Savings of $2 Million Annually
Through enterprise-wide integration and expanded resource pools
Six Facilities, Six Ways to Schedule
As organizations look to lower expenses without compromising care quality, the unification of multiple facilities within one health system through acquisition and consolidation is an increasingly attractive solution.

Consolidation does not come without challenges. For Hillcrest one of the major challenges following consolidation of six facilities was optimizing the workforce across the new enterprise. Hillcrest had six different facilities each with a different system for staffing and scheduling, which were not yielding the most efficient use of labor resources.

“Each facility was using a different method for staffing and scheduling,” said Resource Team Director, Jennie Bible. “Some were using paper, some were using technology and some were just winging it. This made it challenging for scheduling managers and the Resource Team to gain a grasp on what each facility’s staffing needs were for any given shift, on any given day.”

Without a consistent scheduling system in place across the enterprise, Hillcrest was losing a significant amount of budget to overtime and agency labor. In response, the organization made the decision to implement one integrated staffing and scheduling system enterprise-wide. In addition, Hillcrest would grow and leverage the internal resource pool that would float employees between facilities, filling in scheduling gaps as needed with more cost-effective internal resources.

Challenge
After consolidating six separate facilities into the Hillcrest HealthCare System, the new organization lacked a singular staffing and scheduling system. This created several workforce-related challenges including:

• Heavy use of premium labor such as overtime and agency
• Ineffective use of the Internal Resource Team
• Inconsistent scheduling practices across the enterprise

Solution
• Enterprise-wide implementation of API Healthcare ShiftSelect®
• Expansion of the internal resource pool

“With the development of our internal resource team and the infrastructure to manage scheduling, we have been able to reduce our overall premium contract labor by over $2 million annually. The implementation of ShiftSelect and the achievement of fill rates over 80% was an important part of our success in accomplishing that goal.”

– Donald Baker, Chief Financial Officer, Hillcrest HealthCare System
A Single, Integrated Staffing and Scheduling System

With six different facilities to staff it was imperative that Hillcrest implement a single staffing and scheduling system. Prior to consolidation, two of Hillcrest’s hospitals were using API Healthcare ShiftSelect. The solution was popular among nurses who were proponents of the self-scheduling tools and the ability to control their own work/life balance.

“We worked closely with CNOs to evaluate all options and decided that ShiftSelect would be the best fit for our organization,” said Bible. “ShiftSelect provides visibility into staffing needs across the enterprise, enabling us to leverage our resources in a more effective way. It also allows for better utilization of the resource team to staff unclaimed or unfilled shifts.”

Working closely with the API Healthcare implementation and training team, Hillcrest was running ShiftSelect within six weeks, with full implementation and training for all employees completed in a little less than two and a half months.

“In more than 30 years as a nursing professional, the implementation of ShiftSelect was the smoothest process I have ever seen,” said Bible. “API Healthcare was responsive to every one of our needs and worked hard to ensure that we were satisfied.”

Leveraging Resources Across Hillcrest

Internal resource pools are an innovative solution for managing scheduling challenges. As census numbers flex the need for labor shifts. When an organization has a finite number of employees, census numbers can create gaps in the schedule, which are often filled with agency labor or by asking employees to work overtime.

Results

Implementation of a single staffing and scheduling system across the whole organization has allowed Hillcrest HealthCare System to create a more cost-effective workforce strategy that has resulted in:

- $2 million annual cost savings in premium labor
- Filling more open shifts internally, reducing dependency on premium resources
- 83% open shift fill-rate average
- Impact on overall employee satisfaction
- Over 90% are satisfied with the level of response and support

“Employees are empowered to choose shifts that best fit their needs. ShiftSelect offers our team members the ability to explore opportunities in departments outside of their home base, which lessens our need to seek external resources to fill scheduling gaps.”

– Jennie Bible, Resource Team Director, Hillcrest HealthCare System
For Hillcrest the top priority for their resource pool was reducing the use of agency labor. With ShiftSelect in place enterprise-wide, Bible and her Resource Team were finally able to maximize the intended potential of the resource pool.

“Prior to bringing everyone under ShiftSelect we had to pick up the phone and call each facility to identify where their scheduling needs were, which took an extraordinary amount of time and resources,” said Bible. “With one integrated system we can see needs in real-time, and send out staff to fill the gaps accordingly.”

The improved insight and visibility has also given Hillcrest a clearer picture of their resource needs. When the Resource Pool was developed, the goal was to hire 15-20 nurses in the first year. With the proper insight into actual staffing needs, that goal was easily exceeded and today includes 140 employees.

Filling Nearly Every Open Shift
Better employee engagement and more consistent scheduling policies have made a significant impact on Hillcrest’s goals of reducing premium labor costs. When shifts are unfilled, either due to census or unplanned employee absences, Hillcrest would use agency labor. Because employees are now able to view and request to work open shifts, Hillcrest has been able to fill a majority of these shifts internally, saving the organization millions of dollars.

“The use of external labor provided an easy fix to our scheduling challenges,” says Chief Financial Officer, Donald Baker. “Within the first few months of implementation, the scheduling system improvements and resource team development led to significantly less premium labor as we started relying more on our own internal resources. Ultimately, this resulted in operating improvements in excess of $2 million annually.”

“The tools in ShiftSelect have helped us reach an average open shift fill-rate of 83%,” said Bible. ShiftSelect is also having an impact on employee satisfaction. The majority of employees are embracing the new technology and are satisfied with the support they are receiving from the Resource Office, with 90% indicating their satisfaction with the level of response and support received from Resource Team.

Healthcare culture makes it challenging to introduce change. The key to Hillcrest’s success was collaboration and persistence. For Bible and her team, keeping their eye on the goal while working closely with employees to demonstrate the benefits of the system, enabled the organization to achieve goals in a short amount of time.

“At Hillcrest, we are committed to providing every patient with high-quality care and an excellent experience,” said Bible. “Creating a consistent and transparent staffing and scheduling system was one of the best things we have done to ensure care quality and employee satisfaction within our organization.”

Hillcrest HealthCare System has been rewarded for participation in this case study and is an active participant in the API Healthcare STAR client reference program that rewards clients for sharing their outcomes, expertise and opinions.