TRANSFORMATIONAL CARE

Ministry Transformation in Action

Transformational Care at Catholic Healthcare West: Improving point of service collections and streamlining the billing processes in the Emergency Department

Lacey Newbry RD, Don Dracoulis MHA, Heather Miller MBA, RD | Catholic Healthcare West

Background:

Transformational Care (TC) is the system-wide initiative and methodology to change the way we do business at Catholic Healthcare West (CHW) by empowering the experts (front line staff) to participate in process diagnosis and improvement. Through customized utilization of lean and six sigma tools, TC aims to optimize the patient experience, improve organizational and financial performance, and change the culture of CHW. Through September 2010, more than 60 teams of front-line staff at over 15 hospitals have implemented TC solutions.

Objective:

Over the past year (August 2009-September 2010), as part of the CHW system-wide Transformational Care paradigm, over 15 hospitals have implemented solutions to increase ED co-pay collections and decrease patients left without being registered (LWBR). Increased co-pay collections result in increased overall revenue and reduction of re-work and dedicated resources. Decreasing patients left without being registered improves the billing opportunity and optimizes ED throughput.

A Bottoms up approach to achieve large operational gains:

TC promulgates culture change using lean implementation and consistent problem solving methodologies utilizing front line staff as the key decision makers to change processes and rewrite standard work. Front line staff become the main drivers of improvement because they own the process.

Over 300 Registration clerks have been trained in process improvement solutions.

We can't solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them.
ALBERT EINSTEIN

Research Methods:

As part of TC, hospitals across CHW organized teams consisting of front-line ED staff to redesign current processes for improved efficiency.

Team members:

- Analyzed baseline data by evaluating point of service (POS) collections and left without being registered percentages in the ED over a 12 month time-frame
- Used Lean process diagnostic tools and participated in first-hand observations and interviews to determine key issues related to co-pay collection and patients LWBR

Key issues and mindsets causing poor collections and LWBR:

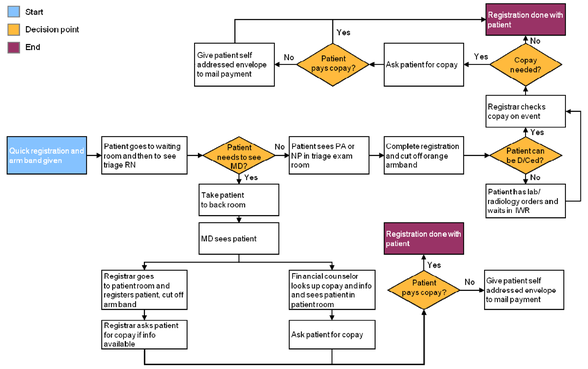
- Not for profit mindset fostered a practice of chartable care even for those patients having a payer source
- ED staff did not understand implications of patients LWBR
- Poor communications between ED clinical staff and registrars regarding patient location and status

Implementation Methods:

After ascertaining key issues, team members were able to implement customized solutions fitting the needs of their individual hospitals in addition to taking advantage of Transformational Care solutions implemented at prior hospitals. Common solutions (albeit customized at each facility) implemented across CHW include:

- Unique disposable ID bracelet to signal staff that a patient has not been fully registered
- Visitor badges to identify non patients
- Common scripting for ED registrars when collecting POS dollars
- Incentive plan for meeting co-pay collection targets
- Daily huddles between clinical ED and registration staff to discuss metrics and briefly problem solve for continuous process improvement
- Posting of performance metrics in public areas
- Restructure of work stations for optimal flow and timely collections
- Use of electronic patient location monitor
- Limit patient entrance and exit to prompt seamless location of patient
- Standard work created by staff to decrease variability of registration staff
- Rounding for influence by senior leaders

Process mapping is used in the diagnostic phase to quickly identify bottlenecks and inefficiencies process



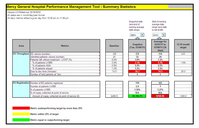
ED Registration Process Map (Pre-Implementation)

Visual and Performance Management ED Solutions Implemented Across CHW

Performance huddles are held daily to discuss metrics from the previous day and allow for brief problem solving when needed. Huddles aide in sustainability of improvements.

Armbands indicating a patient has not been registered are a visual cue to all ED staff that a patient should not be discharged until the wrist band is removed creating group responsibility and fostering a team environment

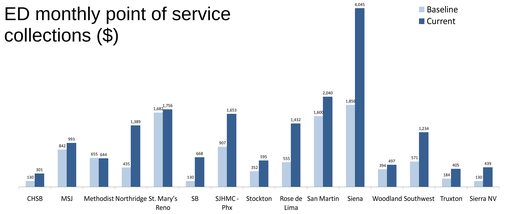
Daily Performance Management and Monitoring brings a renewed sense of urgency to the roles of front line staff. Key metrics are displayed daily and discussed during performance huddles

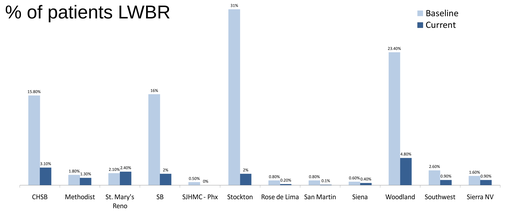


Results:

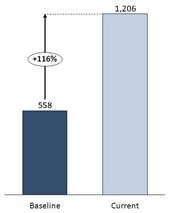
System-wide achievements for hospitals post-transformation was:

- 116% increase in ED co-pay collections = 7.1 million dollars across the system
- 63% decrease in patients LWBR = 4.5 million dollars across the system

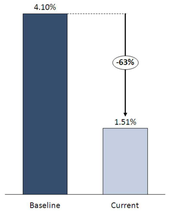




ED point of service collections ($)
CHW - System Wide Average



% of patients LWBR
CHW - System Wide Average



TOTAL FINANCIAL IMPROVEMENT: $11.6 MILLION

Catholic Healthcare West