



## Making Every Minute Count: Medical School Streamlines Time and Attendance with Web-Enabled Solution

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Deborah A. Taylor, EVMS

Eastern Virginia Medical School recently reduced the effort to prepare payroll for 1,600 salaried and hourly employees from three days to well under one, and eliminated a payroll departmental staff position. Paychecks reflect actual time worked, and employees and supervisors gain access to a real-time review of their pay period totals and accrued paid time off. Key to this achievement is a web-enabled time and attendance system with advanced features for automating, analyzing and managing employee labor data, while meeting the scalability, reliability and reporting requirements of the medical school.

### **About Eastern Virginia Medical School**

Eastern Virginia Medical School (EVMS) provides the southeastern Virginia region with world-class medical and research services. The Eastern Virginia Medical Center includes the Sentara Norfolk General Hospital, the region's primary tertiary care center, and Children's Hospital of The King's Daughters, a full-service, acute care facility which serves as the regional referral center for pediatrics.

Additional facilities include the Edward E. Brickell Medical Sciences Library; the Jones Institute for Reproductive Medicine; the Center for Pediatric Research; and the Department of Internal Medicine's Division of Endocrinology and Diabetes. The center also houses additional educational and research facilities, and the administrative offices.

### **The Burden of Manual Methods**

In years past, EVMS tracked employee time and attendance with a completely manual system of paper time cards. The payroll department spent over three days each pay period processing the time and labor data of over 1,600 EVMS hourly and salaried employees including clinical researchers, academic professionals; food services employees, nursing, doctors, custodial, department chairs, and many others.

While the payroll department did its best to ensure an accurate and efficient process, the manual system was problematic. As an example, due to cumbersome hand sorting of departmental time cards, employees submitted their weekly records on a Thursday, projecting their estimated time worked for the Friday. Any discrepancies in the actual time worked on the Friday were then adjusted in the next pay period. Not only was this a time waster for the payroll department, the process often resulted in inaccurate pay period totals and increased the chance of fraud. In fact, payroll issued up to 15 corrected checks each pay period due to the inaccuracies.

EVMS tracked salaried employees paid time off (vacation and sick time) manually as well, and the payroll department was burdened with home grown spreadsheets, manual data entry, and daily interruptions when responding to employee inquiries.



## **Looking for a Better Way**

Concerned with these and other limitations, the EVMS board mandated that an automated time and attendance system be put in place. The system had to offer full capability for tracking time, labor reporting, and accommodate both web access and time clock entry for workers. EVMS also sought proximity readers

EVMS selected Mid-Atlantic Time Systems (Williamsburg, VA) to implement Attendance Enterprise™ from InfoTronics, a scalable time and attendance system offering flexible pay rules, scheduling, labor budgeting, benefit accruals, web access for employees and managers, and biometric data collection.

Mid-Atlantic Time Systems installed the system in a matter of 8 weeks, including six proximity reader devices on the ground floor of each EVMS facility. Based on EVMS's specific structure and pay rules, Mid-Atlantic Time Systems configured and integrated the system with the payroll vendor, and once implemented, helped the medical school achieve key improvements.

Now, hourly employees begin shifts using proximity readers or access the web for time tracking via Attendance Enterprise. There are over 900 daily web log-ins, and 600 salaried employees track their paid leave via the new system. Attendance Enterprise easily processes 34,000 transactions every pay period, polling the data collection devices in real time. A customized interface exports the data to the payroll service.

## **Empowered Supervisors, Employees**

A key achievement since automating time and attendance is that EVMS empowered departmental supervisors with the management of employee resources. States Deborah A. Taylor, Director, Information Technology/CIO "The paper time cards and home grown systems have gone away. Once a pay period ends, it is the supervisors who review and authorize departmental totals before payroll exporting, reviewing any exceptions – all on line in real time."

With Manager Self Service, 120 supervisors instantly see exceptions to scheduled attendance such as tardiness and absenteeism, notifying supervisors of issues and trends. This helps supervisors deal with attendance issues before they become chronic problems.

## **Accuracy Improves**

Attendance Enterprise easily manages multi shift pay rules, holiday and double time; once tracked by hand rounding to the hour. States Taylor, "There are far fewer special checks and corrections issued, giving employees more trust that pay is

accurate, and freeing up the payroll department tremendously.” Automated calculations easily implement the School’s rules for granting and using vacation, sick time and other benefits – to the minute for more exact pay totals. Benefits can be scheduled ahead of time (such as pre-approved vacation time), with balances monitored and limits enforced. All this happens without manual intervention, freeing the payroll department from managing a once cumbersome process.

EVMS also uses the scheduling module to help supervisors manage manpower requirements and to provide for better quality assurance in completing the time review process. In addition, the trending capabilities from the historical tracking of data within Attendance Enterprise helps supervisors recognize troublesome patterns before they negatively affect operations.

EVMS’ information technology departments place a strong emphasis on the provision of data to management for decision making. Attendance Enterprise’s reports and data extracts are easily ported by the supervisors to PDF, CSV, DOC, RTF, TXT and HTML formats. They also lend themselves well to storage in EVMS’s data warehouse for data mining efforts that may include data sources in addition to Attendance Enterprise.

### **A Better Bottom Line**

All told, EVMS reduced the amount of time once needed to prepare payroll each period from three days to under one, and eliminated a payroll staff position. Paychecks accurately reflect actual time worked, and employees and supervisors gain access to a real-time review of their pay period totals and accrued vacation, sick, floating holidays. Concludes Taylor, “The bottom line is we improved the quality of timekeeping, while shifting the responsibility for managing labor resources and benefits to the supervisors and employees where it belongs. Payroll is no longer burdened with chasing down missing information, or cutting corrected paychecks. Our management is confident that employee resources are being tracked efficiently.”

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