

Manchester Memorial Hospital, located in Kentucky, became part of AdventistHealth in the early 1970s and remains the only hospital in Clay County. AdventHealth Manchester offers a wide range of inpatient and outpatient care – particularly emphasizing the areas of heart and vascular, where a service expansion and increased cardiology presence was deemed necessary to meet the growing needs of area patients.



AdventHealth Manchester (AHM) is a rural 63-bed, voluntary, not-for-profit, faith-based hospital that offers a full range of services as part of the AdventHealth network of care. The hospital belief that health should be measured in terms of the whole person — body, mind, and spirit — is apparent from the many awards, accolades, and achievements received, including a “Top Rural Hospital” by The Leapfrog Group in 2016 and 2019.

Knowing patients sometimes travel at least 25 miles for advanced cardiac procedural care, AdventHealth decided to remedy the access-to-care issue by working with Corazon to submit a Certificate of Need (CON) for diagnostic cardiac cath services in December 2018.

A Unique Partnership:

Through the CON process, AHM recognized the need for a stronger relationship with the affiliated independent interventional cardiologists in order to improve and grow CV services, which provide a significant financial contribution to the hospital. In March 2019, AHM again engaged Corazon to assist in the development of a closer alignment with the cardiologists to synchronize goals and incentives, and ultimately enhance the coordination and level of care provided at the hospital.

“Corazon helped us navigate a very successful cardiology engagement strategy. They were hands-on in helping navigate a complex cardiology journey and gave practical expert guidance.”

Jamie Couch

AdventHealth Manchester

Education and Consensus:

Corazon initiated an evaluation of cardiology partnership options and recommended the optimal plan for all parties involved, including a financial analysis of the agreed upon arrangement, as well as the incorporation of quality metrics targets. The process involved education of all parties on various alignment strategies and the associated risks and benefits, ranging from “simple low-risk / loose alignment” models to “complex high-risk / solid alignment” models. Upon review and assessment of various options, a consensus around medical directorship and employment agreement was reached.

Agreement Development & Execution:

Based on the needs and goals of the hospital and cardiologists, areas of consideration involved:

- Cardiologists' practice locations and related real estate arrangements;
- Practice staff and functions;
- Practice-based ancillary services and related billing;
- Continued performance of cardiac cath lab procedures at other facilities; and
- Non-cardiology related ventures

Additionally, quality and process improvement incentives and targets were recommended for call coverage and non-physician provider support; accurate, timely, and complete documentation; on-time testing; clinical protocols related to chest pain, heart failure, and atrial fibrillation; physician-patient interaction and patient satisfaction; and programmatic development for peripheral vascular and AAA screening; and other outreach.

Ongoing and transparent communication between the hospital and cardiologists was essential. Corazon facilitated several meetings involving all parties to review options, legal concerns, and obstacles, in addition to developing consensus toward a viable agreement. While the process achieved the desired goals, a few items caused the process to take longer than expected, primarily related to:

- Complexity of the cardiologists' ventures;
- Difficulties in obtaining accurate information; and
- Consensus building among the key stakeholders.



Results:

In March 2020, AHM began an employment agreement with an interventional cardiologist. Within two months, the cardiologist is on target to achieve and possibly exceed contract expectations. Although AHM continues its efforts to seek CON approval for a diagnostic cardiac cath lab, the hospital recognizes the importance of cardiovascular services and has moved forward to employ a service line leader to focus on building cardiovascular the service line.

For a more detailed explanation of this Cardiology Physician Alignment project that involved multiple components of Corazon's services call 412.364.8200.