How Smart Asset Management Can Lower Costs, Boost Efficiency, and Elevate Patient Care

SWIPE SENSE

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There's no room for inefficiency in today's competitive healthcare environment. Demand for services is high while staff shortages are stubbornly persistent. Labor and supply costs continue to increase, outpacing reimbursement.

According to a 2025 report by the American Hospital Association, overall hospital expenses increased by 14.1% from 2022 to 2024 due to inflation, while Medicare reimbursement only increased by 5.1% during the same period.

Hospital executives are pressed to reduce costs while improving the delivery of care. Ineffective asset management and its underlying effects on productivity, costs, patient safety, and employee satisfaction play a significant role in achieving this balance.

At a Glance

The Cost of Inefficient Asset Management

"More than one-third of nurses spend at least an hour finding items of equipment during an average hospital shift. On average a further hour is spent helping other wards locate items."

- Nursing Times

According to a Nursing Times survey, a nurse may spend up to 40 hours – the equivalent of one whole work week – tracking down necessary equipment every month. And a recent time and motion study found that hospital nurses spend up to nearly 12% of their total work time on non-nursing activities that include "searching for a supply or equipment."

Staff who work at hospitals that utilize an effective asset management system can locate needed equipment in a matter of seconds.

The average hourly wage for a Registered Nurse is now $45 per hour. That is a fair price for competent, compassionate nursing care. It's a lot to pay for time spent searching for an IV pole, though.

Meanwhile, it's estimated that hospitals spend $93 billion each year on medical equipment lifecycle costs (MELC), and hospital equipment represents one of the largest spikes in healthcare spending.

Ineffective asset management caused by lost, unmaintained, or over and underutilized equipment has created an immediate challenge for efficient equipment utilization, which has direct implications on cost savings.

According to Becker's CFO Report, hospitals are missing savings of as much as 12% to 16% due to a lack of accurate information and the bandwidth of internal resources to efficiently manage and allocate important hospital equipment.

The Far-Reaching Benefits of Effective Asset Management

The benefits of asset management are extensive, from saving time and money to improving patient care. This increased efficiency also makes nurses' lives easier, which can go a long way to minimize burnout and increase nurse retention. Here are several ways that asset management can directly impact a hospital's bottom line.

Asset Management Reduces Overstocking

Hospitals typically overstock essential supplies, such as IV infusion pumps and heart monitors, to ensure that patients and providers have access to necessary supplies when needed.

It's much more cost-effective to efficiently use the equipment and supplies a hospital has on hand. With a real-time locating system, hospital staff can almost instantaneously identify the location of unused infusion pumps. There is no need to stockpile pumps because staff can quickly find and use existing equipment.

In one real example, when management received a request for additional IV pumps at $2,500 per unit, reviewing utilization data first revealed the facility already had sufficient pumps—they just weren't distributed effectively. This data-driven approach prevented tens of thousands in unnecessary equipment purchases.

An accurate asset management system can dramatically decrease overstocking. You may still need to have extra supplies on hand in case of emergency and extraordinary demand, but you should not have excessive amounts of equipment sitting in storage.

When you monitor asset usage, you'll be able to see when it's time to purchase more equipment. Conversely, you will also be able to see if you have excess equipment that you may be able to sell or redeploy to another hospital within your system.

"

Overstocking to compensate for lost or misplaced infusion pumps can cost the typical hospital

$150,000

or more annually.

- Hospital and Healthcare Management

Most hospitals overstock by approximately

30%.

But overstocking is costly. In 2019 alone, hospitals collectively spent

$25.7B

on unnecessary supplies.

"Research shows that between 10% to 20% of a hospital's mobile assets are lost or stolen during their useful life, costing $3,000 per item." -**Chief Healthcare Executive**

Asset Management Prevents Hoarding and Borrowing Between Units

Nurses are not trying to cause problems when they hide equipment. They're simply trying to do their jobs. But the result of this behavior costs hospitals in real, measurable ways.

When staff can't count on finding the equipment they need, they sometimes take matters into their own hands. Nurses have been found hiding IV pumps in janitor closets, behind ceiling tiles, and in other out-of-the-way spots to keep a personal supply ready for their patients.

A lack of trust drives this hoarding behavior. Healthcare workers hold on to memories of past shortages, and those experiences push them to stash equipment. The problem feeds itself. When nurses hide equipment, other nurses can't find it. This cuts into how much each piece of equipment actually gets used.

The same pattern plays out between departments. Staff from one unit will walk over to another unit to borrow a pump, only to be turned away because that unit is holding equipment back for its own patients. This creates friction between departments and wastes time that could go toward patient care.

Efficient asset management addresses this directly. Real-time data shows which departments are holding more than their share and which are running short, making it possible to move equipment based on actual patient need. When nurses trust that a clean pump will always be waiting in the supply closet, the impulse to hide one disappears.

Asset Management Reduces Equipment Loss & Theft

Theft and loss cost hospital systems an average of one million dollars per year. Instances of theft frequently appear in the headlines:

- A 2015 investigation found that nearly $12 million dollars of equipment, including heart monitors, mammography machines, and infant incubators, has gone missing from Santa Clara Valley Medical Center in San Jose, California.
- In 2023, several hundreds of thousands of dollars of medical equipment – including an electrocardiogram machine and mobile computers – were stolen from Prisma Health Baptist Hospital in Columbia, South Carolina.
- In 2025, a former employee was arrested for stealing emergency medical equipment including heart monitors and a feeding tube pump valued at more than $150,000 from Lee Memorial Hospital.

While many devices are deliberately stolen, others end up in the laundry or garbage. When patients are discharged from the hospital, medical equipment (including expensive telemetry units) is often unwittingly tossed in the trash or mistakenly sent to the laundry room.

An asset management system can significantly reduce this type of loss by alerting staff when a tagged piece of equipment enters a non-designated zone, such as the laundry room, kitchen or trash room. This can help hospitals "rescue" equipment that would otherwise end up in the garbage. Likewise, organizations can be alerted any time equipment "walks out the door."

Asset Management Helps Extend the Life of Equipment

Keep Track of Regular Maintenance and Repairs

Appropriate maintenance preserves the functional lifespan of medical equipment. It's typically much more cost-efficient – and eco-friendly – to prevent machine breakdowns and need-it-now purchases meant to replace equipment that fails. An asset management system can help hospitals proactively schedule and track both maintenance and repairs.

IV infusion pumps, MRI machines, and critical life support equipment require regular maintenance and certification. According to *Healthcare Finance*, performing annual certification and maintenance in-house can help hospitals lower costs and decrease the need for backup devices. In some cases, it may be cost-effective to hire certified technicians to do the work.

This same visibility also helps with recall management—when a medical device manufacturer issues a safety recall, healthcare organizations can instantly identify the exact location of every device matching recall criteria, verify that each one has been properly addressed, and document complete compliance.

Reprocess Equipment to Reduce Purchases

Asset management systems allow health systems to track supply usage patterns and identify inefficiencies. This information can help you make informed decisions about when to replace, retire, or re-use assets.

Increasingly, health systems are learning that it's possible to safely reprocess many non-invasive "single-used" medical devices, including blood pressure and tourniquet cuffs, patient fall alarms, EKG leads and cables, pulse oximeter sensors, and sequential compression devices. According to the Association of Medical Device Reprocessors (AMDR), 20,328,087 pounds of medical waste were diverted in 2021 because of the use of reprocessed devices.

Asset Management Improves Patient Care & Outcomes

When hospital staff cannot locate necessary medical equipment in a timely manner, patients suffer. They linger in emergency departments while unit staff search for the equipment needed to safely care for patients upon transfer to the floor.

They wait for antibiotic treatment as staff try to locate a clean, available IV pole and pump. An irregular heart rhythm may go undetected as staff scramble to locate a clean telemetry unit.

Such delays can negatively affect patient outcomes. Studies have shown, for instance, that effective post-operative infection control is best achieved if patients receive prescribed pre-operative antibiotics within 30 minutes to one hour pre-incision. If the medication does not get into the patient until right before surgery because staff could not access a pump, the patient is at increased risk of infection.

To satisfy patient needs in less-than-ideal circumstances, nursing staff sometimes use compromising "workarounds" to compensate for the lack of available equipment. One study found that nurses who were unable to access necessary equipment sometimes gathered equipment from the dirty utility room or other patient rooms — a practice which increases the risk of infection transmission.

Your clinical staff can do their best work, and optimize patient outcomes, if they have the proper equipment in the proper place. An asset management system helps them provide efficient, cost-effective, quality patient care.

Most Commonly Tracked Hospital Assets

Based on SwipeSense data, here is a list of the top 20 individual hospital assets commonly 'tagged' or tracked:

1. *IV Pump Brain/Module*
2. *Telemetry Transmitter/Box*
3. *SCD Pump*
4. *Patient Bed*
5. *Vital Signs Monitor*
6. *Blood/Fluid Warmer*
7. *Stretcher*
8. *Bair Hugger*
9. *Defibrillator*
10. *Fan/HEPA Filter*
11. *Epidural Pump*
12. *Bassinet*
13. *Wheelchair*
14. *Aspirator*
15. *Ventilator*
16. *Syringe Pump*
17. *PCA Pump*
18. *Apple iPod/iPad*
19. *EtCO2 Monitor*
20. *Language Line*

Best Practices for Asset Management

1. Perform Regular Inventory Audits

Regularly scheduled asset audits can help you adhere to maintenance schedules, improve recall compliance, track depreciation, and identify items that need to be replaced, repaired or discarded. Audits can also help reduce waste, save money and ensure that your facility is not over- or under stocked in any particular area.

A complete audit involves taking inventory of all of your hospital's fixed and mobile assets. You will want to record the following details about every asset:

- Type / category
- Value
- Location
- Years in service
- Operational status
- Manufacturer information
- Maintenance history
- Parts vendor

Ideally, audits should be completed quarterly, but at least once per year at a minimum. The information can be entered into a spreadsheet or input into an asset management system, which is less prone to errors caused by manual data entry and can significantly streamline the process. Tagging your assets will also simplify audits.

2. Tag Your Assets

During an initial inventory audit, all assets should be tagged with a unique identification number. Various types of tags can be used for this purpose, including RFID tags, QR codes, scannable barcodes and Bluetooth systems. Be sure to choose durable tags that can withstand the regular sanitization and environmental hazards that medical equipment is subject to.

3. Schedule Preventive Maintenance

In a medical setting, the unexpected breakdown of critical equipment can have dire consequences. Proactively scheduling maintenance for your facility's equipment can help you avoid unexpected outages and prevent disruptions to patient care, while minimizing costly repairs and replacements.

A good preventive maintenance plan should include regular inspections along with cleaning and servicing the equipment. Be sure to include specific tasks that should be performed daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly and annually. Taking these proactive steps will go a long way to protect the facility's significant investment and extend the life of the equipment.

4. Invest in Asset Management Software

Implementing a technology solution for asset management is an important step to overcoming ineffective asset management. Sophisticated software can streamline inventory audits and preventive maintenance while allowing providers to locate equipment in mere seconds.

Accurate information on the location and utilization of equipment is key in order for organizations to make informed decisions across the medical equipment lifecycle that includes purchases, repair and allocation.

Using technology to monitor the location, **usage and status of a device helps hospitals:**

- Reduce costs of new purchases through loss prevention
- Improve strategic purchasing decisions based on lost, broken, overutilized or underutilized equipment
- Efficiently manage timing for preventive maintenance, reducing costs of broken equipment and helping to meet Joint Commission standards
- Decrease the time nurses spend looking for equipment during a shift to improve workflow and patient experience
- Allocate funds for capital planning more effectively based on asset utilization (i.e., Do we really need 5 new infusion pumps?)
- Create a system-wide approach to track assets that move from one facility to another

SwipeSense Asset Management

SwipeSense's Asset Management solution is built to make managing equipment smarter and more efficient. It brings real-time visibility, coordination, and control to assets across the health system. The platform helps teams stay ahead of inefficiencies and make confident, informed operational decisions every day.

The platform combines seamless hardware with powerful analytics to track and manage equipment effortlessly. Through a centralized, intuitive dashboard, staff can quickly:

- Locate assets
- Monitor unit and room readiness
- Access actionable insights
- Streamline service needs

Features like geofencing, smart alerts, and proactive maintenance reporting help prevent loss, streamline preventive maintenance, and guide smarter procurement and deployment decisions. The result is a more connected and efficient operation, where teams spend less time managing equipment and more time delivering exceptional care.

Unit Readiness

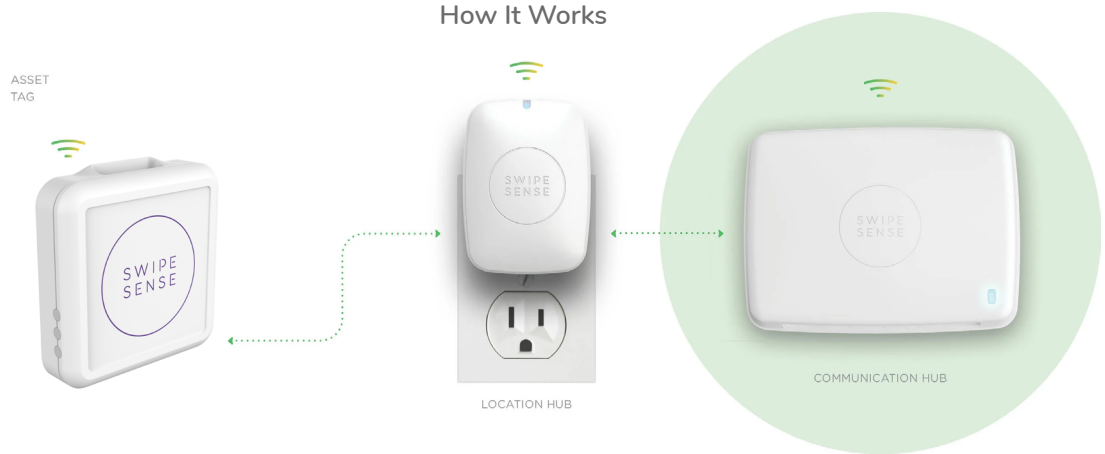
> *Shift workflows from reactive problem-solving to proactive shift readiness by bringing together live asset visibility, room-level requirements, and asset governance.*

The *Unit Readiness* feature gives managers a real-time view into whether their units and patient rooms are fully equipped for safe, uninterrupted care. With just a glance, managers can verify whether equipment thresholds are met, identify under-equipped rooms, locate missing or misplaced assets, and monitor equipment status (borrowed, lost, under maintenance, etc.). This level of visibility reduces last minute scrambling and improves overall equipment accountability. It gives care teams confidence that every room is ready before patients arrive.

Asset Utilization

> *Fine-tune inventory levels, avoid unnecessary purchases, and get more value out of existing resources by surfacing patterns in both high-demand and underutilized assets.*

The *Asset Utilization* feature adds another layer of intelligence by revealing how equipment is actually used across the health system. Insight into peak usage periods also support more strategic rental decisions. With a clearer picture of demand and availability, teams can trust that the right equipment is in the right place at the right time, without excess cost or waste.



Beyond Asset Management

The innovative RTLS platform of the SwipeSense® system powers applications that include Hand Hygiene Monitoring, Asset Management, Nursing Insights and Contact Tracing. Easily collect the data your facility needs from a single platform to protect patients, improve clinician experiences, and create operational efficiencies.

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See SwipeSense Asset Management in Action

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