

# TeamHealth Case Study

Skagit Valley Hospital, Mount Vernon, Washington

Increasing long-term patient satisfaction through teamwork

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## The Challenge

Skagit Valley Hospital (SVH) opened a new, state-of-the-art ED with expectations of improving patient satisfaction scores and patient throughput. After observing the ED's contemporary layout and innovative equipment, TeamHealth, in partnership with SVH, recognized the need for a fresh approach to ED processes in order for SVH to achieve its goals.

## Our Solutions

TeamHealth helped organize a collaborative meeting to obtain input about new processes to enhance patient satisfaction and improve core measure compliance with all emergency physicians and medical and administrative staff. After reviewing the feedback, TeamHealth suggested creating three work groups comprised of physicians, nurses, and other clinical and administrative staff members. These groups were tasked with identifying processes to: (1) improve patient satisfaction, (2) decrease the percentage of patients who left without being seen (LWBS), (3) decrease patient throughput times, and (4) improve staff satisfaction. The director of emergency services and the ED medical director further enlisted TeamHealth's assistance in coaching the groups, implementing processes conducive to the new environment, and assigning specific goals and deadlines.

Some of the changes executed by the group included:

- Creating a brochure that advises patients about what to expect during an ED visit
- Implementing report sheets that track the flow of ambulance/primary medical doctor call-in
- Flow tracking of orders from ancillary services to the unit secretary in "code" situations
- Revising bed forms to facilitate better communication with hospitalists
- Rearranging the ED nursing station to maximize efficiency of daily performance



## Results

Within less than a year of the opening the new ED, patient satisfaction was at 90 percent, and the rate of LWBS patients had dropped to less than 1 percent. One additional result realized by this collaborative process was the enhanced morale among the SVH staff and their pride in accomplishing a goal through true teamwork.

The hospital continues to utilize the three work groups, and the TeamHealth vice president of client services regularly attends ED staff meetings to provide input and further improve upon these results.

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## Client Response

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"TeamHealth is there to support us—all I need to do is call. The members of our client services team are very responsive and proactive. We're fortunate to have TeamHealth as our ED partner."

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Director of Emergency Services

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