



☰ CASE STUDY

Philadelphia Nonprofit MANNA Partners with HSX to Improve Care Coordination Through Encounter Notifications

As a member of HealthShare Exchange (HSX), the Metropolitan Area Neighborhood Nutrition Alliance (MANNA) of Philadelphia receives alerts through the Encounter Notification Service® (ENS®), powered by Audacious Inquiry, when clients have healthcare events, allowing for timely follow-up and improved care coordination.

MANNA Works with HSX to Provide Nourishment to Individuals with Serious Illness

MANNA is a Philadelphia nonprofit delivering nourishment to low-income individuals with serious health conditions that recently entered into a partnership with the area's health information exchange, HealthShare Exchange (HSX), to improve patient outcomes by strengthening care coordination processes. The recipients of MANNA's services suffer from devastating chronic diseases that require special dietary support. Various factors impact these needs, especially changes in a recipient's health status, making it vital for MANNA to understand when and why their clients interact with the healthcare system. Through this partnership, MANNA is now subscribed to HSX's Encounter Notification Service® (ENS®), a software platform powered by Audacious Inquiry that provides encounter alerts to facilitate timely care coordination.

The Challenge: Patient Health Status Needed for Proper Nutritional Adjustments

Food insecurity in the U.S. is a major health issue. The nonprofit food bank, Feeding America, estimated that in 2021 as many as 42 million Americans, or one in eight people, struggled to access nutritious food and meals. Food insecurity can mean lacking access to food that meets dietary needs or having to restrict caloric intake because there is not enough money to afford it.

ENS alerts help MANNA deliver care and medically nutritious meals more efficiently. On average, patients receiving care from MANNA had better outcomes including shorter hospital stays, fewer admissions, and more discharges home.





Studies have also found that it is crucial to tailor dietary support for the critically ill, called nutrition therapy, to meet individual needs and promote better recovery and improved health outcomes. While there have not been many studies on the effects of food insecurity on adults, research has found that lacking access to nutritious food can lead to more negative health outcomes and is associated with a higher risk of mental health problems, diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and poor sleep.

Moreover, each stage of a critical illness may require different nutritional needs, which cannot be managed with a one-size-fits-all approach to diet. This is why MANNA works to provide adequate nutrition to its clients, finding that MANNA clients experience shorter hospital stays, less admissions, and more discharges home than those who aren't receiving nutritional support. In addition, a study about MANNA's impact on healthcare costs found that those receiving nutrition therapy from MANNA had reduced costs – \$10,000 less per patient, per month compared to a control group of patients who were not MANNA clients.

Nutritional therapy and addressing food insecurity are key to solving many major health issues in the United States, but this can only be done effectively if a patient's care team and nutritional therapy providers are aware of any health events they may be experiencing. This is where ENS alerts can play a key role.

ENS Alerts Keep MANNA Care Teams Informed

When MANNA clients experience a health event at an area hospital, ENS sends an electronic alert about the encounter. MANNA can then access HSX's Clinical Data Repository to obtain relevant information about the patient's health status. Receiving this information in a timely fashion is crucial, as it facilitates rapid patient outreach and allows MANNA to update clients' care plans to reflect their medical and dietary needs. Knowing when encounters occur is also important from a workflow perspective, as it allows MANNA to update delivery schedules and optimize resource allocation.

Outcomes: Improving Care Delivery and Patient Results

For patients with complex and/or co-morbid health issues, care coordination between healthcare facilities/providers and community support organizations is essential for optimal outcomes. ENS alerts help MANNA to understand health concerns in real time, allowing them to reach out to physicians and patients to determine treatment plans, and knowing where their clients are, informs scheduling and resource allocation decisions.

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“ We're thrilled that we can help MANNA's staff become an even better-informed and more crucial part of the care team of these chronically or severely sick patients in Philadelphia.

We've come together with MANNA because we support their mission and because our organizations believe, as we've said, that 'data plus food equal better outcomes.

**— DANIEL WILD HEALTHSHARE EXCHANGE,
SENIOR DIRECTOR OF HEALTH IT AND
CHIEF INFORMATION SECURITY OFFICER**

