

[Home](#) » [News](#) » [Hospitals & IDNs](#)**CFO OFFERS BEST BET FOR GETTING BEST BUY ON IT**[E-mail to a Friend](#)[Print](#)**CFO offers best bet for getting best buy on IT**June 09, 2009 | [Bernie Monegain](#), Contributing Editor*Hillsdale Community Health Center*

SEATTLE – Valerie Fetters, chief financial officer of Hillsdale Community Health Center, an 84-bed hospital in Hillsdale, Mich., is used to keeping an eye on the bottom line.

When the hospital decided to roll out an electronic health record, she realized the project would be expensive and complex and the due diligence would be more challenging than ever. She and her colleagues decided help was in order.

"We had a vendor help us through the process," Fetters said. "It's the best

decision that we've made."

Fetters is prepared to give her reasons why at a session called "Reducing Costs of IT Acquisition: Hillsdale Community Health Center Case Study." The one hour and 15 minute presentation (B06) on Monday, June 15, begins at 2:45 p.m.

Vince Ciotti, who served as consultant on the Hillsdale EHR acquisition, will join Fetters for the presentation.

Fetters and Ciotti promise to share with the audience tips on how to foster price competition among vendors, contract negotiation strategies, a list of often overlooked hidden costs and advice on how to avoid the most common mistakes hospitals make when buying new IT systems.

"Even the smallest vendors set their list price at a higher level than they intend to close for, expecting some discounting and negotiations" wrote Ciotti in a recent article.

*Vince Ciotti*

Ciotti, a founder and principal of the IT consulting group H.I.S. Professionals LLC, came to consulting 20 years ago by way of Shared Medical Systems, where he worked as an installation director in New York and New Jersey hospitals.

Fetters credits Ciotti with saving Hillsdale about \$500,000 because of his familiarity with industry standards. He helped the Hillsdale team figure out what they needed in a system and what might be considered frills.

"I can easily see how you can get manipulated into services, and end up paying more," Fetters said.

Hillsdale executives reviewed the offerings of five companies, Fetters said, whittled that down to two, and settled on Mobile, Ala.-based CPSI.

They started the conversion from paper to digital on Nov 1, 2008, with the financial applications and some clinical order entry. Phase 2 was completed in May with the surgical package, and Phase 3 – point of care – is tentatively scheduled for go-live on Jan. 4 next year.

Not only did Ciotti advise the Hillsdale team on the necessary versus the extras, but also he negotiated with CPSI to shave about \$400,000 from the original costs, according to Fetters.

"I don't know that we could have gotten enough concessions," Fetters said. "He clinched it for us."

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