



Improving Care in Obstetrics

A Case for Operations Excellence at Women & Infants Hospital of Rhode Island

Women & Infants Hospital of Rhode Island (WIHRI), a Care New England hospital located in Providence, Rhode Island, is one of the nation's leading specialty hospitals for women and newborns. The primary teaching affiliate of The Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University for obstetrics, gynecology, and newborn pediatrics, Women & Infants is the ninth largest obstetrical service in the country with more than 9,700 deliveries per year. In 2003, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services named this hospital and Brown University a National Center of Excellence in Women's Health.

Challenge

WIHRI was struggling with increasing rates of scheduled caesarean section procedures and labor inductions that caused the obstetrics department to exceed capacity at peak times. To accommodate this increased patient load, the hospital boarded patients in Triage, Labor & Delivery, and used non-OB units to accommodate postpartum mothers. This ultimately reduced patient satisfaction as well as overall quality of patient care.

The overall goals of the project were to:

- Increase efficiency and patient throughput to accommodate for traffic spikes during peak times
- Increase overall patient satisfaction
- Standardize patient lengths of stay (LOS)

How Tefen Helped

Tefen's engagement with WIHRI encompassed a number of initiatives to achieve the hospital's desired results:

Improving the Discharge Process

Tefen first established a streamlined patient turnover procedure, beginning by redefining the hospital's discharge processes to ensure timely patient discharges.

Serving to preempt overly long patient LOS, Tefen's team also worked to develop a visual tool that would help hospital staff members identify, anticipate, and control patient discharge prerequisites.

Improving Housekeeping Support

A communication process was instituted between nursing and housekeeping personnel to improve the efficiency of hospital processes.

Tefen also developed a room readiness visual management tool, helping hospital support staff to monitor room usage and availability. In an effort to prevent any confusion and overlapping of nursing and housekeeping's functions within the facility, a standard defined housekeeping role Client Testimonial was created.

Implementing an Automated Bed Management System

To improve management of hospital beds, Tefen worked with WIHRI staff to develop personalized business processes and define desired automated solutions for the hospital's bed management structure. Once the customized system was designed, Tefen worked to train the staff to follow the new bed management system and finally established the new system within everyday hospital operation.

Applying Performance Metrics

Tefen identified Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to reflect the strategic performance of the hospital staff. Once identified, the KPIs were used to establish performance baselines and define data sources and retrieval processes. These KPIs were tracked and published over a period of time for WIHRI personnel review.

Tefen's team also served to bolster the quality and efficiency of hospital personnel. Performance-based reward and recognition programs were developed to inspire operational efficiency, enable employee improvement, and bolster staff morale.

Performance Excellence Delivered

With Tefen's help, Women & Infants achieved an improved communication process between nursing and housekeeping staff to ensure standardized, timely room changeover. This enabled a 28% reduction in patient discharges after 11AM.

WIHRI's new Tefen-implemented system also reduced boarding occurrences, which served as a solution for boarding patient overspill in non-OB units. With fewer boarding patients needing care, the hospital was able to schedule more time for direct nurse-patient interaction, which ultimately lead to an overall increase in patient satisfaction.

About Tefen

Tefen is an international management consulting firm, committed to improving overall operational effectiveness for Fortune 500 companies around the world. The firm's main areas of focus include operations excellence, manufacturing, quality, customer service, research and development and supply chain management. With its "hands-on" approach philosophy, the company has achieved tremendous success in delivering quantifiable and value-driven results for its clients in a variety of industries, including healthcare, life sciences, general manufacturing, high-tech and financial services. All of Tefen's support programs are ISO 9001 certified. Tefen currently employs over 300 professionals worldwide.

Client Testimonial

"Through the work Tefen did for us, we have achieved significant progress that we could never have done on our own. But even further, Tefen made possible things other consulting firms have not been able to do. We deeply benefited from their unquestionable and extensive expertise and knowledge of operations excellence in obstetrics. Not only did Tefen do a good job in identifying opportunities for improvements, they partnered with us in implementing some of the changes. Their team was very respectful, professional, and consistent. Needless to say, my staff and I are greatly appreciative of Tefen's help and recommendations."

Dick Argys, Chief Operating Officer,
Women & Infants Hospital of Rhode Island

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