

Abstract Title: A Lean Journey to Decrease Hospital-Acquired Infections

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Problem Statement: Infection rates were rising and hand hygiene compliance, monitored through observation, was averaging 74%. Would the use of Lean methodologies improve hand hygiene rates and subsequently decrease infections?

Background/Evidence: Hand Hygiene is the single most important act to decrease hospital-acquired infections. Using Lean methodologies, such as Four Step Problem Solving (4SPS), Standard Work (SW), and bringing departmental accountability through Visual Management (VM), this hospital implemented and sustained adoption of the WHO's Five Moments for Hand Hygiene.

Aim/Objectives: The following hypothesis was tested: If this hospital utilizes Lean methodologies to improve hand hygiene compliance to 92%, then we will see a 50% reduction in hospital acquired infections.

Methods/Strategy: An inter-professional team developed standard work for hand hygiene compliance and created a standard audit process to reduce the risk of variation in measuring hand hygiene. SW in Lean methodology equates to 'the best way we know how to do something right now.' Implementation of this standard work was championed by staff from every department. Champions conducted compliance observations and met monthly to share successes and problem-solve challenges. To better understand the organizational barriers to hand hygiene compliance, the inter-professional team collaborated with unit champions using 4SPS, a Lean approach, similar to PDCA (plan, do check, act) or the scientific method. Compliance rates were made visible through a centralized database and frequent results reporting. Process and outcome metrics were updated monthly, made visual in each department (VM), and addressed during staff huddles.

Outcomes and Takeaways By the end of the fiscal year, the organization achieved the goal of 92% hand hygiene compliance, with a 16% reduction in hospital-acquired infections.

Recommendations: Sustainment has been the greatest challenge. The success of this initiative continues through the ongoing use of Lean tools such as 4SPS, Visual Management, and Standard Work. Implementing a Lean Management system creates a culture where everyone is a problem-solver.

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