

## Building up and implementing process oriented thinking through ProDoc

*In May 2007 Hospital District of Helsinki and Uusimaa launched a project named ProDoc to enable process-oriented work and promote best practices. More than 1000 experts have contributed to the project over a period of three years.*



Quality Manager Mrs. Leena Keskiisaari-Kajaste

### CUSTOMER CASE



HOSPITAL DISTRICT OF  
HELSINKI AND UUSIMAA

Department of Oncology

For the organization of specialized medical care, Finland is divided into 20 hospital districts. Five of them are university hospital districts. The Hospital District of Helsinki and Uusimaa (HUS) is the largest of these.

HUS serves patients by providing specialized medical care for the residents of its 26 member municipalities. The aim is to offer patients in all member municipalities a timely and equal access to specialized medical care.

HUS offers high-caliber specialist medical care in all 20 of its hospitals throughout the province of Uusimaa. In addition, as the largest university hospital in Finland, Helsinki University Central Hospital HUCH is nationally responsible for treating severe and rare illnesses and ones calling for special expertise and technology.

Historically patient care processes vary from healthcare provider to another. These organization, facility, or staff dependent processes create diverse customer experiences and dissatisfaction.

### Adding value to care paths

The initial target of the ProDoc project was to answer a fundamental question: How can we add value for patients and owners using process thinking in a large healthcare organization, such as the Hospital District of Helsinki and Uusimaa?

With this value adding objective the project was kicked off in order to identify care paths and model them on different levels. In addition suitable metrics for follow-up and process improvement were needed. With all this done, the organization would have the correct mindset and tools to manage care paths as daily work.

### Collaboration of experts

Commitment and co-operation of several professional experts were needed in the project. Besides the full-time project staff of two, hundreds of individuals contributed to ProDoc via several sub-projects. This collaboration supported in preparing the organization for the change and new way of thinking.

Both clinical and support function processes were identified and modeled to ensure the seamless patient flow and thus the value chain for all stakeholders. The benefit of the cross-functional teams was creating understanding and appreciation within the care path, seeing the shared goal for all.

As ProDoc ended in March 2010 as a project, the organization had learned process oriented thinking, as well as discovered the potential of actually managing processes. More than 200 processes are under implementation, pilot model for metrics was created successfully and the process oriented thinking is becoming part of everyday work. Now it is time to sustain the framework and build up continuous improvement. One of the success stories is presented on next page.

### ProDoc supported by QPR solutions

QPR ProcessGuide and QPR ScoreCard were used in ProDoc to model processes, create process metrics and share all information via ProDoc Portal utilizing QPR Server environment.

## ProDoc visualizes the care path of cancer patients

**The Department of Oncology of the Hospital District of Helsinki and Uusimaa has all core processes documented and modeled within the ProDoc project. The department is now implementing these processes to be part of everyday work.**

In the department of oncology the initial focus was on patients and other tangible things. Deputy Nurse Manager Birgit Byman finds important that change like this is done together, in collaboration. Only this leads to truly useful models and metrics.

- In 2008 we started asking questions like 'What actually happens in our department?' and 'What is our care path for the patient?'

A patient-centric approach requires the care to be observed from the patient's perspective, not from the professionals.

### Transparent care path as an objective

The care path for a breast cancer patient is a reference process model for the entire department. Chief Medical Officer at the Department of Oncology Tiina Saarto, speaks for transparency and seeing the big picture.

- The complete chain is as strong as its weakest link. Through studying complete care paths we can find overlaps and deficiencies, which could not be found in detailed, separate sections. This is also a way to reveal things that are working well.

Senior Nursing Officer Marita Kaltea emphasizes on work phasing and finding so-called bottle-necks.

- ProDoc as a framework is a tool that makes work easier and increases quality. At best, everybody knows which actions others are taking and at which stages. Furthermore, bottle-necks – *blocks between phases* – can be minimized.

Saarto also points out that the communication barrier between managers and workers can be brought down with process documentation.

- With a truly transparent process it's hard to turn a blind eye to problems. The facts speak mutual language that everybody understands.

At the moment the overall process model is being implemented for everyday work. The breast cancer patient process will be further on linked with that of surgery.

### Grinding the process enhances information

After a general description the process is grinded into further details and sub-processes. Detailed information like role and task descriptions as well as each professional provide an enriched process model.

- Especially in healthcare, analyzing work tasks is a welcomed challenge. Smartly distributed work is a benefit to everyone in the organization, Saarto says.

- Trained nurses could share parts of the traditional doctors' work and on the other hand their valuable time be reallocated from time-consuming secretarial work, continues Saarto.

### The quest for metrics

Time is one of the most significant quality factors in treating cancerous diseases. The target is to find metrics supporting quality and efficiency analysis of the patient care in addition to monetary terms.

Metrics are under work and the direction is clear. In addition to queue and transition times Senior Nursing Officer Kaltea raises the efficiency of information flow and Dr. Saarto adds in medical attributes, as well as the smoothness of process flow.



Deputy Nurse Manager Mrs. Birgit Byman

- Cancer care should start quickly, and that is why time is certainly one of the most important quality metrics. Finding metrics that focus on the most significant areas is a true challenge, but at the same time one of the most important tasks, Byman adds.

### From status quo to continuous improvement

ProDoc gave a good starting point for further developing the department. At the moment there are nine active projects to enhance the practical activities. Three of these projects are a direct continuation of ProDoc.

- The entire culture of the department changed thanks to this work. We have learned process thinking, systematic working and to broaden our perspective, says Saarto.

Saarto appreciates the current participating and collaborating work style, in which expertise is emphasized in an environment where all professional teams are active and all activities are transparent.

Deputy Nurse Manager Birgit Byman appraises the fact that everybody has the possibility to develop also his or her own work.

- We have learned that change is promoted and implemented through discussion, participation, and thus commitment.

#### Mrs. Leena Keskisaari-Kajaste

Quality Manager, M.Sc.  
HUS Group, Research and Development  
Hospital District of Helsinki and Uusimaa  
E-mail: leena.keskisaari-kajaste@hus.fi

#### Mrs. Birgit Byman

Deputy Nurse Manager  
Department of Oncology  
Hospital District of Helsinki and Uusimaa  
Email: birgit.byman@hus.fi