

An Extra Set of (Expert) Helping Hands

► *It's a challenge to find great IT team members, especially for Cerner Millennium® installed applications. NorthBay Healthcare gets much needed help from HPG's Production Support team.*

It's hard to find good people, and NorthBay Healthcare knows it as well as any organization. The right blend of attitude and aptitude are hard to come by. And it's especially difficult to find in the highly-specialized world of Cerner Millennium® Applications.

On the other side of the equation is the substantial workload necessary to keep hospital systems up and running. There is a steady stream of maintenance activities, upgrades, and tasks that must be carried out – quickly – to keep patient care at its highest levels.

As Director of Clinical Systems and Integration at NorthBay Healthcare, Michelle Hearne leads a team of nine IT professionals. It's a high-performing group characterized by experience and longevity, with very little turnover. It still isn't enough when you consider the volume of Cerner Millennium® tickets that must be handled on a weekly basis.

"Patient care depends on us keeping our systems in top condition and giving our healthcare providers the technology support they need to deliver the

best care," said Hearne. "If we don't come through they can't take care of patients, and every day that a request is delayed means that patient care isn't as good as it could be."



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*- Michelle Hearne
Director of Clinical Systems and Integration, NorthBay Healthcare*

NorthBay Healthcare has two main inpatient facilities – Fairfield and Vacaville – just north of San Francisco in Solano County. The two hospitals and affiliated physician groups care for thousands each year.

NorthBay started to implement Cerner Millennium® over 10 years ago as their EMR and has made consistent progress, adding lab, pharmacy and radiology modules over the years. Each week is filled with IT requests to fine tune the system and the list of requests can get long, very long. Hearne wanted to grow her team in order to handle more requests but had a hard time finding qualified team members.

Hearne first got to know HPG during the initial stages of the NorthBay Cerner Millennium® implementation. They stayed in contact over the years, and when HPG mentioned its Production Support capabilities she immediately recognized an opportunity to solve her team member shortage and IT request backlog.



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*- Ed Ballerini, R.N., M.S.N.,
Chief Nursing Informatics Officer,
NorthBay Healthcare*



Cerner Millennium® Production Support – Ready When Needed

HPG's PRN®, Production Support is exactly what it sounds like: ongoing support for installed Cerner Millennium® Applications. A team of HPG specialists is ready to assist with activities and tasks "as needed."

In addition to the extra workload help that HPG provides, there is also the knowledge component. The collective expertise of the entire HPG staff is extremely valuable to NorthBay.

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Ed Ballerini, R.N., M.S.N, is Chief Nursing Informatics Officer at NorthBay and works with Hearne to prioritize IT projects and fulfill them. He points to the backlog processing productivity as a key indicator of HPG's results.

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What to Look for In a Cerner Millennium® Production Support Partner

1. Deep Cerner Millennium® expertise.
2. Broad knowledge across all Millennium® applications.
3. A hands-on attitude regarding all design, build and testing activities.

Pains and Gains

- (-) Not able to find qualified Cerner Millennium® IT experts
- (-) Large backlog of Cerner Millennium® maintenance tasks
- (-) Delay in handling healthcare provider upgrade requests
- (+) Extra set of expert hands, ready to tackle backlog
- (+) Access to broad and extensive Cerner Millennium® experience
- (+) Backlog reduced by 80 percent, maintaining more reasonable level

Ballerini said they had a very clear goal in mind when they engaged HPG and the PRN Production Support team: reduce the backlog by 80 percent or more within weeks. They achieved their goal and have easily cost-justified the investment in HPG Production Support.

The HPG Production Support team is always ready and available, and is only a fraction of the cost of two to three full-time employees. HPG augments the NorthBay staff, and this collaboration provides NorthBay full control over the prioritization and completion of work.

Hearne has very low turnover on her team so it's clear she treats people well. She just can't find enough of them. Even if she could, she'd likely have to pay costly search fees, moving expenses, full salaries and benefits. The HPG Production Support solution is a good one for her situation and she's been more than pleased with the experience.

"The HPG people are excellent in terms of responsiveness and knowledge," said Hearne. "On top of that, they deliver incredible value. They do what they say they're going to do and they do it for a reasonable investment."