



CASE STUDY

Streamlining Open Shift Management for Saint Francis Healthcare

Learn how Saint Francis is using Shifts to streamline open shift management and reduce contingent labor costs across their entire healthcare organization.

System details

- Saint Francis Healthcare System
- Headquartered in Cape Girardeau, Missouri
- Founded in 1959
- Operates 30+ healthcare facilities throughout southeast Missouri, southern Illinois and northern Arkansas



Introduction

Keeping shifts adequately covered had become a tough task for Saint Francis Healthcare, a leading healthcare system based in Cape Girardeau, Missouri. Managers and staffing coordinators often found themselves playing telephone every week trying to fill holes in the schedule, requiring hours of manual effort to ensure patient care ratios were met.

Saint Francis' existing system didn't provide mobile access, meaning staff couldn't easily view or pick up open shifts on the go, leading to frequent gaps in coverage.

Plus, without advanced reporting, management found it hard to keep track of shift fill rates and staff availability, making it challenging to allocate resources effectively and fully utilize all the resources in their float pool, including travel nurses.

To turn things around, Saint Francis chose Shifts to tackle persistent challenges in managing open shifts across their workforce.

The Challenge

Saint Francis faced several obstacles:

Complex shift management: Tracking filled versus unfilled shifts was inefficient, often leading to coverage gaps and requiring manual intervention.

Highly manual processes: Managers relied heavily on phone calls, texts and emails to recruit for open shifts. Their staffing coordinator often had to manually compile and email lists of open shifts weekly, hoping for responses. If shifts remained unfilled, managers would step in or beds would be temporarily blocked due to capacity.

Limited mobile access: Staff could not claim shifts via mobile devices, restricting their flexibility and increasing response times to shift openings.

Diverse workforce pools: Saint Francis was investing a lot of manual effort into categorizing and assigning shifts across a diverse workforce of internal resources, float pool members and contingent labor.

Lack of data insights: Insufficient reporting limited management's ability to assess fill rates, creating barriers to resource optimization and data-driven decision-making.



How Shifts helped Saint Francis achieve its goals

Recognizing the need for a tech-driven solution, Saint Francis partnered with Shifts to streamline its scheduling and open shift management processes. By using Shifts, Saint Francis empowered its float pool with easy access to available shifts via the Shifts mobile app.

To date, Saint Francis has close to 600 team members using the Shifts app across five professions and seventeen specialties.

By implementing the Shifts app across the organization, Saint Francis gained:

Mobile application access: Shifts' mobile app provided staff with a user-friendly platform to view and claim shifts by specialty, increasing shift fill rates and staff engagement.

Custom float pool integration: Staff were efficiently categorized into float pools, ensuring accurate and compliant shift assignments based on availability and qualifications. They could also configure tiered shift releases to optimize scheduling and cost structures.

Enhanced reporting tools: Real-time reporting delivered valuable insights, allowing Saint Francis to track shift fill rates and resource allocation more accurately.

Seamless integration and support: Shifts worked closely with Saint Francis' IT team to integrate with its scheduling system, establishing a reliable API data exchange and improving scheduling efficiency.

Jason Snow, vice president of human resources at Saint Francis, shared that the app-based scheduling approach was a game-changer for the organization, stating, "The RNs at our organization are very excited about the technology and the ease of picking up and managing open shifts."

Clayton Suggs, BSN, RN, Saint Francis' manager of patient care resources, shared, "I can't brag enough ... I have nothing but good things to say about the Shifts team. It's been a great partnership — I hope it continues for as long as it can."

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A joint integration effort

Saint Francis uses a scheduling system that does not have public APIs, which made it difficult to integrate with other solutions to fill gaps left by its current system.

Suggs, familiar with the change management required for new technology, went into the Shifts implementation process optimistic. “If you can’t adapt, healthcare might not be for you,” he shared, noting that he anticipated a few roadblocks but was impressed with how communicative, helpful and prompt the Shifts team was during onboarding. “I really couldn’t have asked for anything better.”

The Shifts team, in collaboration with Saint Francis’ system analyst, developed a workaround that allowed Saint Francis to open a two-way data exchange between Shifts and its scheduling platform, enabling real-time visibility into open shifts and seamless updates between systems.

This ensured that Saint Francis’ scheduling tool remained the single source of truth, while Shifts’ customizable shift tiering allowed Saint Francis to prioritize its own internal float pool before offering overtime, incentives or seeking agency labor to fill staffing needs.

The success of this implementation is a testament to the collaborative spirit between the Shifts team and Saint Francis, and our shared commitment to solving tough problems in service of better patient care.

Increasing app adoption with internal champions

Saint Francis’ travel nurses — some of whom had already used Shifts or similar apps at other facilities — became early adopters and advocates for the Shifts app. Their familiarity helped encourage permanent staff to embrace the new tool. “They’ve actually been pretty helpful in getting that going and championing the process,” said Suggs.

To support long-term adoption, Saint Francis integrated Shifts training into both orientation and on-the-floor onboarding, ensuring new hires, whether permanent or contracted, were equipped to use the app from day one.



Plans for expansion

Due to the program's initial success, Saint Francis recently expanded their program to support additional professions and specialties, which will enable a larger resource pool to claim and manage shifts within the Shifts app.

The expansion includes its ICU, ER, Family Birthplace (OB/Peds) and NICU units. These units rely on a mix of CNAs, RNs and patient transport staff, all of whom are now being brought into the Shifts application to streamline staffing and improve shift visibility across the system. Both full-time employees and contracted travelers are included in the pool.

Looking ahead, Saint Francis is exploring how to bring additional departments — such as EVS and ancillary services — onto Shifts.

Conclusion

The collaboration between Saint Francis Healthcare and Shifts has led to significant improvements in shift fill rates, workforce flexibility and operational efficiency.

Shifts offers a scalable solution that can empower healthcare facilities facing similar challenges to optimize their staffing, streamline open shift management and reduce costs. By partnering with Shifts, healthcare organizations can harness the power of a reliable, app-based shift management system designed to adapt to diverse workforce needs.

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