

John Muir Medical Center: Quick Fix Committee

Problem to Be Resolved:

- Lengthy assessment and implementation delays

Hospital: John Muir Medical Center

Location: 1601 Ygnacio Valley Road
Walnut Creek, CA 94598

Categories:

- Throughput
- Communication/IT

Key Words:

- Process Improvement
- Committee
- Quick Fix
- Collaboration
- Door to Physician Time

Hospital Metrics:

(Taken from the FY2005 AHA Annual Survey)

- 2005 ED Volume: 43,902
- Hospital Beds: 324
- Ownership: Not-for-profit
- Trauma level: 2
- Teaching status: No

Tools Provided:

- [Committee Mission Statement](#)

This tool is incorporated into this document as a statement establishing the mission of the Quick Fix Committee, and is used by this committee and hospital staff to understand the purpose of the committee and its functions.

Strategy Description

A Quick Fix Committee was implemented to identify issues in the emergency department related to patient flow and ED crowding and consequently implement and monitor changes to address these issues. To enhance efficiency and effectiveness, the Quick Fix Committee was given the authority to implement these changes without higher administrative approval.

The Impetus for Change

John Muir Medical Center's ED was experiencing significant increases in length of stay in their ED causing an increase in staffing demands and at the same time, ED volume was also growing. Another challenge was that while many important initiatives had been implemented at the hospital to improve processes and flow, identifying new changes implementing them was taking increasingly longer. The ED's management team, Julie Crouse, RN, MS and the ED medical director, Alice Hunter, MD, FACEP, believed they needed to look for a new tool that provided for change processes that was efficient, used simple fixes, took little time to implement and had staff buy-in from the beginning. The team created the **Quick Fix Committee**.

Buy-In and Implementation

The idea of the Quick Fix Committee was that a small team would meet regularly and identify needs, brainstorm suggestions and be responsible for implementing and monitoring the change processes.

Quick Fix Committee Mission Statement:

To identify operational and quality issues within the immediate control of the ED and provide immediate and sustainable change to positively affect these issues.

The committee would work on only issues under their control (for example, they did not try to solve the in-patient bed crisis). The committee was set up such that there would be no need to have administrative approval or a hospital committee's agreement for the fixes.

The committee is made up of the ED manager, ED medical director, two department coordinators, a staff nurse, unit secretary, and a technician. Fixes that look risky are tried on a smaller scale first before being rolled out department-wide. The Quick Fix Committee started meeting monthly in 2003. Generally, there is at least one quick fix that is approved at each meeting and often times more than one. Some of the quick fixes are adjustments to ones tried the previous month but that needed additional improvement.

Lessons Learned

Ms. Crouse points out that when implementing change, it is very important to have the staff buy-in and not to look for a total solution but rather incremental opportunities. Even if the fixes do not work, the Quick Fix Committee meets again within 30 days and either fine tunes that fix or creates a new one for the identified problem.

Impact

The Quick Fix Committee has been highly successful. Staff buy-in has been great, and the committee has rolled out about 20-25 fixes. More importantly there has been a substantial reduction in the door-to-physician time (58 percent) which has been the prime focus of the Quick Fix Committee. The previous data for door-to-physician time showed an average of about 45 to 50 minutes. The data now reflects an average in the low 20-minute range. In addition, staff morale is very high and the staff has high incentive to look for changes as they see the results in a very short period of time.