

COMPARISONS TO PEER PERFORMANCE DATA REDUCE OVERTIME AND PATIENT WAIT TIMES BY 60 PERCENT

Case Study

Operational Improvement

WellStar Kennestone Hospital

WellStar Kennestone Hospital located in Marietta, Ga., had invested substantial time and resources to address their operational workflow and utilization issues.

Despite their best efforts, scheduled cases were regularly being bumped for unscheduled emergencies — creating more staff overtime and causing excessive patient wait times and procedure backlogs.

COURSE OF ACTION

While providing emergent services goes hand-in-hand with unpredictable patient volume, WellStar Kennestone wanted to ensure it had resources available to handle every scenario. It enlisted the help of the Thomson Reuters **ACTION O-I® Operational Performance Improvement Solution**. By applying operations-management-science approaches, such as queuing analyses and simulation modeling to patient flow problems, WellStar Kennestone identified a patient flow improvement methodology. With oversight from the Surgical Services Committee made up of surgeons, physicians, anesthesiologists, and hospital leadership, the improvement project got off the ground.

With access to the largest database of client-supplied comparative benchmarks in the industry, WellStar Kennestone compared its operations to performance levels across the industry as a whole and to its peers. ACTION O-I data supported



staffing models and identified peak times to support appropriate patient flow through the operating room (OR). This data supported decision making on resource utilization and enabled the team to:

- Examine utilization of the OR, including use that occurred both within and outside of the blocked schedule
- Define clinically based categories for urgent and emergent cases
- Identify maximum allowable wait times for each category
- Determine capacity needed to support these cases within established wait times
- Quantify true demand for elective admissions by service line and by physician
- Analyze “truth in scheduling” reports, which revealed that the hospital information system (HIS) lacked accurate time intervals. Without accurate case times, surgeries ran over or were delayed, causing overtime.

WellStar Kennestone created eight block simulations by surgeon and by service line to determine which schedule provided the best patient-placement percentage to the appropriate unit, capacity for elective patient volume, and opportunity for growth in surgical volume.



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2009 HEALTHCARE ADVANTAGE AWARD

WELLSTAR KENNESTONE HOSPITAL

Location:
Marietta, Ga.

Size:
633 beds

Scope and services:
Part of the WellStar Health System, WellStar Kennestone is a not-for-profit, community-based hospital providing world-class emergency, outpatient, and inpatient services. WellStar hospitals strive for excellence in patient care, safety, and satisfaction. WellStar was named one of the nation’s “Top 100 Integrated Health Networks” by *Modern Healthcare* magazine and SDI, making it the highest-ranked Georgia health system. For more information, please visit www.wellstar.org.

Solutions:
ACTION O-I®



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RESULTS

WellStar Kennestone successfully decreased wait times for urgent cases, which represented a major improvement in quality of care provided to those patients. Simultaneously, true emergencies were able to flow through the OR within clinically acceptable times.

By designating separate capacity for urgent and emergent cases and increasing the accuracy of case duration, improvements also occurred in elective-procedure schedules. In the cardiac cath lab, rooms were set aside to accommodate unexpected emergencies, and schedules were adjusted to better reflect true practice patterns.

The quantitative results were equally impressive:

- Twenty-two percent reduction in wait times for add-on emergent surgeries
- More than 20 hours of schedulable time opened up on clinicians' schedules
- Staff overtime dropped by 60 percent
- Patient wait times were reduced by as much as 60 percent
- Cath lab utilization increased between 10 and 15 percent

With the insight from ACTION O-I on effective staffing, scheduling, and patient flow, physicians and hospital leadership at WellStar Kennestone now enjoy data-driven decision-making that contributes to a better patient experience.

WellStar Kennestone was acknowledged for its accomplishments in the pursuit of excellence with a Thomson Reuters 2009 Healthcare Advantage Award. The Healthcare Advantage Award was established in 2005 to honor and recognize customers who have used Thomson Reuters solutions to achieve outstanding success at their organizations.

“ACTION O-I gave us an entirely new way to solve patient flow issues and achieve substantial improvements through teamwork, data analysis, communication, and quality metrics.”

Marcia L. Delk M.D.

Senior Vice President for Medical Affairs and Chief Quality Officer
WellStar Health System

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