



Capturing Success

Project Title: EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT PATIENT THROUGHOUT

SUMMARY

IMA Consulting worked with directors and leaders to redesign workflow to expedite patient throughput and increase virtual capacity within the emergency department.

PROBLEM

The emergency department (ED) of an urban hospital with more than 80,000 annual visits experienced crowding, excessive lengths of stay, significant percentages of patients leaving without being seen, and high numbers of hours on ambulance diversion. All of these lead to low patient satisfaction and poor financial performance.

SOLUTION

The IMA Consulting consultant facilitated a multi-disciplinary team that recommended changes to key processes. The chief process change recommendations focused on redesign of the triage and admissions functions within the ED, as well as the management of the discharge process on inpatient units. The report also included recommendations regarding changes to the physical layout within the ED to reduce wasted movements and the application of existing information technologies to enhance communication throughout the system. The consultant redesigned staff roles and responsibilities to support the recommended changes in processes and layout.

RESULTS

This work resulted in acceptance of the recommendations identified. The full implementation of those recommendations will move the ED toward its goals of reduced delays and increased capability to care for the growing numbers of patients seeking care. In addition, the improved treatment lengths of stay within the ED and the expedited discharges will reduce the time spent on ambulance diversion, further improving services to the community.

THE IMA APPROACH

The assessment of not only the ED, but the simultaneous assessment of selected inpatient care units allowed leaders to understand the effect that inpatient capacity constraints have on ED performance. By focusing on downstream bottlenecks, the consultant enabled the hospital to address process challenges that manifested themselves as poor performance results in the ED.