
**SAVING TIME, SAVING LIVES: CONFLUENCE HEALTH NATIONALLY HONORED FOR SUPPLY CHAIN
INNOVATIONS USING A.I. DIGITAL ASSISTANT**

Wenatchee, WA: In healthcare, a few minutes can make a massive difference, so having access to supplies as fast as possible is not a matter of convenience, but a matter of life and death. Finding supplies and keeping them stocked to be easily accessible can be daunting in any large organization but, when the minutes count, it becomes even more crucial. Finding the answer not only solved a long-standing challenge for Confluence Health, but gained them national recognition for the creative solution, winning an award whose nominees included Fortune 500 companies and international competition.

“We want to ensure staff have the tools and supplies they need to provide the best patient care possible to the communities we serve,” commented Chad Hoffman, supply chain operations director for Confluence Health. “Coleman Digital Assistant helps staff to access item information on the go from their phone, helping us locate supplies quicker and making them available to our patients.”

Coleman, a piece of automated software from Infor, is a digital assistant like Amazon’s Alexa or Apple’s Siri. Except in this case, Coleman doesn’t help you remember the capital of Denmark or let you know that your brownies are cooked, but instead helps Confluence Health staff locate supplies in mere seconds when it used to take a quarter of an hour or longer.

“The Coleman assistant has changed the efficiency in how the STAT CNAs can locate lifesaving equipment in our storeroom,” reflected Aja Rodriguez, a STAT certified nursing assistant (CNA) working in the resource unit for Confluence Health. “Our original resource was a book that is alphabetically organized by the name of the product. This is further complicated since a product may be known by several names within the hospital. With the Coleman assistant, I can put in a brief description either verbally or through chat, and it will bring up the options that match. This has saved so much time and is crucial when a patient needs something in a timely manner. It has been a groundbreaking resource, especially for our night shift workers who don't have a backup after-hours.”

Rather than having to run down to a storeroom, look through a book which may be out of date, and then check a shelf only to find that the resource is low, which then requires trying to find products in other supply areas, a CNA can now quickly ask Coleman where the resource is from their mobile phone while en route to a supply room and can not only find what shelf the item is on before even arriving, but also get a list of alternate locations if supplies are low or it is available somewhere closer by. This innovative process not only saves time but also saves personnel since fewer people can be more efficient with their efforts to get supplies by going to the right place the first time. In fact, leadership estimates that key supply management processes are now executed at least 90% faster.

“Coleman helps me locate items quickly that I have in inventory that would normally take me over a half hour to locate in the storeroom,” added Chris Mangold, a CNA in Confluence Health’s resource unit. “It saves a tremendous amount of time.”

Having a strong relationship with their IT vendor Infor, Confluence Health was approached about the technology and asked if it might be useful. Thinking on problems that needed solving, David Boehm, Confluence Health’s senior enterprise resource planning analyst, proposed the innovative solution.

“Knowing the amount of time spent searching for supplies after hours by our STAT CNAs as well as the frustration that this can cause, we felt that utilizing Infor’s Coleman DA could provide us with a solution to an ongoing problem by putting the information needed to locate supplies right at clinical staffs’ fingertips,” commented Boehm.

Infor was so impressed by the creative use of the technology that they [nominated Confluence Health for a national award given each year by Constellation Research](#), a technology research and advisory group, called the SuperNova Award. Nominated in the ‘Future of Work: Employee Experience’ category, [Confluence Health beat out several Fortune 500 companies – including Warner Music Group, SAP, and CLIF Bar - to take home the award at a gala held at Constellation’s Connected Enterprise event on October 26, 2022.](#)

“I’m most proud of the collaborative effort from everyone who was involved in the project. We were able to solve a problem that had existed for a long time and to do it using the tools we had available,” remarked Stace Webley, financial systems support manager for Confluence Health, who oversaw the implementation of the project. “I think this project has proven how valuable a strong partnership can be with other departments and with our IT vendor. Because we have such a strong relationship with Infor, they came to us with the tech and asked if we could use it. It just proves that working together in a collaborative way, and having good relationships, lends itself to success.”

About Confluence Health

Confluence Health serves the largest geographic region of any healthcare system in Washington State, covering over 12,000 square miles of Okanogan, Grant, Douglas, and Chelan counties. Confluence is one of only two locally-lead healthcare systems in the state with the purpose of maintaining availability and access to high-quality, cost-effective healthcare services for North Central Washington. The Confluence Health Board of Directors provides governance for Confluence Health, the Clinic, Central Washington Hospital, and Wenatchee Valley Hospital, and includes nine community board members and six physician board members.

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