



**EMPLOYEES:** 850 use Kronos

**INDUSTRY:** Healthcare

**PRODUCTS:**

Workforce Timekeeper™  
Kronos scheduling  
- Workforce Target Intelligence™  
- Workforce Workload Manager™

*“They [nursing leaders] take [Kronos] data to the nursing directors or CNO to explain their variances and to understand where they need to tweak things.”*

**Sara Ogurek**  
Nursing Information  
Systems Specialist  
Billings Clinic

Based in Billings, Montana, Billings Clinic is a community-governed healthcare organization consisting of a multispecialty physician group practice, a 285-bed hospital, and a 90-bed skilled nursing and assisted living facility. Comprising 3,800 employees, including 255 employed physicians and 85 nonphysician providers, all professionals work together to provide coordinated and complete care to patients. Billings Clinic was the first Montana Magnet®-designated healthcare organization and is a member of the Mayo Clinic Care Network. Billings Clinic is the community’s largest employer and serves patients in Montana, Wyoming, and the western Dakotas.

## CHALLENGES

- Staffing was based on a patient census that was manually adjusted, using the nurses’ assessment of selected acuity, and there was no good way to trend and review data
- Patient census projections for the next shift weren’t consistently performed or reviewed, so schedulers weren’t always consulting staffing forecast data
- Staffing was not based on true workload and often had a negative impact on budget adherence

## SOLUTION

- A Kronos scheduling, staffing, and workload solution provides real-time patient data that help nurse managers and leadership adjust staffing to patient census, workload intensity, and throughput data

## BENEFITS

- Staffing is reviewed every four hours, with the charge nurse and staffing office reviewing together the acuity-adjusted census and projected census
- Patient classification and census data are trusted by leadership, making variances relative to budget easier to explain
- Using the solution to staff to patient-care demand has helped maintain high-quality patient care and clarify the labor spend
- Charge nurses understand more objectively how staffing needs are impacted by workload intensity and census, and nurses better understand the reasons behind staffing decisions, improving satisfaction

## THE STORY — BILLINGS CLINIC

Billings Clinic charge nurses conducted bed meetings at 8:30 a.m., 4 p.m., and 3 a.m. to discuss staffing-to-patient census. The centralized staffing office and charge nurses weren't consistently using available data for census or review projections. The staffing office used paper matrices, adjusting them based on historical hours per patient day. Not using census, throughput, and workload data created challenges in staffing.

The healthcare organization moved to the Kronos automated staffing and scheduling solution, which uses data to create a staffing forecast screen of projected staffing needs based on an acuity-adjusted census. The result has been a more accurate view of each unit's demand-adjusted needs, creating more aligned staffing. With staff consistently scheduled to an acuity-adjusted census, as well as other workload data points, Billings Clinic is more confident in providing quality patient care while having a better handle on labor costs.

### Benefits of acuity-adjusted staffing

Within Kronos, charge nurses indicate the workload intensity level — from low to extreme — of each patient. Staffing is then evaluated every four hours, with the charge nurse and central staffing office reviewing the staffing forecast screen together to determine appropriate unit staffing based on the acuity-adjusted projected census. As the census or acuity changes, they also can re-project staffing needs for the next shift.

“Having this objective information is a huge benefit in staffing,” says Sara Ogurek, nursing information systems specialist. “The staffing analysis reports provide leadership with data on how charge nurses staffed versus their census projections.”

### Staffing to workload intensity positively impacts labor spend

Because charge nurses understand staffing needs more completely, they are staffing better and don't typically need last-minute help, explains Ogurek.

### Data detail reasons for staffing needs

Nursing leaders and charge nurses use the Kronos information to document staffing decisions. “They take data to the nursing directors or CNO to explain their variances and understand where they need to tweak things,” says Ogurek.

Tracking direct care hours is an area where this is especially beneficial. When a CNA needs to become a direct-care “sitter” for a high-risk patient, a special work code is used to track these hours. A unit can show the number of direct-care hours and how the additional sitter hours affect the unit's budget.

### Data identify areas for staffing improvement and savings

Solution data have been helpful in identifying census dips, areas for process improvements, and potential labor savings. Workload reports showed, for example, that the census was dropping significantly at 3 p.m. in a majority of units, but the shift ended at 7 p.m. During the night shift, the census rose, and by 7 a.m. the unit was full again. This information drove the decision to look at staffing units differently to accommodate for census fluctuations. The workload reports allowed leaders to see where their census dips were.

“Most of the unit leaders knew where the dips were, but to have the data in report form was helpful,” notes Ogurek, adding that the data led them to create the new process of staffing every four hours.

### Call-off data demonstrate compliance with union requirement

If staff needs to be called off a shift, this must occur two hours prior to the shift start. When hospital RNs are called off and the union questions documentation, Kronos reports detail when a nurse was called off, mitigating compliance issues.

### Making informed budget decisions

To prepare future budgets, Billings Clinic uses the solution's historical data, including acuity index information. “Understanding this information helps us make more informed decisions,” notes Ogurek.

With charge nurses better understanding the impact of the acuity-adjusted census on labor costs, they see how their decisions affect the bottom line. At the same time, with nurses better understanding the reasons behind staffing decisions, their workplace satisfaction and retention are improved. Kronos scheduling gives Billings Clinic real-time impact analysis that allows it to staff more efficiently while providing high-quality patient care.



Kronos Incorporated 297 Billerica Road Chelmsford, MA 01824 +1 800 225 1561 +1 978 250 9800 [www.kronos.com](http://www.kronos.com)

More information about Kronos customer success stories may be found at [www.kronos.com/resources](http://www.kronos.com/resources).

© 2015, Kronos Incorporated. Kronos and the Kronos logo are registered trademarks and Workforce Innovation That Works is a trademark of Kronos Incorporated or a related company. For a full list of Kronos trademarks, please visit the "trademarks" page at [www.kronos.com](http://www.kronos.com). All other trademarks, if any, are property of their respective owners. All specifications are subject to change. All rights reserved.

HC0173-USv2