



At a kickoff meeting held in August 2005, the students were introduced to the project and to SAS[®] Strategic Performance Management (SPM) and SAS Enterprise Guide[®]. Then, using a large dataset from Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, MD, the team isolated about 90,000 medical records pertinent to the AIDS/HIV patient population. Using Enterprise Guide and SPM for data analysis and reporting, the team identified factors that influence length of stay and cost of care, two key cost drivers. The students' report also provided demographic data on the AIDS population both nationally and in Maryland, as well as other factors that influence that population.

Students enjoyed working on real software applications from SAS to solve a “live” IT problem. They formed a team, developed client deliverables and presented their finished work to the SAS management team. Students were expected to draw on their coursework, which included database management, systems analysis, networking, accounting, finance, operations management and marketing courses. In addition to group road trips, activities at the SAS headquarters played a major part in the experience.

Throughout the semester, SAS industry experts, product managers and strategists offered overviews on healthcare and intelligence software to the students. These interactions with professionals in the field were highly valuable for the students as they tested their theories and sought to validate their findings.

The students concluded their report with specific recommendations aimed at hospitals, and state government as well as general recommendations for policymakers to help drive the adoption of healthcare IT. And during the final presentation to SAS management, students revealed their findings and recommendations to managers working in the fields they were studying.