



## The Ottawa Hospital drives home business efficiencies using innovative patient safety framework from Datix



The Ottawa Hospital was formed in 1998 and is now one of the busiest hospitals in Ontario, Canada, spread across three campuses. A team of 12,000 staff, 1,200 doctors and 2,000 volunteers serve 1.2 million people in the region.

The organization is proud of the active role it plays in promoting and improving health within the community. It regularly collaborates with a wide range of partners to address the needs of local people and to build a strong, integrated system for regional health-care delivery.

The University of Ottawa Heart Institute—Canada’s largest and foremost cardiovascular health centre—delivers world-class care to The Ottawa Hospital’s cardiac patients.

### Datix at the heart of Canada’s largest teaching hospital

The Ottawa Hospital is committed to providing every patient with exceptional care, service and compassion, a vision that is reflected in the organization’s meticulous approach to monitoring clinical incidents from admission to final discharge. In fact, the organization’s patient safety framework, based on Datix, is so effective that it links directly into other parts of the hospital such as finance and HR to create a high value business tool that demonstrably improves performance and enables financial savings to be made.

Several years ago, however, the situation was very different. Dr Alan Forster, Scientific Director, Performance Measurement and Senior Scientist at the Ottawa Hospital Research Institute takes up the story, “At the time, we relied on staff remembering to log adverse events manually onto sheets of paper that were then scanned and loaded into different systems.

The whole process was clunky, time-consuming and erratic and became even worse when people, justifiably frustrated by the situation, resorted to creating their own systems that only added to the confusion. The time had come to rethink our patient safety strategy and introduce new technology that merited one of Canada’s largest teaching hospitals.”

### Configurability and automation top the selection criteria

The final decision to go out into the marketplace and search for a fully automated adverse event management solution came in 2009 after the Canadian accreditation body for Acute Care Hospitals further highlighted the inadequacies of the original manual system. After evaluating five vendors, The Ottawa Hospital selected Datix for its ease of use, configurability as well as the committed, professional attitude of the Datix team.

Dr Forster continued, “Datix was a clear winner. It stood head and shoulders above the rest of the competition in terms of adaptability. We were particularly impressed by the Datix leadership team who took an active interest in helping us make tangible improvements that would really make a difference to the hospital.”



### About The Ottawa Hospital

One of Canada’s largest teaching and research hospitals, The Ottawa Hospital is a bilingual multi-campus, health sciences centre, serving the 1.2 million residents of Ottawa and Eastern Ontario.

To meet the high demand for its services, it relies on a dedicated and compassionate team of 12,000 employees, 1,250 physicians and more than 2,000 volunteers.

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## Integration is key to measuring organization-wide performance

The deployment of DatixWeb software in 2010 to manage clinical events and complaints coincided with the foundation of The Ottawa Hospital's Department of Performance Measurement, tasked with monitoring the quality of all aspects within the hospital including the new Datix system.

Under the leadership of Dr Forster, the newly established department set about creating a data warehouse that brings together clinical, financial and HR information in one central place and provides a cohesive quality framework across the whole organisation. Having a complete picture of events and costs from different departments helps build a reasoned business case for, by way of example, the need to invest in more nursing staff to reduce the number of infections, surgical site errors or other adverse events that may continually persist in a particular area.

## Active doctor participation guarantees success

The Ottawa Hospital has taken a radical approach to patient safety by putting adverse event investigation and management in the hands of clinicians rather than with a separate risk management team. As a result, all reported events are initially reviewed by those with the knowledge and expertise necessary to take them to the next stage. Very quickly, doctors can establish if a bad outcome is the result of the patient's underlying illness or the quality of medical care they received.

Dr Forster and his team have used Datix in an innovative way, taking advantage of its inbuilt flexibility to create a robust solution. Since introducing a methodology known as Prospective Clinical Surveillance, The Ottawa Hospital has significantly increased the number of adverse events reported. Extra doctors or nurses are placed in departments on one-to-three month assignments to look for adverse events that might have been missed by voluntary reporting.

Clinicians can scan various hospital databases, search for events around specific cases, such as hospital re-admissions, and then record them in Datix. With all information stored in the same place, doctors see at a glance if a patient has been re-admitted to hospital within a period of 30 days and so give the case priority attention. These Datix 'e-triggers' are fundamental to building up a complete patient history and spotting trends that need to be addressed.

Dr Forster added, "It is exciting to be working with Datix in this way because we are pushing the frontiers and Datix is central to supporting that."

## Measurable benefits all round

Datix has benefitted The Ottawa Hospital all round with a 150% increase in the number of events reported in just two years. Quality data held in the Datix system means that Dr Forster and his team now have a reliable and instant source of information effect change and drive improvements.

Take the real-life example of blood test mis-labelling. Before Datix, there was one year of 5,000 instances where patient details have been inadvertently placed on the wrong specimen tube, causing stress for the patients concerned, loss of customer confidence and costing the hospital up to US\$100,000 in wasted time and materials. Datix has enabled The Ottawa Hospital to put in place tighter processes that help prevent common adverse events such as falls or avoid the unnecessary expense of repeat procedures.

## Communication accelerates reporting, simplifies measurement process

Communication around quality and safety has improved exponentially because data is held in one place, and both language and processes are consistent. Before Datix, there might be 27 definitions of an adverse event. Today, there is a single definition which accelerates reporting and simplifies the measurement process.

## Looking towards a healthy future

The Ottawa Hospital has ambitious plans for the future. It plans to enhance the e-trigger and clinical surveillance capabilities of the Datix system. By tailoring the Datix solution even further, it hopes to create alerts that help doctors identify risky situations before they actually occur or even cross-reference events to specific departments or staff groups. Dr Forster believes these next steps will manage clinical outcomes more effectively, encourage greater employee accountability and deliver better patient care.

## Fast Facts

- The Ottawa Hospital is using Datix to drive measurable improvements in patient safety
- Around 2,000 doctors are using the software to manage adverse events and complaints
- Datix links seamlessly to data in finance and HR to create a robust, hospital-wide performance measurement framework
- 150% increase in event reporting in just two years
- Information 'all in one place' accelerates reporting process
- Scientific Director & Senior Scientist Dr Alan Forster believes Datix is easy to use and highly configurable. Combined with a winning team from top to bottom, it drives business efficiencies and supports clinical excellence.

## About Datix

Datix has been a pioneer in the field of patient safety since 1986 and is today the leading supplier of software for patient safety, risk management, incident and adverse event reporting. Datix aims to help healthcare organizations build a culture and practice that drives excellence in patient safety. Datix recruits and retains people committed to the healthcare sector and continually invests in its software and services to ensure that it integrates best practice and learning.

Datix is focused on the health and social care sector - customers include public and private hospitals, primary care providers, GP surgeries, mental health and ambulance service providers. Datix clients also include organizations delivering care home and domiciliary care services.