

Capturing Success

Project Title: Patient Throughput: Defining Metrics and Process Improvement

SUMMARY

IMA Consulting worked with hospital administrators, department directors, physician leaders, and staff to identify a multi-phased process improvement plan to define realizable opportunities for improving patient movement from the Emergency Department through acute care services.

PROBLEM

Leadership of a regional health system sought external assistance to create and implement a future state patient movement model. The desire to redesign patient movement activities stemmed from several important factors. Leadership recognized the importance of attracting and retaining satisfied patients, and providing seamless quality care and service. Further, it recognized that policies, practices, and staff accountabilities were not aligned to transform current state patient movement practices. The model resulting from this effort assisted management, physicians, and staff in their efforts to expedite patient movement throughout the acute care setting.

SOLUTION

IMA Consulting focused a multi-disciplinary team on conducting an organization-wide assessment to identify opportunities for improving patient throughput originating from its Emergency Department, which accounted for 80 percent of its admissions. The team utilized detailed data analyses, interviews, and direct observation to build a knowledge base from which to surface opportunities. The analyses included direct observation of operations, data analysis, and review of departments and disciplines that impact patient throughput. Engagement of corporate, hospital, departmental, and physician leadership promoted understanding, acceptance, and ownership of the recommendations developed.

RESULTS

This work resulted in 211 recommendations for action. The recommendations addressed changes in the functional areas of Emergency Department (62), inpatient Nursing (49), patient placement (37), case management (32), ancillary department (21), and administration (10). The change recommendations were delineated in the categories of people, process, and technology categories that were further delineated into the following subcategories.

Accountability	Culture	Staffing
Resource Allocation	Physicians	Capacity
Care Delivery	Safety	PICIS
ADT	Bed Tracking	Triage
Communication	Denial Management	Patient Placement
Education	Transport	EMS
Ancillary	Pharmacy	Outcome Measures



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THE IMA APPROACH

A diverse team of knowledgeable subject matter experts expedited discovery, analysis, and recommendation formulation. Engaging executive and physician leadership expedited decision-making and action. Once compiled, consultants facilitated a steering committee session of the executive leadership team, during which it reviewed all recommendations. In this session, the executive leadership team, including the chief of staff discussed the recommendations, facilitated dialogue, and promoted acceptance of the recommendations and their implications.