Reducing Wait Times in Pre-Op Testing and Admitting

Facility Type
400 bed acute care hospital

Major Issues
Poor patient experience
Multiple transfer points
Long wait times
Poor patient throughput

Lean Transformation:
Admitting
Pre-Operative Testing

The Challenge

The leadership team at a 400 bed acute care facility in Texas had gotten feedback from a patient experience survey that patients were dissatisfied with how long they had to wait to do routine tests prior to surgery.

After performing initial observations, average lobby wait times exceeded 40 minutes. Patients were escorted to more than 3 offices in order to complete the pre-op testing process, averaging over 95 minutes for total processing time from the time they arrived until the time they left.

The Solution

The leadership team elected to take an alternative approach to address this problem and utilize a rapid improvement, or Kaizen methodology as this would have the least amount of ongoing impact to clinical operations. A cross-functional team representing admitting, nursing, IT, and leadership was formed and together over 6 days with the help of HEI process engineers, they designed a new process to address the long wait times and excessive movement of patients who came in for pre-op testing.

Because this was a clinical setting and large scale change was going to take place, the event was scheduled to begin on Thursday and conclude the following Wednesday. This arrangement allowed for all physical change of the workspace to occur over the weekend with no patient impact. The goal was set that by Monday morning, at 6 AM, the area was to be fully operational and ready to receive patients, fully utilizing the new process.

The Results

The results of the Kaizen event exceeded leaderships expectations in both qualitative and quantitative measures. By 6 AM Monday morning, the new process was being utilized and the difference was immediate. With the same staff, average wait times had been reduced by 60% from 40 minutes to 15 minutes. Total processing time went from 95 minutes to 75 minutes.

Contact: info@healthcare-consulting.org