

Trillium Health Centre



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Wayne Mills, Chief Information Officer, Trillium Health Centre



In healthcare today, getting a single version of the truth—getting the right information to the right people at the right time—is essential. In fact, lives depend on it. And it’s for this reason that Trillium Health Centre chose to standardize on Cognos.

As one of Canada’s largest community hospitals, Trillium Health Centre continues to push the envelope when it comes to delivering quality, patient-focused care to more than one million people. With Cognos, Trillium is developing an integrated community care services model that enables it to be more responsive to the needs of patients, providers, staff, and the community. By teaming with Cognos, IBM, and other partners, Trillium has formed the Transforming Healthcare into Integrated Networks of Knowledge (THINK) initiative—an initiative aimed at simplifying information access and exchange among all stakeholders, facilitating health care innovation, and ultimately, improving services to Trillium patients and their families.

Challenges Faced

One of the reasons that Trillium has become a healthcare leader is its constant and committed focus on the strategy and metrics it needs to succeed. Following the Balanced Scorecard approach from Kaplan and Norton, the organization had a clear view of the key performance indicators it wanted to track, but its technology provided no meaningful way to unite, analyze, and share information across the organization.

Prior to Cognos, Trillium had a dashboard system that it had developed in-house. The dashboard was a series of linked intranet pages and converted PowerPoint pages. The system was static, labor-intensive to maintain, and could only be deployed to a maximum of 100 people. With all of the valuable work being done to nail down strategy, Trillium wanted to share that vision and approach with its 3,000 employees.

Industry

- Healthcare

Geography

- Canada

Information Needs

- Data unity
- Software that reflects the Balanced Scorecard approach
- Clear insight into operations, patient care, services, programs, and more

Platform

- IBM WebSphere Information Integration Suite
- Agfa Impax
- Agfa/Heartlab Encompass
- Eclipsys Sunrise Clinical Manager

Cognos Solution

- Cognos 8 BI
- Cognos 8 Planning

Users:

- 3,000+

Benefits:

- Ready access to all data and information for decision-making
- Fast, accurate information on all key performance indicators
- One version of the truth that helps maximize resources and deliver better care to the community

In addition, Trillium wanted to make sure that the organization had a single version of the truth. With key information stored in 45 separate systems across the enterprise, each department had different data, different terminologies, and were coming up with completely different numbers. It was with this reality staring them in the face that the THINK initiative was born. Trillium needed to integrate data. It needed business intelligence to provide a more effective way to understand it. And, it needed to extend the reach of performance management to internal and external stakeholders.



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Strategy Followed

“With a firm strategy developed, we needed the right software product to bring it to life,” says Wayne Mills, Chief Information Officer at Trillium. “In 2002 we crafted and RFP and received proposals from 40 different vendors, including a combined proposal from IBM and Cognos. We looked at several performance management vendors but once we discovered Cognos we realized that Cognos doesn’t really have a competitor in terms of capabilities.” With Cognos 8 BI, Trillium could satisfy all its information needs including reporting, analysis, dashboards, and scorecards, and with Cognos 8 Planning, it could leverage a sophisticated budgeting, planning, and consolidation platform.

While Trillium liked the product, what sold them were the people behind it. “Everyone we spoke to at Cognos really impressed us with their understanding of the decision-making process and real-world customer need,” says Mills. “Other vendors wanted us to modify our thinking to fit their software’s capabilities, but Cognos has designed software that fits the way people think and the way they need information displayed for better understanding.”

Equally important was finding a platform that fit into Trillium’s existing technology environment. With significant investments in IBM software including IBM WebSphere applications, Trillium wanted a BI platform that would integrate quickly and easily with these applications. And, with plans to one day take the system to the public via extranets and portals, the integration had to be flawless.

Benefits Realized

With Cognos, Trillium now has a system that now reaches everyone in the organization. With a Cognos dashboard, it can now link disparate data to clearly examine:

- Finance and Operations
- Programs and Services
- External issues such as the current and future needs of the community.

With Cognos, Trillium can now have real-time, accurate insight into length of stay for patients, ambulatory services, rate performance, market share, staff retention, budgets, and more. With this information, Trillium can maximize savings and patient care. For example, by looking at an issue such as average bed stays, staff can anticipate demand and ensure that the requisite beds are available when people need them most. In addition, staff can benchmark performance to truly understand what methods are working and which need attention.

Staff can also properly link the key performance indicators that impact one another to identify potential problems and show process gaps. They can also map into external databases from the Canadian Institute of Health Informatics and the Ministry of Health to share and maximize the information they have. Another key factor is the fact that Cognos has helped Trillium eliminate the information haves and have-nots within the organization. With Cognos, rather than share performance information with only 100 people, staff can now share information with more than 3,000.

With Cognos 8 Planning, Trillium is transforming the way the hospital plans and budgets health care programs, patient services, and supplier requirements. And, with Cognos 8 BI, the organization has become visionary in healthcare for its ability to measure and monitor health care delivery performance. “It’s nice when a firm strategy meets the right product,” say Mills. “With Cognos, we are better positioned to face the challenges of the future.”

“Not only has the product integration between Cognos and IBM been seamless, we have been very impressed with the synergy between Cognos Consulting and IBM Global Business Services,” says Mills. “Since inception of the project, we have had consultants on-site from both companies helping us with the design, implementation, troubleshooting, training, support, and more. We are constantly tasking them to not only think out of the box, but to actually throw the box away. The insight and ingenuity these teams bring has far exceeded our expectations.”

“Both companies have also joined our TACT initiative, which is in essence a think-tank for using technology to help address critical healthcare issues and find innovative approaches to diseases such as diabetes and cancer. The insight and thought leadership from IBM and Cognos has been simply invaluable.”

When asked to put an ROI on the Cognos solutions, Mills says finding a number would be impossible. “Cognos has given us capabilities and insight that we never had before. With Cognos, we have saved time and money, but it is the vision that is the real ROI—truly there’s nothing we can compare to because it has helped revolutionize our decision-making in a totally new way. Cognos has also opened up a world of new possibilities in terms of what we can accomplish in the future. The software and the Cognos and IBM people have showed us new ways to better manage, better communicate, and better serve our community.”

