These coordination and communication activities are vital and complex, and they take time.

GE HealthCare's Command Center software is a tool crafted specifically to serve these needs and save nurses' time. It achieves this by providing nurses with the information they need to make informed decisions quickly and efficiently, but also by providing the scaffolding to support new staff, smart advice and predictions, and communication pathways to reduce churn. Command Center software is purpose-built for ease of use, providing nurses with distinct apps, or "Tiles," and profiles for their specific situation.



Challenge

Healthcare's nursing shortage pre-dated the COVID-19 pandemic, but in the years since, it has only grown more dire. A 2022 analysis found that the U.S. saw a decrease in total registered nurses of more than 100,000 from 2020 to 2021, marking the largest drop in more than four decades. The crisis even reaches beyond U.S. borders.

“On any given shift, nurses must be prepared to take on extra workload due to staffing issues,” said Vina Prollamante, a charge nurse at Humber River Hospital, a major acute care provider in Toronto, Canada. “This can be a challenge on weekends and sometimes on regular days as well.”

Factors contributing to the shortage include a large portion of the nursing workforce nearing retirement age, while an aging population increases the volume of patients needing nursing care for chronic diseases and comorbidities, according to the American Association of Colleges of Nursing. These constraints lead to extreme pressure on the nursing professionals who remain, heightening stress levels, hurting job satisfaction and leading to increased turnover.

Technology-enabled workflow changes are imperative to help nurses navigate the challenges of the role more easily. Otherwise, healthcare will remain challenged by dwindling staff and ongoing inefficiencies, negatively impacting patient care and operational viability in the long term.

Opportunity

Without the aid of solutions such as GE HealthCare's Command Center, nurses must rely on multiple sources of information to keep track of patient status and staff workflows. Finding the right information often entails searching for data in electronic medical records (EMRs), placing phone calls to several departments to track down answers, or working from aged reports.

These time-consuming and inefficient processes prevent nurses from working to the top of their licenses, instead bogging them down with administrative duties. The consequences are delays in patient care and missed opportunities for timely interventions.

“EMRs are great for a variety of tasks but it does not tell the full picture when it comes to patient throughput, nursing satisfaction, patient satisfaction, or anything like that,” said Ann Haverstick, a clinical expeditor for Tacoma, Wash.-based Virginia Mason Franciscan Health. “They’re not proactive in any way.”

Software tools like GE HealthCare's Command Center complement the EMR by looking across all the patients at once, and continuously applying algorithms to derive a broad range of insights – such as which patients from all portals of entry are most appropriate for admission and which

available beds are best suited for those patients. EMRs struggle with such uses because information is siloed by role and workflow.

The difference between aging reports and continuously-updating information is significant in an acute setting.

“It used to be that I would get on the elevator to go downstairs to flow meetings, and all the information had changed by the time I got off the elevator,” said Miranda Harris, clinical operations director of patient flow for Duke University Health System in Durham, N.C.

Replacing aged reports with current actionable information saves time.

Without current information, “You’ll still need to data mine to find information from the chart,” explained Virginia Mason’s Haverstick. This is not as efficient as quickly looking at a Tile to realize, for example, that a patient just needs their CT results in order to be discharged.

There is therefore tremendous opportunity to streamline communication and efficiency for nurses, but it requires implementing software that truly minimizes administrative burden rather than adding to it.

Impact

GE HealthCare's Command Center Tiles provide actionable information for a range of applications, all in “real-time,” meaning that data is constantly ingested from source systems and refreshed with updated calculations for users every 30 seconds. The software consolidates data from multiple sources, such as EMRs and other hospital information systems, fuses the data, applies AI and machine learning (where applicable), and presents it in an easy-to-read format, saving time otherwise spent tracking down relevant information. It presents insights that can lead to better decisions, which is often practically impossible with other tools.

End-users who spoke to Modern Healthcare Custom Media described how they leverage different Tiles to fulfill their day-to-day responsibilities.

Improving awareness of vital action items

For charge nurses at Humber River Hospital and elsewhere, the Patient Manager Tile offers a clear, actionable snapshot of care.

“You can see all the pending procedures and which staff members need to see the patient, so I don’t have to go into the chart itself as much,” said Prollamante.

Based on hospital protocols, the Command Center also provides alerts and notifications when patient status or hospital operations require attention, keeping progress on track.

“Without the Command Center Tiles, it’s not easy to see the pending orders across the unit,” said James No, a charge nurse at Humber River Hospital. “But with the Tiles showing pending work-up to do – like an ultrasound or other discharge barrier – they speed up the process, which leads to faster results for the patient and shorter length of stay in the hospital.”

Forecasting workload and capacity

Importantly, through the Staffing and Capacity Snapshot Tiles, Command Center software helps predict treatment team overload and forecast future nursing workforce imbalances.

“Whether you're clinical or non-clinical, you can appreciate what the Capacity Snapshot Tile is showing us – which is how busy are we, or how stressed do we feel, based on the volume of patients sitting in any location,” said Harris of Duke University Health System. “That is a Tile we use every morning to see where we're starting the day as well as what's coming.”

At Humber River Hospital, the advantages of using Command Center Tiles are similar – fostering better visibility, collaboration and communication.



“It helps me do my job as well as help my coworkers,” Prollamante said. “Before we got the Tiles, everyone had to do their own checking of the orders and follow up. But because of the shortage of nurses and patient acuity, they're too busy – so, I can check it for them and inform them of what needs to be done.”

The software is particularly helpful for making assignments with bandwidth in mind, No added.

“When we have to divide the patient load, we'll look at the scoring that helps charge nurses make nursing assignments. Then we can try to assign that patient to the nurse who has a lighter load or who is more experienced in a particular area,” he said.

Elevating care quality and experience

Driving more efficient throughput is essential as hospitals seek to maximize utilization of scarce staffing and facility resources. By creating time-saving opportunities, the Command Center Tiles help improve care quality and satisfaction among both patients and nurses.

For instance, if a patient does not have to wait in the emergency department as long – or can avoid inpatient admission altogether – nurses “are going to get patients who are less cranky,” according to Haverstick.

The technology also frees up nurses’ availability, allowing them to spend most of their time on the things that matter most.

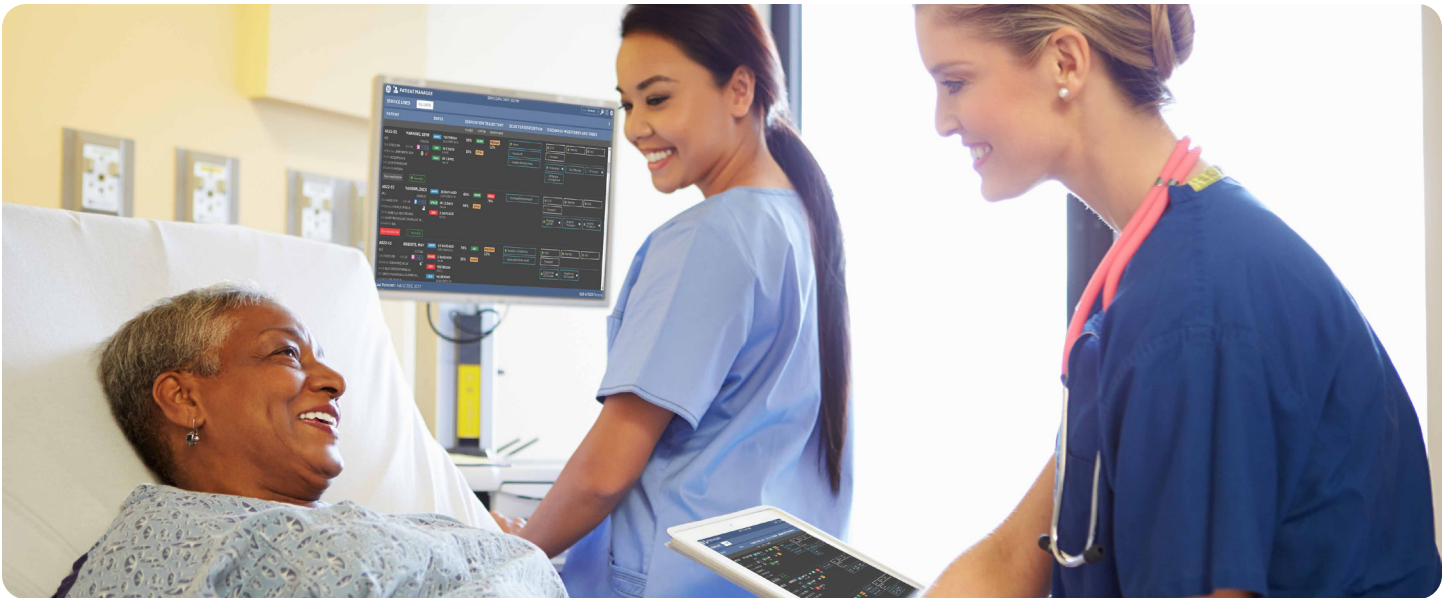
“We're taking things off their hands, so they don't have to stress out and add that into the 10,000 other things they have to do,” Haverstick said. “And the patients feel like they're getting more attention, which makes them happier.”

Another way Command Center puts the focus back on patients is through the Clinical Deterioration Tile which allows staff to view patient information and trends such as Early Warning Scores along with clinical indicators pulled from the EMR and other hospital systems. Nurses are able to quickly identify protocol deviations and make necessary concomitant interventions, all while ensuring compliance with hospital standards. This builds on the patient and nurse satisfaction achieved through time savings, with another level of satisfaction driven by better care.

The software facilitates more informed decision-making for higher-quality care.

Similarly, nurses may tap into the Infectious Disease Tile to view the location of isolation patients, allowing nurses to identify risk of cross-contamination, whether for COVID-19 patients or other infectious diseases. The moment a test result comes back positive in the hospital’s laboratory, it is reflected in the Tile to facilitate a response by nursing staff and/or bed placement.

“Once I got used to the Tile system, I realized it helps me remind myself of important tasks, which leads to better patient care,” No said.



GE HealthCare's Command Center Tiles are revolutionizing the way healthcare professionals can access and manage patient data.

Putting relevant information at nurses' fingertips not only improves hospital efficiency and throughput but also elevates the patient experience and supports nurse retention. Examples of these results are steadily growing, with testimonials from nursing leaders at Humber River Hospital, Duke University Health System, Virginia Mason Franciscan Health, and other well-known organizations.

The implementation of Command Center Tiles has led to reductions in the time spent on administrative tasks as well as

increases in the time available for direct patient care.¹ The software facilitates timely interventions, such as 47% reduction in patient code blues, 30% decrease in ED patient waiting, 18% fewer transfer declines and decreased length of stay by half a day.²

Importantly, the software's real-time data and alerts can be modified to show exactly the type of information needed, enabling nurses to adapt it to their unique organizational needs. The ability to not only make informed decisions but to make them quickly and efficiently is instrumental in improving the experience of patients and nurses amid a workload crisis and financial pressures.

“We’re getting a lot more 'Thank You's' from charge nurses and nurses on the floor,” Haverstick said. “It gives them more time back.”

¹Command Center technology provides bridge between analytics and compassion - GE HealthCare Command Centers ([gehccommandcenter.com](https://www.gehccommandcenter.com))
²<https://www.gehccommandcenter.com/sources>

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