

DATA UNCOVERS AREAS OF PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT RESULTING IN OVER A MILLION DOLLARS IN SAVINGS

Case Study

Clinical Performance

Waukesha Memorial Hospital

Waukesha Memorial Hospital was faced with the challenge of an increasing rate of complications. The results of their evaluation, as measured by the *CareDiscovery*[™] risk-adjusted complication measure, were not acceptable given the hospital's commitment to clinical excellence and top 10th percentile performance.

The team at Waukesha set out to reverse this trend. They wanted to better understand the specific factors contributing to this problem and gain clarity into how to prioritize their efforts.

COURSE OF ACTION

The first step Waukesha undertook was to develop a new quality plan. Utilizing products by Thomson Reuters, mainly *CareDiscovery*, they drilled down and made discoveries in the data that helped to focus their efforts. They were able to take this complex issue and break down improvement efforts into manageable stages.



The team analyzed how coding, documentation, and clinical care all contributed to risk-adjusted complications. To achieve buy-in and engage physicians, they used clinical databases to identify and prioritize improvement opportunities.

Physicians in particular appreciated the use of transparency and solid data analysis to pinpoint evidence-based practice changes.

"Utilizing *CareDiscovery*, we were able to really drill down and let the data drive where our efforts should be focused to achieve the continuous improvement," says Susanne Lichter, PE, director of performance excellence, Waukesha Memorial Hospital.

The first set of targets focused on what would have the most significant impact on patient outcomes — central line blood infections. Then they tackled ventilator-associated pneumonias, hospital-acquired pressure ulcers, iatrogenic hypotension in knee replacement surgeries, and reoperation for bleeding in cardiac bypass surgery.



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2011 HEALTHCARE ADVANTAGE AWARD

WAUKESHA MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

Location:
Waukesha, WI

Size:
301 beds

Scope and services:
Established in 1914, Waukesha Memorial Hospital is part of the ProHealth Care health system. The hospital has five centers of excellence: Neuroscience, Orthopedic, Regional Cancer, Regional Heart and Vascular, and Women's. This nonprofit teaching hospital has more than 2,700 employees, including 668 physicians on staff.

Solutions:
CareDiscovery[™]



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The innovative solution to these particular challenges was to not only consider the tactical approaches to solving the problem, but also the cultural approaches that needed to be included in getting to a long-term sustainability of the improvements.

“Quite often we make the improvement that we intended to make only to find ourselves back to the way it used to be,” says Gorica Overmoyer, RN, MSN, CPHQ, vice president of performance excellence, Waukesha Memorial Hospital.

Incorporating the cultural components through a project called the Comprehensive Unit-Based Safety Program was key in Waukesha’s staff, physicians, and board members understanding that it’s not just a matter of how these things happen in their organization. The cultural shift was seen organizationally — from acceptance that some patients will be harmed to recognition that harm can be prevented.

“We moved from ‘patients are going to get hurt, infections are going to happen’ to ‘we can prevent these from occurring as long as we keep our eye on what we need to keep our eye on and understand that every patient matters.’ And that was a cultural change for our organization,” says Overmoyer.

RESULTS

Because Waukesha focused on both the tactical and the cultural issues behind the problem, they were able to see significant improvements. Over a three-year period Waukesha achieved:

- Central Line Bloodstream Infection Rate – 83 percent reduction in the Adult ICU for a savings of approximately \$200,000
- Ventilator Associated Pneumonia – 84.5 percent reduction for a savings of approximately \$400,000
- Annual Hospital Acquired Pressure Ulcer Rate – 36 percent reduction for approximately \$460,000 in savings
- Hypotension After Knee Replacement Surgery – 92 percent reduction for patients on an ACE/ ARBi for a savings of approximately \$10,000
- Reoperation for Bleeding – virtually eliminated for a savings of \$45,000 in surgery costs alone

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Susanne Lichter, PE

Director of Performance Excellence
Waukesha Memorial Hospital

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“When you take a look at all of the projects combined, we were able to achieve a savings of over a million dollars through the use of data to drive our improvement efforts,” says Lichter.

In 2011, Waukesha was an overall winner of the Thomson Reuters Healthcare Advantage Award, which recognizes hospitals, health plans, government agencies, and employers that use data analytics to improve the quality of care and business results.

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