![Just Associates — MASTERING PATIENT IDENTITY]

Sharon Regional
*Taps Just Associates' **IDManage**® to Maintain a Pristine MPI*

Sharon Regional Health System

Based in Sharon, Penn., Sharon Regional Health System is a comprehensive health system consisting of a 241-bed hospital, 17 satellite centers and more than 1,750 employees. A major resource for the northwest Pennsylvania-northeast Ohio region, Sharon Regional has experienced significant growth in medical services and number of patients served.

In 2011, its outpatient revenues grew by 6.2%, while net patient revenue increased by 4%. To keep pace with that growth, Sharon Regional is in the final stages of implementing a $13 million Electronic Health Record (EHR) system throughout all inpatient/outpatient services and employed physician offices.

In preparation for that implementation, Sharon Regional brought in Just Associates to conduct a comprehensive Master Patient Index (MPI) Clean-Up. While the clean-up eliminated existing duplicate records from the system, Sharon Regional still faced a dilemma – how to maintain that clean MPI.

"We needed a way to continuously identify and correct duplicates before they created a confusion among our clinical staff or impacted care," said Barb McKee, director of Business Office Operations, Sharon Regional Health System.

Resource and Process Challenges

Sharon Regional faced several obstacles to maintaining a clean MPI. Like many hospitals, limited resources made it particularly challenging for the health system to achieve the necessary level of efficiency in the MPI management process.

"Multiple registration points made it difficult to pinpoint when and where potential errors entered the system, and staffing limitations made it difficult to quickly evaluate and reconcile possible duplicates once they were identified," said McKee, adding that there was also no good way to identify when additional training or revised procedures were needed.

Finally, like many facilities, the MPI management process at Sharon Regional was entirely manual. In addition to being inefficient and error-prone, the time-consuming process of using rudimentary reports and spreadsheets to identify and track duplicates requires dedicated human resources and expertise – a luxury that few hospitals can retain.

Limited resources also prevented Sharon Regional from employing a more efficient technology-enabled "assembly line" approach to validating and reconciling duplicates – one that not only leverages individual strengths, but also technologies that drive more rapid reconciliation by enabling the simultaneous viewing of hundreds of pairs of potential duplicates.

*"These are the reasons why, when we heard about **IDManage**®, we knew immediately it was the long-term solution we needed,"* said McKee.

IDManage®: The Outsourced Solution

With MPI cleared of duplicates, Sharon regional recognized that it was the ideal time to implement changes to ensure integrity. Outsourcing was the natural solution. It ensured ongoing and instant identification of duplicates and more importantly, it freed internal resources to focus on longer-term strategies that would improve care quality and safety.

The health system engaged Just Associates' **IDManage**® for ongoing duplicate resolution. It leverages remote technologies to link directly into Sharon Regional's MPI system, which eliminates internal workflow disruptions and allows management activities to take place transparently in the background.

When a potential duplicate or integrity issue is identified, a report is automatically transmitted to **IDManage**® for review and reconciliation. If for any reason the system cannot confirm an issue, it is reviewed and reconciled by Just Associates' specially trained, highly experienced professionals. Though rare in cases where Just Associates is unable to validate a duplicate, it is returned to Sharon Regional for resolution.

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ID*Manage*® also provides secure access to real-time information and a variety of reporting tools and analytics. An array of business intelligence tools, coupled with expert analysis, enables Sharon Regional to easily identify where duplicates are created as well as the types of errors being made by registrars. This insight allows for the development of customized training programs that strengthen specific areas.

Multiple Benefits

In the first four months, 330 potential duplicates were identified. Of those, just four could not be resolved by Just Associates and **ID***Manage*®.

Outsourcing has afforded Sharon Regional a new peace of mind that comes from knowing that **ID***Manage*® is continuously working in the background to handle any data integrity issues and negate potential impacts to patient care and safety.

*"Part of what drove our decision to use **ID***Manage*® was the uncertainty about what was out there and where there errors were coming from because there are so many points of registration,"* said McKee. *"I can relax now that I know Just Associates and **ID***Manage*® are handling ongoing MPI Clean-Up.*

The business intelligence available through **ID***Manage*® has also proven to be invaluable. For example, the system at one point identified an unusually large number of registration errors within a one-week period. The analysis determined that all the errors were generated in the same department.

"By providing additional training and education, the number of registration errors originating from the department has dropped to single digits," said McKee. *"Without **ID***Manage*®, I don't know how long those errors would have been out there or how many would have been created before the problem was identified. **ID***Manage*® nipped that really quickly."*

In Fact, McKee says the robust dashboard is one for the most useful features of **ID***Manage*® because of the highly detailed information it provides. By tracking patient type, where information enters the system and who enters it, the tool allows Sharon Regional to provide targeted education and training.

By keeping the process clean and ensuring anyone with access to the registration system is properly trained, the number of duplicates within the MPI at any point in time continues to decline.

"There is a quality aspect to data integrity," said McKee. *"Improved safety and quality comes from properly managing the MPI to ensure it remains-duplicate free. That is what **ID***Manage*® does for Sharon Regional."*

ABOUT JUST ASSOCIATES, INC.

Just Associates is a healthcare data integrity consulting firm that delivers superior value to our clients through improved data integrity. We have the process expertise and systems knowledge to deliver tailored, value-added solutions that improve your financial outcomes and business processes, support delivery of quality patient care, and meet your diverse stakeholders' expectations through improved data integrity.

*Our services include: MPI Clean-Up, Data Integration/Migration Consulting, MPI/EMPI and HIE Consulting, Outsourced MPI Management and Patient Access Consulting. Our software solution, **ID***Master*® puts workflow processes and controls in place to resolve duplicate records quickly.*

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